



# **Review of the School Inspection Framework**

## **ATL's response to the HMI e's consultation document**

**17 December 2010**

## **ATL – the education union**

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), as a leading education union, recognise the link between education policy and our members' conditions of employment. Our evidence-based policy making enables us to campaign and negotiate from a position of strength. We champion good practice and achieve better working lives for our members. We help our members, as their careers develop, through first-rate research, advice, information and legal support. Our 160,000 members – teachers, lecturers, headteachers, support staff and students – are empowered to get active locally and nationally.

ATL is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and Education International (EI). The union is a member of the Social Partnership – working with the UK Government, employers and other unions on education issues. ATL is not affiliated to any political party and seeks to work constructively with all the main political parties.

## **Introduction**

ATL welcomes the opportunity to comment on HMIE's Review of the School Inspection Framework. We recognise that the questionnaire is directed at individuals rather than for organisations to respond to; thus posing challenges about the ability to offer more nuanced positions than a simple 'agree' or 'disagree'. We felt it was important however for a submission to be made in lieu of a meeting with the review team.

ATL represents members in both the maintained and the independent sectors. Whilst we have completed our submission in relation to the maintained sector the review does beg the questions as to the impact of any changes to the framework for schools in the independent sector. There is also a bigger question at large of the timing of the review and the likely implementation of the outcomes given the impending merger between *Learning and Teaching Scotland* and *HMIE* on 1 July 2011 to form the new *Scottish Education Quality and Improvement Agency*; details of which are still to be made public.

## About the inspection process

HMIE would like to introduce a new proportionate method of sampling schools to be inspected each year. This would take the form of a smaller representative national sample of schools, plus some additional schools which have been identified as 'high risk' through an annual risk assessment process.

**Q1 Please tell us your level of agreement with this proposed method.**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	➔ IF YOU AGREE PLEASE ANSWER Q1a
Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
No opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	
			➔ IF YOU DISAGREE PLEASE ANSWER Q1b
			➔ PLEASE GO TO Q2

**Q1a Please tell us your reasons for agreeing. What types of information do you think HMIE should seek to have available to help us to assess risk for all schools in each authority?**

ATL has consistently argued that the inspection process should be more proportionate. Our 2007 position statement 'New accountability for schools', albeit focussed on the English inspection regime, argued for sample testing citing the Scottish Survey of Achievement as one possible model.

By working closely with local authorities then HMIE would hopefully be able to make clear and objective judgements as to which schools will be inspected. We would, however, like to see more information on how the annual risk assessment process will be arrived at and what criteria would be utilised.

**Q1b Please tell us if you have any alternative suggestions for sampling schools.**

N/A

**Q2 Do you agree with the changes to inspecting and reporting in secondary schools? Namely, a report that focuses on the broader Curriculum for Excellence particularly areas of literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing rather than subject focused reporting.**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	➔ IF YOU AGREE PLEASE GO TO Q3
Agree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2	
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	4	
No opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	
			➔ IF YOU DISAGREE PLEASE ANSWER Q2a
			➔ PLEASE GO TO Q3

**Q2a Please tell us why you disagree.**

N/A

## Parental involvement

**Q3 Do you agree that, in general, parents should be more involved in the inspection process?**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Disagree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
No opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	5



**IF YOU AGREE  
PLEASE ANSWER Q3b, Q3c  
and Q3d**



**IF YOU DISAGREE  
PLEASE ANSWER Q3e**



**PLEASE GO TO Q4**

**Q3b Do you agree that parents should be involved as part of a focus group run by the inspection team during the inspection?**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
No opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

**Q3c Do you agree that parents should be involved as part of the inspection meeting at the beginning and/or end of the inspection?**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
No opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

**Q3d Are there any other ways you think parents should be involved in the inspection process?**

N/A

**Q3e Why do you disagree with increased parental involvement in the inspection process?**

Without availability of further details ATL has some reservations about increased parental involvement in the inspection process. Whilst we may be neutral on involving parents through the use of focus groups we remain to be convinced that parents should be involved when inspection visits are being planned by HMIe.

## Staff involvement

**Q4 Do you agree that senior staff and education authority staff should be more involved in the inspection process?**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Disagree	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
No opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

➔ **IF YOU AGREE  
PLEASE ANSWER Q4a, Q4b  
and Q4c**

➔ **IF YOU DISAGREE  
PLEASE ANSWER Q4d**

➔ **PLEASE GO TO Q5**

**Q4a Do you agree that senior staff and education authority staff should be more involved in the inspection process through class visits?**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
No opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

**Q4b Do you agree that senior staff and education authority staff should be more involved in the inspection process through being present at some inspection team meetings?**

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	1
Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	2
Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	3
Strongly Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	4
No opinion	<input type="checkbox"/>	5

**Q4c Are there any other ways you think senior staff and education authority staff should be involved in the inspection process?**

N/A

**Q4d Why do you disagree with more involvement for senior staff and education authority staff in the inspection process?**

Whilst we believe that professional dialogue is vital if schools are to continue to improve, these proposals do not promote professional dialogue as we see it. Instead, the attendance of senior staff and education authority staff could lead to a limiting of the discussions on the issues around school effectiveness and improvement.



## Priorities

**Q8** Finally, Please tell us what is the **FIRST** thing you would look for when reading findings from a school inspection.

- Particular strengths of the school
- Example of good practice

This submission was prepared on behalf of  
ATL Scotland  
CBC House  
24 Canning Street  
Edinburgh, EH3 8EG