



Inspection - Day one, Part One

Written by Elaine Long - Ofsted Inspector & Consultant

All inspectors arrive at the school at the agreed time – usually 8 am. They sign in and the school should check their ID in accordance with safeguarding procedures. At this point, most schools provide badges to identify the inspectors as visitors.

Arrival

- The team normally go straight to their allocated room and introduce themselves to the Headteacher. The Lead Inspector might also then have a provisional conversation regarding the timetable which has been agreed and to ensure that the Headteacher is still happy with current arrangements. It is important too at this stage to ask how staff are and if there are any issues with individuals which the Team might need to be aware of. As a Lead Inspector, I continually check in with the Headteacher to ensure that the inspection is going well and that there are no concerns and also to update him/her with current findings. I always keep a running evidence form on these interactions for inclusion in the inspection evidence base.
- A provisional lesson observation timetable is agreed and I would accommodate the Headteacher's and other Senior Leaders' requests to be involved in joint observations as much as they would like.

The number of joint lesson observations is included in the final school report under the "Information about this Inspection" section.

- A meeting with all staff is fairly common practice and essential because it provides the Lead Inspector with an opportunity to introduce the Team but also to engage with them personally and try to put them at their ease. They will be invited to receive feedback and encouraged to speak to the Headteacher should they have any concerns at all during the inspection. A tour of the school usually then takes place if practicable: this very much depends on the size of the school. If it does take place, it is a very useful opportunity because it allows the inspection team to

gain a really good overview of where everything is, the atmosphere and feel of the school.

Key tasks to be undertaken first thing:

- Several inspectors normally meet and greet parents as they are dropping children off to school. They ask them their view of the school and record these on an evidence form. They also aim to meet with parents at the end of the school day as well.
- The Team would be briefed by the Lead Inspector before the inspection if there had been a specific safeguarding concern raised in the School Inspection Portal and the Lead would, if necessary, speak to



the Headteacher about this. The Inspector who has been allocated Safeguarding would meet with the appropriate personnel first thing and begin to ensure that all safeguarding requirements are in place: Single Central Register; Safeguarding and other associated policies; training is up-to-date and paperwork in place for any child protection concerns; walking the school site to ensure it is secure and speaking to staff to assess how familiar they are with arrangements. If there are any concerns identified then they are dealt with immediately and there is a protocol in place for dealing with this. All inspectors are involved in contributing to the evidence base re. safeguarding (as it is an essential aspect of lesson observations), discussions with staff and pupils and observing break and lunch-time arrangements. Parents' views are taken into account too via the on-line questionnaire and any specific letters which might be brought into school - **this is a very important and detailed piece of work and will be covered in more detail in a future article.**

Lesson observations

- It is very important to see as many lessons as possible. Staff will have been informed that if an inspector is in their classroom for more than 25 minutes then they are entitled to formal feedback at the end of the day. If the lesson is being observed jointly, with the Headteacher or other Senior Leader, then they would discuss the outcomes prior to this feedback session and decide who is giving feedback to the member of staff. The Lead Inspector would be there

too and use it as an opportunity to observe the Head giving feedback and arrive at a judgement regarding their leadership and management of teaching and learning in this situation.

- In the feedback sessions there is no overall grade given for teaching and learning. The conversation should be a two way discussion where the inspector will highlight the aspects of the lesson which worked well and perhaps some areas for development. In terms of Pupil learning and progress, this is assessed over time and so scrutiny of pupils' books, current assessment information and results must be taken into consideration during the inspection. All of this feeds into the final Teaching and Learning grade.
- At the feedback session, inspectors might also ask teachers to provide some feedback on the school's performance management processes and whether or not they find them useful.

They are asked how the school's training and support is enabling them to become better teachers. Again, this information provides important information regarding the Leadership and Management grade.

Observations and formal/informal conversations with pupils

- Throughout the day inspectors observe pupils in a number of situations and engage with them informally e.g. when arriving at school, at break, lunch-time and after school. They talk to them about their experiences at school: Are they happy? Have they any concerns? What is behaviour typically like? Have they experienced bullying and if so what has the school done to help them?
- Observations take place as pupils arrive at assembly, between lessons, and during lunch time in the dining hall. They take into



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account the relationships pupils have with each other and staff, and whether they treat everyone with respect.

- A formal meeting will also be set up with pupils to gain their views on a whole raft of issues.

Our next article, **Inspection – Day 1 Part 2**, will focus on the meetings Ofsted Inspectors have with different individuals during the inspection.

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About the Author:

Elaine Long

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Elaine Long has been a teacher for over 35 years and 17 of those have been in Senior Management positions; being a qualified Headteacher since 1999. In September 2011 Elaine started her own company BEST4Solutions (Bespoke Educational Support and Training) and became an OFSTED inspector. She has become a lead inspector and is qualified to conduct inspections in Primary and Secondary Schools.

She enjoys working alongside Headteachers and Governors too in a consultative role and is currently expanding this side of her work. She has delivered training on teaching and learning, leadership and management for the SSAT and has worked alongside a number of other organisations too. She enjoys the challenge of tailoring packages which really meet the needs of the organisations and colleagues she is working alongside. Elaine works hard to achieve a good work/life balance and has used the extra time afforded by not working full-time to pursue her other interests and passions.

Her love of dogs-dobermanns to be specific- has lead to a new career in the world of dog showing where she has achieved real success with her bitch Libby (Aritaur Enchante). She is looking forward to adding dog breeder to her CV when Libby has her first litter in June but perhaps not so keen on all the sleepless nights this will entail during the first few weeks!!

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