

Geography Inspections

What is an inspector looking to see from a geography teacher and geography department during an inspection?

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Outline

- Background
- Evaluation framework
- Practice observed and expectations!
- School self-evaluation

Education Act (1998) Section 13

The functions of an Inspector shall be:

- to support and advise recognised schools....and teachers on matters relating to the provision of education
- To evaluate the organisation and operation of those schools...and the quality and effectiveness of the education provided in those schools, including the quality of teaching and effectiveness of individual teachers

Education Act (1998) Section 13

- **Report to the Minister**, or to the board, patron, parents of students and teachers, as appropriate, and as prescribed, on these matters or on any other matter relating to the activities of those schools or centres and the needs of students attending those schools or centres

Code of Practice

The aims of evaluation are:

- to identify, acknowledge and affirm good practice in schools
- to promote continuing improvement in the quality of education offered by schools
- to promote self-evaluation and continuous development by schools and staffs
- to provide an assurance of quality in the educational system as a whole, based on the collection of objective, dependable, high quality data.

Code of Practice

The Inspectorate is committed to ensuring that:

- every effort is made to foster positive relationships with all members of the school community
- every effort is made to preserve the positive relationships which exist between teachers and pupils.

Code of Practice

- the evaluative process takes account of the contextual factors of the school, including socio-economic circumstances and local demographic trends

Code of Practice: Feedback

- is conducted with care and sensitivity
- gives feedback and advice in a supportive and constructive manner
- ensures that the messages given are clear and unambiguous
- emphasises the key findings
- provides the opportunity to the recipients of reports, whether individuals or groups, to clarify by questioning what is reported and to offer any further evidence that they think should be taken into account.

Code of Practice: Report

- accurately reflects an evaluation which has been made on the basis of the evidence available
- communicates written messages that are clear and unambiguous
- ensures that what is reported is fair and balanced, particularly where conflicting evidence is being presented

Evaluation Framework

From incidental to WSE-MLL

Subject inspection

- A Guide to Subject Inspection: - DES website
- Geographically random but following a regional schedule
- Two week notice period
- One or two days – up to two lessons per teacher

Subject Inspection

- A school information form in advance
- No lessons plans required
- Normally an outline of the planned work for the class group for the term or year
- Any collaborative planning documentation

Subject Inspection

In the classroom (normally).....

- Introduction
- Observe what happens
- Look at copies and notebooks
- Any documents provided by teacher
- Engage with the students
- Write notes on an observation record
- Give individual feedback

Incidental Inspection

- Totally random - No notice....the drive by!!!
- Looking at student / teaching / classroom experience on a specific day
- Normally not the first lesson
- Schedule of visits is posted ASAP
- Classroom engagement same as subject inspection
- No written report
- Oral report on overall findings based on lessons observed

Follow-through Inspections

- In a selection of schools - normally within three years of the issue of the report
- A two-day notice period
- To review implementation of recommendations
- Document reviews
- Classroom visits
- A short report is appended to the published report

WSE-MLL

- Three in-school evaluation days
- Review of collaborative / departmental planning
- Potential classroom visit
- Three-week notice period for WSE-MLL
- Classes to be visited posted each morning
- Procedure very similar to Incidental experience

Practice observed and expected!

Looking at...Looking for...!

Subject Inspection or WSE-MLL (not II)

- Evidence of planning – individual and collaborative
- Individual planning as expressed in classroom, students' work, fieldwork, projects etc
- Any collaborate planning evidence – meeting minutes, subject / curricular plans, teaching resources etc
- Whole-school planning as expressed in subject department planning

Looking at...Looking for...!

In class within any evaluation experience.....

- Lesson structure and clarity in the learning intention whether one lesson or a sequence
- Active engagement and participation by students within the lesson
- The balance between teacher and student inputs – who is doing all the talking!
- Behaviourist, Constructivist, Socio-cultural!

Looking at...Looking for...!

- **Variety of experiences for students**
 - Responding to questions
 - Engaging in whole-class, pair or group discussion
 - Tasks
 - Practice or application of skills
 - Co-operative learning*
 - Visual stimulus materials
 - individual attention
 - review and provision of homework
- ICT for learning as opposed to teaching only
- ***We are not looking for tokenistic pair or group work***

Looking at...Looking for...!

Assessment of Learning and for learning?

- Questioning strategies
 - Higher-order, lower-order, open
 - Targeted
 - Differentiated
 - Wait time
- Appropriate attention to homework and copybooks – annotation, formative feedback

Looking at...Looking for...!

Any evidence of differentiation

- In the learning intention
- In questioning
- In classroom tasks
- In group or pair formation
- In homework tasks

Looking at...Looking for...!

Literacy and Numeracy

- Any evidence of how whole-school strategies are translating into classroom practices
- Any evaluation of impact

School Self-Evaluation

- Any similar evidence in terms of strategies and / or impact

Looking at...Looking for...!

- Classroom atmosphere,
- Normal classroom routines
- Seating arrangement
- Classroom management ,
- Dealing with challenging behaviours
- Mutual respect and relationships

Feelings!

What is it like to be a student in this class

- Is what are they are setting out to learn clear
- Are they learning it
- Are they engaged and participating
- What kind of learning environment
- Are all students included and respected
- Is their work and their contributions to the lesson acknowledged, affirmed and valued

The Geography Department

Provision and structures

- Teacher-based rooms, student-based rooms, the geography room, a resource area
- Level of collaboration.....it varies!
- A subject folder – a curricular plan
- A subject plan – what does this mean?
- A working document or something prepared for the inspector?

The Geography Department

- A co-ordinator – a post? voluntary? role?
- Provision to meet
- What is on the agenda – books, exams and / or teaching and learning
- Collaborative review of SEC results
- CPD sharing of skills, experiences and outcomes
- Identified priorities - links with whole school initiatives

The Geography Department

Ideally....

- An active and engaged group of teachers interested in the ongoing development of their subject
- Moving beyond the static 'plan / folder' to look at strategic targets or priorities either embracing or complementing whole-school initiatives

What can the SSE guidelines tell
you?

Teaching and learning Framework

(SSE Guidelines)

Learning outcomes:

- Attainment of subject and programme objectives

Learning experiences:

- Learning environment
- Engagement in learning
- Learning to learn

Teachers' Practice:

- Management of students
- Assessment
- Preparation for teaching
- Teaching approaches

Learning Experiences

- Learning settings are safe, well maintained, visually stimulating and supportive of literacy and numeracy
- Students have access to appropriate materials, including ICT, to support learning

Learning Experiences

- Students are enabled to engage actively in a range of suitably challenging, relevant and interesting learning opportunities
- Students are given support as needed
- Students are equipped with tools and skills for learning now and in the future.

Teachers' Practice

- Teachers prepare thoroughly for lessons; expected learning outcomes including literacy and numeracy development are clearly stated; and appropriate resources are in place
- Expected learning outcomes are clearly communicated; lessons are suitably paced to enable progression in development of knowledge and skills

Teachers' Practice

- Teaching is focused, stimulating and relevant. All aspects of the subject, including subject-specific language, are thoroughly taught
- All students are respected; high but realistic expectations are communicated; and efforts and achievements are affirmed
- A range of assessment methods is used effectively to assess progress

Learner outcomes

- Students' overall attainment, with regard to knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects and programmes, has improved significantly in line with targets; and expected outcomes have been achieved
- Students enjoy learning and have developed appropriate attitudes and dispositions

Learner outcomes

- Students can meet the literacy and numeracy challenges of the subject
- Students at risk of underachieving have made good progress
- Students' uptake levels and performance in state examinations compare favourably with national norms, within the school context.

Questions / Comments