

Dear Colleagues

## **Reports**

The first few reports are now being published and our quality assurance colleagues are suggesting that the key changes are being addressed. In particular reading, performance management and governance are being highlighted.

There are some good examples of reporting on pupil premium where inspectors are addressing the following key questions in their reports:

- what is the school spending their PP premium money on
- why they are spending it in this way
- how it is making a difference for their disadvantaged pupils
- how governors are holding their schools to account for the way in which this money is spent

A few reminders when writing reports:

- Make sure that writing is crystal clear and avoids at every opportunity the use of jargon – the key test is that they are easily read by the general public.
- Keep to one side for summary - there are always a couple of words you can prune to stop them running on to the next page.
- Avoid making the achievement section too technical - the reports can lose clarity and 'sparkle' in this section.
- Avoid phrases like 'at present' as in 'these systems are not understood by all staff at present'.

## **Section 5 inspection report template**

Some inspectors have let us know that they have been having difficulty with elements of the report template and that there have been technical 'glitches' which have taken time to put right. We are very sorry that this has happened particularly where it has added to inspectors' work load.

In response to this we have 'rebuilt' and tested the template and updated the guidance on how to complete it. These will be reissued on Monday 1 October and inspectors should use the new October versions from that point. Once this has been issued inspectors must not change the formatting of the template including bullet lists.

## **Attainment in outstanding schools**

In response to a query I would remind inspectors to note that in an 'outstanding' school we will expect pupils' attainment to be at least in line with national averages, with many pupils attaining above this. There will, of course, be exceptions, but in an

'outstanding' school, if pupils' attainment is below that of all pupils nationally, the gap will be closing rapidly.

## **Safeguarding**

As you know there are mechanisms in place to alert inspectors to any formal notifications about a school regarding safeguarding issues through the Provider Inspection Portal (PIP). However, there may be other information that we are unaware of that is in the public domain and reported in the press. Inspectors should therefore do a check on the internet as part of their pre-inspection planning to see whether there are any safeguarding issues that may need to be followed up during inspection. When evaluating the effectiveness of a school's safeguarding procedures, inspectors should also ask whether there have been any recent safeguarding incidents.

## **What to do if the LI cannot contact a school the day before the inspection.**

We have slightly amended the process for carrying out a section 5 inspection where the LI has been unable to make any contact with the school to notify it of the inspection. In order to cover the rare occasions when this might occur, we have published a briefing which explains the process and the timeline.

## **Action short of strike action**

Inspectors should be aware that from 3 October some members of the NUT and the NAS/UWT will be taking action short of strike action. The action should not impact on inspection activities, including lesson observations. Further details of what the action entails can be found on the NAS/UWT or the NUT websites.

## **School websites**

As outlined in the handbook for school inspection, inspectors should be using the school's website to assist in their pre-inspection planning. However inspectors must be careful not to suggest what schools should, or should not, put on their websites for the purpose of inspection planning. The DfE has published guidance for schools about what should be on their website and this will be included in the next edition of *Schools and Inspections* to be published in October.

In particular, inspectors should not use the information on the website to request an increase in tariff, or change to the team, prior to the initial notification phone call. It is only when the school has been notified of the inspection that these details can be confirmed.

Thank you again for all that you are doing.

Sue Gregory HMI  
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