



THE INSPECTION PROCESS

Inspections by HMIE follow one of two models:

- Full inspection model
- Short inspection model

Should Cathedral's inspection be the full model, the process will be as follows:

- The **notification period** of a full inspection visit is **two and a half weeks**.
- Full inspection visits are of a **week's duration**, from late morning on Monday until lunchtime on Friday.
- Headteachers receive the notification email, together with an inspection briefing note outlining what can be expected in the course of the inspection.
- On receipt of the notification email, Headteachers are also advised of the evidence that is required to be completed in advance of the inspection- **school self-evaluation, the safeguarding proforma and online stakeholder questionnaires- and of the other existing school documentation to be shared with the inspection team.**
- Schools are required to complete their self-evaluation summary and safeguarding forms and discuss them with the inspection team on the first day of the inspection.
- **Confidential online pre-inspection questionnaires** are distributed to **all parents, all staff (teaching and non-teaching), all pupils from P4 (none in nursery)** and partners who deliver learning and contribute to the life and work of the school, prior to the inspection.
- Following notification, Headteachers receive a phone call from the Managing Inspector who will lead the inspection to discuss arrangements, including the meetings that will be required, and any relevant contextual information about the school; and to outline the membership of the inspection team.
- The school will be inspected by a team of inspectors led by a Managing Inspector who is an HM Inspector of Education. The team may consist of additional HM Inspectors (HMI), a health and nutrition inspector (HNI), associate assessors (AA) and/or assistant inspectors (AI) and a lay member who may join the team for a day (LM). A Care Inspector will also be included in the team where nursery provision is being inspected.
- In evaluating the quality of provision in the school, inspectors will use **Quality Indicators (QIs) from 'How good is our school?'(4th edition) and 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' in the case of primary schools with nursery classes.**
- **Five main QIs are used in full inspections of Primary. Four are mandatory** (1.3 Leadership of change 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion.) **The final QI is chosen by the school.**
- **For inspection of nursery classes, four main QIs are used by Education Scotland.** (1.3 Leadership of change 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment 3.2 Securing children's progress and 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion) Where the Care Inspectorate is involved in a shared inspection of a nursery class, their focus will be on some or all of the following themes: Quality of care and support, Quality of environment, Leadership of change, and the agreed additional QI(s).
- **Inspectors will observe learning and teaching in the classroom amongst their activities.** This is likely to be for parts of lessons only.
- On the final day of the visit, **inspectors** (including the Care Inspector where inspections have included a nursery class) **will share pre-quality assured gradings of the QIs for the school with the Headteacher, who is asked to keep these confidential, sharing only with the education authority and the senior team within the school, until the draft letter of inspection findings is received.**
- **Headteachers are advised by Education Scotland to share high level messages and key strengths and aspects for development with staff as soon as the visit is complete.**

- **Education Scotland aims to provide to Headteachers, Chair of the Parent Council and the education authority, a confidential draft of the letter** of inspection findings (including those relating to nursery where relevant) for parents and carers, **within ten working days of the inspection being completed.**
- Comments or suggested amendments to the draft letter are invited from the Headteacher, Chair of the Parent Council and the education authority within one working week of its receipt.
- The Headteacher and the Local Authority also **receive a draft of the Summary of Inspection Findings (SIF)**, including for nursery where applicable, and are invited to check for accuracy and return within one working week of its receipt.
- **The letter for parents and carers, and the SIF are then published on the Education Scotland website.**

Education Scotland believes that the inspection process is about how effectively the school/education setting uses self-evaluation to take forward its plan to improve.

‘Our inspections provide the opportunity for early learning and childcare settings and schools to show that they know themselves inside out and that they are using self-evaluation to focus on improving all the achievements of children. When self-evaluation evidence is robust and convincing, we use it as part of the inspection evidence. It can also help identify good practice and innovation that Education Scotland may wish to look at in more detail as part of our continuing engagement after the inspection has been completed.’
(Being Ready for Inspection, Education Scotland website)

In advance of inspection, Headteachers are asked to complete, in consultation with the education authority, a self-evaluation summary form. At the start of the inspection, Headteachers use the completed self-evaluation summary form to brief the inspection team on the impact of the school’s approach to improvement through self-evaluation.

The inspection team seeks to be provided:

- a clear account of an establishment’s strengths and aspects for development
- information relating to a school/ education setting’s improvement and associated evidence
- identification and availability of the key sources of evidence underpinning the school’s/ education setting’s knowledge of performance and improvement
- an indication of how the school/education setting prioritises areas for improvement.

Inspectors will look at the extent to which the school’s/education setting’s view of itself is supported by evidence and by inspection activities which are likely to include:

- looking at the school’s Standards and Quality Report
- looking at current and previous school improvement plans
- analysing pre-inspection questionnaires sent to all parents, all staff, all learners from P4, and partners
- looking at self-evaluation data and information and evidence
- observing learning and teaching in the classroom (learning episodes)
- professional dialogue with staff
- discussions with pupils and parents (including the Chairperson of the Parent Council).

OVERVIEW OF THE INSPECTION WEEK

MONDAY

The inspection team will arrive at the school around 12.30pm, meeting briefly as a team first.

Towards the end of lunchtime or at the end of the school/education setting day, a briefing meeting for teaching and non-teaching staff will be arranged. Staff will receive an outline of the inspection process and will have the opportunity to ask questions.

The Managing Inspector will meet with the Headteacher, members of the senior management team (possibly in the case of Primary) and the local authority Improvement Officer who supports the school/education setting.

The discussion will focus on the self-evaluation and other supporting documentation submitted in advance of the inspection, and on the schools' approaches to safeguarding.

The discussion is also likely to involve planning for inspection activities during the remainder of the visit, taking account of key features of the school/setting and its context, as identified in the course of the discussion. A programme of meetings and visits to classes (though these are not timetabled) will be agreed at the meeting which should last around one hour.

While this meeting is taking place, the remainder of the inspection team will begin inspection activities, including class visits.

During the afternoon, the Chairperson of the Parent Council usually meets with an inspector and/or the inspection team's lay member.

Where an lay member is part of the team she/he may also meet with children (P4 upwards) and focus groups of parents, from Monday afternoon onwards, until the LM leaves the school/setting usually by the end of the day on Tuesday.

TUESDAY

The priority for the inspection team is to get into classes to observe and consider the learning and teaching experience in the context of the school's/education setting's self-evaluation.

A school nominee would normally be invited to accompany the inspectors on some lesson visits to share thoughts and observations on the school's/setting's approach to learning and teaching. Where staffing arrangements allow, a school/setting might select a teacher to engage in this professional dialogue with the inspection team rather than a school/setting manager.

The lay member will continue to engage with parents through looking at aspects of their partnership activities with the school/setting, and with focus groups of pupils.

Usually, at the end of the day, a session will be organised to allow staff to engage individually in professional dialogue about features of their work that they wish to share with members of the inspection team.

WEDNESDAY – THURSDAY/FRIDAY

Inspection activity- class visits, meetings and focus groups- continue according to the principle of proportionality, as stated by Education Scotland, who cannot and do not aim to, cover all aspects of the school's/education setting's work.

At the conclusion of the inspection activity, which could be anytime between Thursday morning and Friday morning, a meeting will be arranged to discuss the findings with the Headteacher and relevant senior managers. A representative from the education authority may also attend.

During the meeting, inspectors (including the Care Inspector where inspections have included a nursery class) will share pre-quality assured gradings of the QIs for the school with the Headteacher, who is asked to keep these confidential, sharing only with the education authority and the senior team within the school, until the draft letter of inspection findings is received.

Headteachers are advised by Education Scotland to share high level messages and key strengths and aspects for development with staff as soon as possible after the visit is complete.