



Circular: 0057/2022

To: Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teachers in Primary Schools and Special Schools

To: Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards

ARRANGEMENTS FOR INSPECTORATE ENGAGEMENT WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS

September to December 2022

SUMMARY

This circular:

- Provides information about the Inspectorate's planned advisory, evaluation and research work in primary schools and special schools from September to December 2022
- Provides information on the Inspectorate's work on supporting and monitoring the implementation of anti-bullying procedures in schools
- Clarifies the arrangements for school self-evaluation (SSE) for the 2022/23 school year
- Supersedes Circular 0029/2022.

Introduction

The Inspectorate is strongly committed to evaluating the work of schools and to providing advice and support to schools in a collaborative and respectful way. Our primary focus is on ensuring the best possible education provision for children and young people.

This circular is designed to provide school leaders, teachers and those involved in managing schools with information about the range of activities that the Inspectorate plans to engage in while working with schools in the 2022/23 school year.

The Inspectorate looks forward to continuing its support for the work of schools throughout 2022/23. It will continue with the phased implementation of its inspection programme by extending the current range of inspection activity to involve a wider



range of inspection types. The Inspectorate will also continue to provide advice and support to schools.

The Inspectorate's planned evaluation and advisory work in schools

September to December 2022

From September 2022, the inspection programme will include the following:

- **Incidental inspections** that are conducted in the context of the school's normal work and are typically unannounced one-day inspection and engagement visits providing opportunities for professional dialogue between school personnel and inspectors
- **Curriculum evaluations** that focus on evaluating specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum (1999)* and the *Primary Language Curriculum (2019)*
- **Child protection and safeguarding inspections (CPSI)** that monitor the implementation of the Department's *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017* in fulfilment of the Minister's obligations under the *Children First Act 2015*
- **Evaluations of provision for pupils with additional and special educational needs** that look in detail at the quality of provision for children with additional and special educational needs
- **Follow-through inspections** to monitor and support the implementation of recommendations arising from previous inspections
- **Priority inspections** in a small number of schools as required. The inspection type will depend on the particular context of the school
- The completion of inspections that commenced in the 2021/2022 school year
- **Advisory visits and other activities** that will include school self-evaluation advisory visits, visits to schools participating in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme and other advisory visits.

From November 2022, the inspection programme will include evaluations of provision in Special Care Units.



From January 2023

From January 2023, all other types of inspection, including whole-school evaluations and evaluations of Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) action planning will recommence.

The inspection programme will be kept under review in the light of public health advice in relation to COVID-19.

Monitoring of anti-bullying

From September 2022, the Inspectorate will continue to monitor and report on the extent to which schools are implementing the *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)* in all inspection types. During incidental inspections, curriculum evaluations, evaluations of provision for pupils with special educational needs and follow-through evaluations, the following **three aspects** of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures* will be monitored:

- The school has developed an anti-bullying policy that meets the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)* and this policy is reviewed annually.
- The board of management minutes record that the principal provides a report to the board at least once a term on the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template provided in the *Procedures*) since the previous report to the board.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is published on its website and/or is readily accessible to board of management members, teachers, parents and pupils.

An **additional two aspects** will be monitored during evaluations of special care units, and also during whole-school evaluations and DEIS evaluations when these inspections recommence in 2023:

- The school has appropriate initiatives in place to promote a positive and inclusive school culture and environment.
- All teachers visited report that they have read the school's policy on anti-bullying and that they are aware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing and tackling bullying.



Commentary on the extent to which the school is meeting these requirements will be included in all inspection reports.

Thematic reports

The Inspectorate published two reports recently on the actions taken by schools to prevent and tackle bullying. These are:

- *Report on the implementation of aspects of anti-bullying measures in schools (May 2022) available [here](#)*
- *Actions by schools to prevent and tackle bullying: Report on focus groups with primary pupils and post-primary students (June 2022) available [here](#).*

The Inspectorate is preparing a report on the findings of incidental inspections and curriculum evaluations conducted during May and June 2022. This report will be published in autumn 2022.

In the September to December 2022 period, research will be conducted in a sample of incidental inspections and curriculum evaluations on areas such as Education for Sustainable Development and Creativity in Teaching and Learning. Reports on this research will be published in 2023.

School self-evaluation

Third phase of SSE: 2022-2026

The third cycle of SSE, which had been due to commence in September 2021, will now commence in September 2022. The arrangements for this cycle and the supports for schools are outlined in *School self-evaluation: Next steps, 2022-2026, including Circular 0056/2022 for Primary Schools, Special Schools and Post-Primary Schools* available [here](#) on www.gov.ie. The document advises on how schools can develop and use SSE in the years ahead in a way that ensures that school and system goals for equity, inclusion, teaching, learning and wellbeing can be achieved.

SSE advisory visits

The Inspectorate will continue to provide school self-evaluation (SSE) advisory visits during the September to December 2022 term as one of a range of supports available to schools. Schools can apply for an advisory session by emailing SSE@education.gov.ie. In preparation for their advisory session, schools should reflect on the work they have undertaken in SSE to date and consider how they would like the



advisory session to progress their engagement in SSE. Advisory sessions will be tailored to the context of each individual school.

Details of other supports for SSE are available in *School self-evaluation: Next steps, 2022-2026, including Circular 0056/2022 for Primary Schools, Special Schools and Post-Primary Schools* available [here](#) on www.gov.ie.

Updated Inspectorate publications

In consultation with the education partners, the Inspectorate has updated a number of documents that inform and support inspection and that articulate the Inspectorate's commitments about how it conducts its work:

- *A Guide to Inspection in Primary Schools and Special Schools* provides an overview of the range of inspection activities that are typically carried out during inspections in primary and special schools. The revised version is available [here](#) on www.gov.ie
- The *Code of Practice for the Department of Education Inspectorate (2022)* sets out the general principles and standards in accordance with which the Inspectorate carries out its work. The revised version is available [here](#) on www.gov.ie
- *Procedure for the Review of Inspections carried out by the Department of Education Inspectorate under Section 13(9) of the Education Act 1998* sets out the steps that can be taken by a teacher or the board of management of a school or other education and training facility to have an inspection reviewed. The revised version is available [here](#) on www.gov.ie.

Supports to promote the participation of children, young people and parents/guardians in inspection

A new suite of resources about inspection, designed for children, young people and parents/guardians is available [here](#) on www.gov.ie. The resources include animated videos, e-leaflets and an e-booklet, and will support the participation of children, young people and parents/guardians in the inspection process.

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