

ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS AND LECTURERS

16 WEST BANK DRIVE BT3(LA TEL: 028 90782020
E-mail: mlanghammer@atl.org.uk <http://www.atl.org.uk> VAT REG NO 539 0866 17
GENERAL SECRETARY Dr MARY BOUSTED B.A.(Hons) PhD
DIRECTOR (N.IRELAND) MARK LANGHAMMER



Targeted Engagement with Stakeholders on proposed changes to the Formal Intervention Process

**Response Form submitted by the
Association of Teachers and Lecturers**

September 2013

Association of Teachers and Lecturers
Unit C2, 16 West Bank Drive
Belfast BT3 9LA
Tel: 028-90782020
Web: www.atl.org.uk

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/ATLNorthernIreland>

Name: Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Please tick the box that best describes you as a respondent:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Principal | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Governor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Education/Sectoral Support Body | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Trade Union | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If Education/Sectoral Support Body/Other please specify:

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers, as a leading education union, recognises 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, head-teachers and support staff – are empowered to get active locally and nationally. We are affiliated to the ICTU and TUC, and work with government and employers by lobbying and through social partnership.

Name of School (if applicable): N/A

School Reference Number (if applicable): N/A

Targeted Engagement with Stakeholders on proposed changes to the Formal Intervention Process

Question 1

The FIP will now include an immediate assessment of a school's sustainability, taking account of local area plans. Are there any other factors that should be taken into account?

Yes No Not sure No view

Comments

ATL has fundamental difficulties with the approach not only of the Education & Training Inspectorate and the flagship Department of Education school improvement policy "Every School a Good School" but with the overall system of Accountability.

We have engaged with DE, ETI, CCEA and others and our view that there is too much 'weighing and measuring' in a sclerotic accountability framework is well known.

In order to address the negative impact on education from an overwrought accountability system, ATL collaborated with Carmel Gallagher of the General Teaching Council to produce a detailed view, with recommendations.

This consultation, tackling on small aspect of a wider, inappropriate, system of accountability, cannot really take account of the breadth of our difficulties.

As such, our substantial response is the attached GTC publication "Striking the Right Balance: Towards a Framework of School Accountability for 21st Century Learning" should be taken as the ATL response.

This document is also endorsed by all five teaching unions that make up the Northern Ireland Teachers Council

Schools in Formal Intervention

Currently a school in formal intervention will have a follow-up inspection within 12–18 months of the original inspection, with a second follow-up inspection within a further 12 months if there has been no improvement in the overall quality of provision.

Question 2

Do you agree that schools in FIP should have one follow-up inspection after 18–24 months?

Yes No Not sure No view

Question 3

Do you agree that a school in FIP which has not improved to at least a 'satisfactory' evaluation at the follow-up inspection (i.e. after 18-24 months) should have further action considered?

Yes No Not sure No view

Note on the meaning of words: It should be noted that the term “Satisfactory” as used by the Education and Training Inspectorate is not taken to mean “satisfactory”. The Dictionary mean of Satisfactory is “*Giving satisfaction sufficient to meet a demand or requirement; adequate*”.(see The Free Dictionary, <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/satisfactory>). This is not the meaning of the word ‘Satisfactory’ as used currently by ETI. As matters stand, the meaning of words, in the ETI way of things, is rather like the meaning Lewis Carroll’s creation Humpty Dumpty gave when he said in rather a scornful tone, “*When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less.*’

In ATL’s view, we should stick with the Dictionary meaning of Satisfactory!

Question 4

Do you agree that a school in FIP which has improved to a ‘satisfactory’ evaluation at the follow-up inspection (i.e. after 18-24 months) should have a further follow-up inspection within 12 months, during which time it will be expected to have improved its provision to at least ‘good’?

Yes No Not sure No view

Question 5

Do you agree that DE should have the flexibility to retain a school in formal intervention following a satisfactory evaluation by the ETI?

Yes No Not sure No view

Question 6

Are there any other circumstances in which schools should be entered into the FIP?

Yes No Not sure No view

If you have any comments in relation to the proposed revisions to the formal intervention process please enter them below.

See document attached, “**Striking the Right Balance: Towards a Framework of School Accountability for 21st Century Learning**” Gallagher C et al, General Teaching Council, September 2013

Inspection and ‘formal intervention’ is currently experienced as a high-stakes, public and negative process. With the near collapse of support from Board Officer tier and the change in modus operandi of the District Inspectors it has become very difficult

for schools and school leaders to 'volunteer' for support, outside of Inspection and Intervention. Focus should be on how schools can 'volunteer' for support without incurring public approbrium or incurring stigma within the education system. Opting in to a low-stakes 'Health Check' inspection may be one way of meeting this gap.

Question 7

Do you agree that a school evaluated as 'satisfactory' should have up to a maximum of two follow-up inspections (the first after 12–18 months and the second after a further 12 months) to improve provision to at least 'good'?

Yes No Not sure No view

See Question 3. If words are to have meaning, then 'satisfactory' means satisfactory!

Question 8

Do you agree that when a 'satisfactory' school is evaluated as 'satisfactory' in two consecutive follow-up inspections further action should be considered?

Yes No Not sure No view

If you have any comments in relation to the proposed revisions to the formal intervention process, relating to schools receiving a 'satisfactory' evaluation, please enter them below.

See document attached, "**Striking the Right Balance: Towards a Framework of School Accountability for 21st Century Learning**" Gallagher C et al, General Teaching Council, September 2013

In addition, see Question 3. If words are to have meaning, then 'satisfactory' means satisfactory!

Question 9

In addition to restructuring leadership, management and/or governance; amalgamation, fresh start or closure, are there any other actions DE should consider taking where schools have not secured the necessary improvements in provision?

Yes No Not sure No view

If Yes, please provide further details

Parents Councils: As recommended in the Purvis 'Call to Action' March 2011, one recommendation would be – in circumstances where Governance of a school was deemed to be unsatisfactory - for the removal of the Board of Governors in favour of a Community and Parents Council with a defined challenge function along the lines of the Scottish model, see

<http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/parentzone/getinvolved/parentcouncils/index.asp>

It is also considered that a fundamental review of the composition of Boards of Governors is required to ensure a fuller range of skills and competences in every school.

Other recommendations ATL would promote, relating to the Inspectorate, are:

- **Fixed Term Principal secondments:** In circumstances where the performance of the Principal is considered to be unsatisfactory and is removed from post, we would allow for consideration of fixed term secondments for the Principal post from within the education system – particularly suitable to aspirant, energetic, leaders-in-waiting.
- **Inspection Toolkits:** The ETI should produce an easy-to-read Inspection Toolkit or Check-List to assist 'demystify' inspections.
- **More Teachers in ETI creating a Two-Way dialogue:** ATL considers that significantly increased numbers of serving teachers should experience spells of 2-4 years within the Inspectorate as Associate Inspectors. Facilitated as a CPD opportunity through secondment, we believe this would increase confidence and trust in the ETI, create a "two way" system, as well as increase movement to 'aerate' a rigid and ossified teaching workforce. Secondments could be organised through the ESA professional development unit and should

be open to both teachers (on reaching the Upper Pay Scale) as well as Principals/Managers. More Teachers to undertake 2-4 year seconded spells in the Inspectorate as Associate Inspectors

- **Grading:** Movement to the 3 grade Scottish system expressed in Levels of Confidence.
- **Qualifications:** NITC considers that the current qualification requirement of a Degree + a teaching qualification is appropriate. However, NITC sees merit in working towards a substantial **majority** of Inspectors having **recent relevant** experience, at minimum within the past 5 years. The ETI and Education Minister has been reluctant to disclose the recent experience of current inspectors. One source considers that 38 of 59 inspectors have no classroom experience.¹

Question 10

Do you have any other comments on the proposed changes to the FIP?

Yes, see document attached, “**Striking the Right Balance: Towards a Framework of School Accountability for 21st Century Learning**” Gallagher C et al, General Teaching Council, September 2013

Return to standardsandimprovementteam@deni.gov.uk Written responses can also be sent to the following address: Standards & Improvement Team; Department of Education; Rathgael House; 43 Balloo Road; Rathgill; Bangor; BT19 7PR.

Please note that all responses must be received by **30 September 2013**.

Thank you for providing your views on the proposed changes to the FIP

¹ UUP spokesperson, Danny Kinahan in NI Assembly debate on the Chief Inspector’s Report, 13 November 2012