

Estyn's arrangements for assuring the quality of inspections

Policy and procedures

September 2011



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Estyn's arrangements for assuring the quality of inspections

This document represents Estyn's policy and procedures for assuring the quality of inspections.

This document also sets out the procedures that Estyn will use when dealing with any performance by Registered Inspectors, Additional Inspectors, Lay Inspectors or Peer Inspectors during inspections that does not meet our requirements.

From September 2011, Estyn will be operating a mixed economy of inspections involving a combination of contracted-out inspections and inspections led by HMI or by Additional Inspectors working under contract with Estyn. This means that some Additional Inspectors (AI), Lay Inspectors and Peer Inspectors may be involved in contracted-out and Estyn-led inspections.

The general terms of this policy have been in place since September 2010. The document has been updated during September 2011 to reflect changes to Estyn's inspection arrangements, specifically new arrangements for Additional Inspectors to lead inspections under contract directly with Estyn. Estyn also plans to introduce web-based systems for completing quality assurance forms from October 2011 onwards. This document includes examples of those forms and how Estyn plans to use them within the quality assurance system.

For the purposes of this document, 'AI-led' means any inspection led by an Additional Inspector (AI) (who is a Registered Inspector (Rgl)) under direct contract with Estyn. 'HMI-led' is an inspection led by an HMI or a secondee working in the same way as an HMI. 'Contractor-led' is an inspection where an AI leads an inspection as a Registered Inspector (Rgl) working for an independent contractor who has been awarded an inspection contract by Estyn. An 'independent inspector' is a generic term that includes Additional Inspectors, Peer Inspectors and Lay Inspectors, but not HMI.

Quality assurance issues relating to the work of HMI are addressed separately through Estyn's performance management system.



Ann Keane
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales

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1 Context

- 1.1 Estyn has a statutory duty to ensure that inspectors carry out inspections of good quality. The provisions of the Education Act 2005 and subsequent regulations enable us to monitor and to evaluate the work of independent inspectors. The legislative framework for these duties is set out in Appendix 6.
- 1.2 We have a range of activities and requirements that help to assure inspections of good quality. These include:
- an inspection framework and detailed guidance;
 - the selection, initial training and assessment of independent inspectors;
 - ongoing training and updating of inspectors about current inspection matters;
 - the regular updating of inspection guidance;
 - requirements for inspectors to work according to a code of conduct, to the inspection guidance, in accordance with general conditions set by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI);
 - procedures for assuring the quality of inspections and reports by monitoring the quality of a sample of inspections and inspection reports;
 - a process for receiving feedback from providers in the form of post-inspection questionnaires; and
 - a feedback and complaints procedure.
- 1.3 Any failure by teams to carry out inspections of good quality could have a major, adverse impact on our reputation within schools and in education in Wales generally. This represents a significant risk to the credibility of inspection. If HMCI is concerned with aspects of performance of any independent inspector, relating either to the conduct of the inspection or the written report, HMCI can require any such inspector to abide by additional conditions that may be applied, subject to an appeals process.
- 1.4 The following policy and procedures set out the role of the Reporting Inspector working under contract to Estyn, and the role of Estyn in dealing with situations when the work of independent inspectors (Additional Inspectors, Lay Inspectors and Peer Inspectors) does not meet the required standards. Where such situations constitute a breach of contract, Estyn may pursue its contractual remedies under the contract. However, under Schedule 4 of the 2005 Act, HMCI may also remove any inspector from the Enrolled List where HMCI is satisfied that such inspector:
- is no longer a fit and proper person to act as a member of an inspection team;
 - is no longer capable of assisting in an inspection competently and effectively; or
 - has significantly failed to comply with any condition imposed on him/her by HMCI.

2 Role of Reporting Inspectors in assuring quality

Contractors

- 2.1 As stated in the latest version of the conditions of contract: 'Quality Assurance and Audit Arrangements', it is the responsibility of the contractor to control quality in accordance with the requirements of the Guidance Handbooks and any further guidance or instructions issued by Estyn.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of the contractor to notify each individual member of the inspection team of the results of any quality assurance activities undertaken by Estyn in relation to the performance of that individual.
- 2.3 The contractor should ensure that it has a formal procedure for handling and responding to complaints that conforms to the principles and timescales found in Estyn's Feedback and Complaints Procedure or any subsequent guide issued to contractors. The first stage in the contractor's procedure should be an informal resolution whereby the contractor ensures that the reporting inspector listens to and tries to resolve any complaints raised by the school inspection. If this procedure fails, the second stage in the procedure should be a formal investigation of the complaint by the contractor. The contractors' responsibilities are outlined in Appendix 2.

Reporting Inspectors

- 2.4 The Reporting Inspector (RI) has the responsibility to manage and monitor all the work of team members and to feed back to Estyn when any difficulties arise. The RI must assure the quality of work of all team members, including their conduct at meetings and their completion of inspection evidence. The RI is also expected to deal with any issues that arise during the inspection itself, for example, concerns expressed by the school nominee. The RI should give feedback to Estyn on the quality of the work of all relevant team members, using agreed criteria, and by completing the appropriate evaluation forms.

3 Estyn's role in assuring quality

3.1 As shown in Appendix 1, Estyn gets information about the quality of individual inspectors' work in a number of different ways:

- direct quality assuring of inspections by HMI;
- quality assurance of reports by HMI;
- Inspector Evaluation Forms (IEF) completed by the RI;
- feedback, including concerns from providers and in the form of post-inspection questionnaires (PIQs); and
- upheld complaints.

On an ongoing basis, we collate all quality assurance information (QAI and QAR), inspector evaluation forms (IEF), post-inspection questionnaires (PIQ), other feedback and upheld complaints for all inspections. We use this information to inform our overall work on training and guidance and to help us support individual inspectors in improving their performance. This may include responding to unsatisfactory performance. These aspects are shown diagrammatically in Appendix 2.

Where HMI monitor the quality of inspections and reports completed by AIs, they will award grades for the quality of the work they see. These grades are explained later in this document.

Direct quality assuring of inspections

3.2 Quality assuring inspections enables Estyn to:

- have first-hand evidence of how the inspection system is operating in schools/providers;
- observe and evaluate the work of RIs and give them feedback on their performance;
- learn lessons that will feed into our training programme to support those who inspect on our behalf; and
- help providers, local authorities and others to see that we are doing our best to ensure consistency and fairness in the process.

3.3 The programme of quality assuring inspections and reports contributes to the delivery of high quality education in Wales.

Quality assuring inspections (QAI)

3.4 We will sample a percentage of inspections. In 2011-2012, we will sample 10% of contractor-led inspections and 20% of AI-led inspections through the direct monitoring of inspections (QAI) as they take place. We aim to assure the quality of up to 5% of HMI-led inspections.

3.5 QAI activity usually involves one HMI visiting the school to:

- talk to staff about the conduct of the inspection;
- evaluate the work of team members, particularly the RI, including how well the RI conducts meetings manages the work of the team;
- assess the quality of the evidence base including:
 - > pre-inspection commentaries, lines of inquiry and hypotheses;
 - > completion of electronic judgement forms;
 - > session observation forms and evaluation forms; and
 - > notes of meetings.
- assess the balance of strengths and areas for improvement; and
- challenge inspection judgements where appropriate to check that judgements are robust and secure.

3.6 For contractor-led and AI-led inspections where QAI takes place, activity, HMI complete a QAI form and award a QAI grade to the work of the RI. We only comment on what we see during the inspection. An example of the QAI form is at Appendix 3. The focus of the comments in the QAI form is on identifying any instances where RIs do not meet requirements. All inspectors are expected to meet Estyn's requirements and this in itself does not attract any specific comment on the form, but is communicated sufficiently through the award of an A or B grade.

Quality assurance of reports (QAR)

3.7 For AI-led and HMI-led inspections, we will assure the quality of all (100%) the ReportingJFs submitted by RIs. As a result of editing by HMI, the RI will receive comments and suggestions for improving the draft report before it moves through the publication process and before the report is sent to the school/provider to check its factual accuracy. RIs are expected to respond seriously and conscientiously to the comments and suggestions made by HMI through the edit and QAR process. For AI-led inspections, HMI will award a QAR grade to the RI for the quality of writing, coverage of aspects of the inspection framework and accurate completion of the electronic judgement form (JF).

3.8 For contractor-led inspections, we will evaluate 25% of the ReportingJFs submitted by RIs. HMI will award a QAR grade to the RI for the quality of writing, coverage of aspects of the inspection framework and accurate completion of the electronic judgement form (JF). This reflects the fact that the RI is responsible for the overall quality of the published report. An example of a QAR form is at Appendix 5.

Moderation of QA grades

3.9 A member of Estyn's relevant sector network (usually the sector lead inspector or equivalent) moderates the quality assurance work of HMI within the sector. The Lead Officer for Inspection Policy and Conformance (IPC) also moderates all QA forms that indicate that the work of an independent inspector is close to or below the standard required by Estyn (grades C and D). The Lead Officer for IPC also considers a sample of forms with higher grades (grades A and B) to check for consistency across the QA work undertaken by inspectors. The sector lead inspector in the first instance and then the Lead Officer for IPC are available to

address concerns from RIs who may have questions about the grades awarded. If there are further concerns, the relevant Assistant Director may review the grade awarded.

Inspector Evaluation Forms (IEFs)

- 3.10 On all inspections, the RI will be required to use an Inspector Evaluation Form (IEF) to record an evaluation of the performance of certain categories of team members as required by Estyn. On AI-led and HMI-led inspections, the RI completes an IEF for each Peer Inspector (PI), the Lay Inspector and any other Additional Inspector on the team. On contractor-led inspections, the RI completes an IEF on the Peer Inspector(s) only.
- 3.11 The IEFs involve a combination of inspector self-evaluation and an evaluation of the inspector's performance by the RI. The RI must submit an electronic version of the completed form for each relevant inspector within five days of the end of the inspection.

Feedback

- 3.12 Estyn may also receive feedback from schools/providers in the form of post-inspection questionnaires (PIQs). These questionnaires give schools/providers the opportunity to evaluate aspects of the inspection process, including:
- preparation for inspection;
 - pre-inspection communications with the provider and stakeholders;
 - the use of self-evaluation as the basis for the inspection;
 - conduct of the inspection;
 - the quality of the evidence and judgements; and
 - inspection reporting, both oral and written.
- 3.13 Analysis of each PIQ identifies whether the inspection is considered by the school/provider to be a positive or negative experience overall. If the provider considers that some key areas of the inspection were carried out inappropriately or have indicated a very negative response to their inspection, Estyn will send a standard letter to the providers. This letter informs them that we will inform the following about their concerns:
- the RI;
 - the contractor (where relevant)
 - the sector lead inspector; and
 - the Lead Officer for IPC.

Complaints

- 3.14 Complaints or concerns may come from school staff, governors, local authorities, or others.

3.15 The RI must give the school every opportunity to raise any concerns, throughout the inspection. These must be dealt with sensitively and positively and, if possible, resolved at the time. If concerns cannot be settled, the complainant must be advised on how to make a complaint as soon as they can, and be directed to Estyn's complaints procedures. Estyn will keep a record of all complaints, and regularly review the list of inspectors who have been the subject of an upheld complaint.

4 Tackling performance that does not meet requirements

The following section is relevant to the work of independent inspectors (i.e. Registered Inspectors, Additional Inspectors and Lay Inspectors).

- 4.1 Information about unsatisfactory performance may derive from any QA activity that Estyn undertakes. This includes all quality assurance activities (QAI and QAR), Inspector Evaluation Forms (IEF), post-inspection questionnaires (PIQ), any other feedback and any upheld complaints for all inspectors.
- 4.2 The following actions may relate to any inspector whose work does not meet requirements or is close to not meeting requirements as judged by any QA activity outlined above.
- 4.3 By ongoing collation and review of QA information, Estyn aims to identify performance that does not meet requirements and to respond to it quickly, clearly and fairly. Different levels of unsatisfactory performance will elicit different actions on our part.
- 4.4 Estyn will try to reduce unsatisfactory performance by:
- issuing additional guidance to support inspection teams in their work; and
 - training all inspectors on a regular basis.
- 4.5 There may be times when we need to take action by implementing the procedures in parts B, C and D of Appendix 2.

General concerns and minor shortcomings (Appendix 2 Part B)

- 4.6 Concerns and minor shortcomings regarding non-compliance with the Code of Conduct might relate to:
- an inspector arriving late for staff meetings;
 - an inspector misplacing school documentation; or
 - a request for a policy document already given to the inspection team.
- 4.7 These examples, taken individually, may not be serious. However, if an individual inspector repeatedly displays the same shortcomings, then we will take action. The procedure outlined in Part B of Appendix 2 will be followed in relation to Registered Inspectors, Additional Inspectors and Lay Inspectors.
- 4.8 If concerns arise about any inspector in relation to three out of five consecutive inspections he or she will be asked to provide an explanation for these concerns in writing and/or to attend an interview with the relevant sector lead in Estyn and/or Assistant Director. In respect of meetings, notes will be taken and shared and agreed with the inspector. In this context, concerns would include grade C evaluations.

- 4.9 In relation to quality assurance, it is important to remember, however, that a grade C meets the minimum requirements and that this process is designed to be supportive of the inspector, in terms of helping them to improve their performance. Performance that continues at the minimum level (for example two grade Cs in a row) is likely to lead to limits on independent inspector activity or a requirement to attend further training as Estyn is committed to securing inspection work of high quality.
- 4.10 On AI-led inspections, the RI is responsible for submitting to Estyn an electronic judgement form (ReportingJF) for the inspection which is of good quality and which meets all of Estyn's requirements. In order to produce this first draft, the RI is expected to edit and to quality assure the contributions of other team members. On AI-led inspections, the RI receives comments and suggestions from an HMI editor on the ReportingJF, and the RI is expected to respond to these before the report moves through Estyn's publication processes. In these cases, the QAR activity is performed by HMI prior to publication of the report, and normally within five working days from the end of the inspection.
- 4.11 On contracted-out inspections, the contractor is responsible for submitting to Estyn an electronic judgement form (ReportingJF) for the inspection and an inspection report, which are of good quality and which meet all of Estyn's requirements.
- 4.12 Information which can be taken into account when evaluating performance:
- QAI grade;
 - QAR grade;
 - IEF grade;
 - PIQs; and
 - upheld complaints – one upheld complaint will be equivalent to one C grade (if the complaint is very serious and is upheld, this will be equivalent to a D grade).
- 4.13 After intervention by Estyn:
- if the work of the inspector has improved, then no further action will be taken;
 - if the work of the inspector has not improved, then further limitations on the inspector's work may apply; and
 - if the work of the inspector has deteriorated, or if there has been no improvement in the next two inspections undertaken by the inspector in question, then the inspector may be prohibited from further inspection work for a period or may be removed from Estyn's list of inspectors, including the enrolled list of Registered Inspectors.

Major concerns (Appendix 2 Part C)

4.14 If there is a significant concern, for example chronic non-compliance with the Code of Conduct or an inspector receives a grade D, the procedure outlined in Part C of Appendix 2 will be followed. The inspector will be asked to provide a detailed explanation relating to the shortcomings identified and/or attend a formal interview with the relevant sector lead inspector and/or Assistant Director. Notes will be taken at the meeting and agreed with the inspector.

There are 2 stages to this process.

Stage 1

4.15 In most cases, the outcome of the meeting will be a warning about the possible consequences of future performance not meeting requirements and may include an agreed agenda for action including any further training. This will be confirmed in writing and sent to the inspector concerned. The timescale for the agreed action shall take no longer than three months, or until two further inspections have been undertaken. The work of the inspector will be evaluated as soon as possible after the agreed action has been completed. If the work of the inspector **improves**, then no further action will be taken.

Stage 2

4.16 If there is **no improvement** after the next two inspections (or if there are very serious failings – see section below), then the inspector will be told that there will need to be further serious action on the part of HMCI. This might include:

- subjecting inspectors to specific conditions, such as not inspecting a particular aspect or in a particular role requiring inspectors to attend some compulsory training at their own cost and within a prescribed timescale;
- subjecting inspectors to future monitoring under our quality assurance system;
- removal from our list of inspectors (see section 5 of this guidance).

The monitoring period

4.17 Estyn will record quality assurance grades for the length of the inspection cycle (2010-2016) and all QA grades will be collected in a database for quality assurance purposes. However, in coming to decisions about inspectors' work in relation to tenders and contracts it is likely that Estyn will take into account the quality of the last two inspections undertaken in a specified role (i.e. as RI or team member (AI, PI or LI)). Overall, instances of non-compliance with Estyn's requirements or its code of conduct will only remain active for a rolling period of 35 months.

Very serious failings

Identifying seriously misleading reports, seriously flawed inspections and unacceptable behaviour

- 4.18 Any seriously misleading report is likely to come to light following a review by HMI of an inspection report or the evidence base of an inspection.
- 4.19 Any seriously flawed inspection is likely to come to light as a result of a visit to an inspection to assess its quality or following a review by HMI of the evidence base of an inspection as the result of a complaint.
- 4.20 Any unacceptable behaviour is likely to come to light through quality assuring an inspection or as a result of a complaint. Very rarely, the major concern will be so unusual, perhaps involving other agencies, such as the Police or a Social Service department, that exceptional action has to be taken.
- 4.21 On contracted-out inspections, when Estyn has received the ReportingJF and the Inspection Report, the ReportingJF is sent to Estyn's inspection database and the report is published on our website. In the period following this, we may monitor the report (according to the QAR procedures set out previously) to check for compliance with our requirements. Any seriously misleading report is likely to come to light following a review by HMI of an inspection report or the evidence base of an inspection.
- 4.22 Where we find that an inspection report is seriously misleading or an inspection is seriously flawed, or that there has been unacceptable behaviour by an inspector, we will take the following action.
- We will contact the RI and report the view that the inspection is seriously flawed or the report is seriously misleading, or we will send a letter to the relevant inspector regarding the inspector's behaviour.
 - We will then invite the relevant inspector to offer an explanation.
 - On receipt of any explanation, we will reach a judgment about whether the explanation is reasonable or there are extenuating circumstances.
 - Where we accept that the explanation is reasonable or where there were extenuating circumstances, HMCI will not take any further action. We will notify the relevant inspector of this decision and monitor the inspector's work on future inspections.
 - Where we reach a judgement that an inspection is seriously misleading, whether or not we have accepted the explanation, we will write to the appropriate authority and the school's headteacher to set out our concerns.
 - After consulting with the provider and considering any particular circumstances that prevail, we may offer the provider a further inspection.
 - Such an inspection will take place at a time determined by Estyn after consultation with the provider.

The following section is relevant to the work of Peer Inspectors

- 4.23 Much of the general guidance set out above also relates to the work of Peer Inspectors (PI). However, the employment status of Peer Inspectors and their contractual relationship with Estyn are different from that of Registered Inspectors, Additional Inspectors and Lay Inspectors. In addition, it is unlikely that Peer Inspectors will be deployed on more than three inspections in one year.
- 4.24 In the terms and conditions for Peer Inspectors, it states that “if Peer Inspectors do not perform effectively as judged by the inspectorate, they will not be used on further inspections”.
- 4.25 As with other inspectors, information about performance of Peer Inspectors may derive from any QA activity that Estyn undertakes. This includes all quality assurance information (QAI and QAR), post-inspection questionnaires (PIQ), any other feedback and any upheld complaints, although the main source of information on Peer Inspector performance will normally be inspector evaluation forms (IEF),
- 4.26 If concerns arise about the quality of a Peer Inspector’s work through the allocation of an overall C grade on an Inspector Evaluation Form (IEF), then Estyn will look at each case on an individual basis, but will be likely to offer support to the Peer Inspector, for example by allocating them to a larger team where their individual load will be less and they can receive support from more colleagues on site.
- 4.27 However, where a Peer Inspector continues to perform at a low level (for example two C grades in a row) then it is likely that Estyn will not deploy them on further inspections.
- 4.28 Where a Peer Inspector receives a D grade for their work on an inspection, Estyn will immediately consider not deploying them on further inspections and removal from the list of Peer Inspectors.

The monitoring period

- 4.29 Estyn will record quality assurance grades for the length of the inspection cycle (2010-2016) and all QA grades will be collected in a database for quality assurance purposes. However, in coming to decisions about inspectors’ work it is likely that Estyn will take into account the quality of the last two inspections undertaken as Peer Inspector. Overall, instances of non-compliance with Estyn’s requirements or its Code of Conduct will only remain active for a rolling period of 35 months.

Very serious failings

Identifying seriously flawed inspection work and/or unacceptable behaviour

- 4.30 Any seriously flawed inspection work is likely to come to light during the inspection itself, or as a result of a visit to an inspection to assess its quality or following a review by HMI of the evidence base of an inspection as the result of a complaint.
- 4.31 Any unacceptable behaviour is likely to come to light through quality assuring an inspection or as a result of a complaint.
- 4.32 Where we find that the inspection work of a Peer Inspector is seriously flawed or that there has been unacceptable behaviour by an inspector, we will immediately consider not deploying them on further inspections and removal from the list of Peer Inspectors.

5. Removal from the list of enrolled inspectors

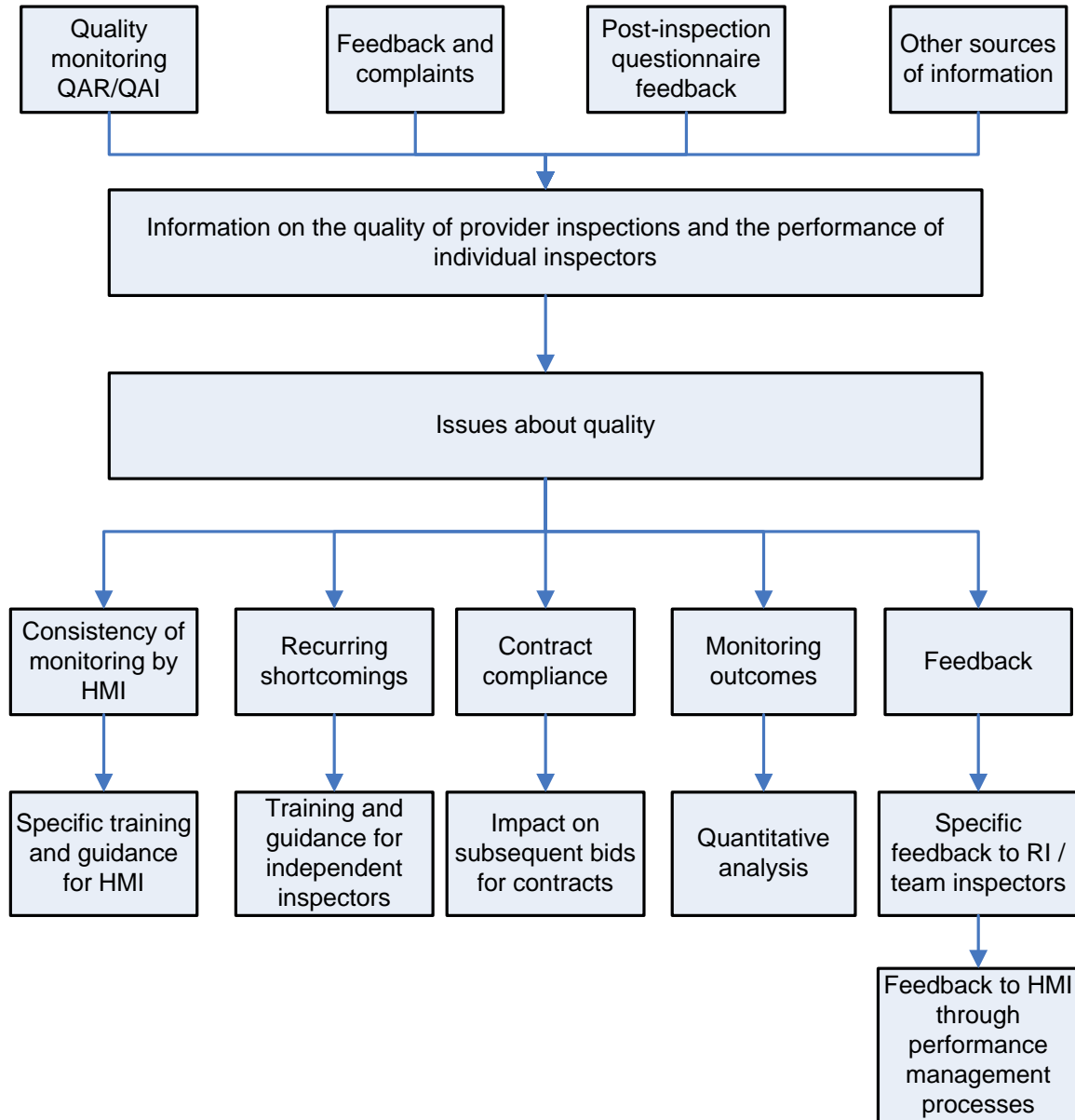
- 5.1 Where there has been seriously flawed inspection work or unacceptable behaviour, an Estyn panel will then consider the status of, and the additional conditions to be imposed upon the Registered Inspector/Additional Inspector. In determining whether to recommend to HMCI the removal of the inspector from the enrolled list or the imposition of additional conditions, we will take account of:
- the extent of any unacceptable conduct;
 - the extent to which the inspection is seriously misleading or the report is seriously flawed;
 - the RI's/team inspector's explanations;
 - the RI's/team inspector's previous inspections and reports; and
 - any other relevant factors.
- 5.2 This panel should consist of three people. Those eligible to sit on the panel are:
- Strategic Directors;
 - Assistant Directors;
 - the Lead inspector for IPC; and
 - inspectors with experience of the particular sector.
- 5.3 Each case involving removal from the enrolled list or the imposition of additional conditions should be considered on its individual merits. The combined weight of all factors will be taken into account of in reaching a recommendation to remove from the list or otherwise. The panel will recommend to HMCI the course of action to be followed regarding an individual inspector.
- 5.4 If action against an inspector is to be taken, HMCI will write to the inspector saying that she is minded to remove their name from the enrolled list or to impose conditions. We will give a period (21 days) in which they will be able to say why this should not be done, after which we will reconsider the evidence and finalise the decision. There is a right of appeal to an independent tribunal for Registered Inspectors.
- 5.5 If Estyn is responding to the unsatisfactory performance of an RI and is considering their removal from the enrolled list / imposition or variation of conditions (Part D of Appendix 2) then this will have a negative impact on the RI's ability to tender for work on AI-led inspections under direct contract with Estyn.
- 5.6 Further information on the appeals process is available from Estyn's website at www.estyn.gov.uk
- 5.7 Copies of the Acts and Statutory Instruments that underpin Estyn's work with Registered Inspectors and the appeals process are available from the Office of Public Sector Information at www.opsi.gov.uk

5.8 The most relevant are:

- the Education Act 2005 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998;
- the Education (Registered Inspectors of Schools Appeal Tribunal and Registered Nursery Education Inspectors Appeal Tribunal) Procedure Regulations 1999 (Statutory Instrument 1999 No.265);
- the Education (School Inspection) (Wales) Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1714);
- Education (Inspection of Nursery Education) (Wales) Regulations 1999 (Statutory Instrument 1999 No. 1441); and
- the Tribunals and Inquiries Act 1992.

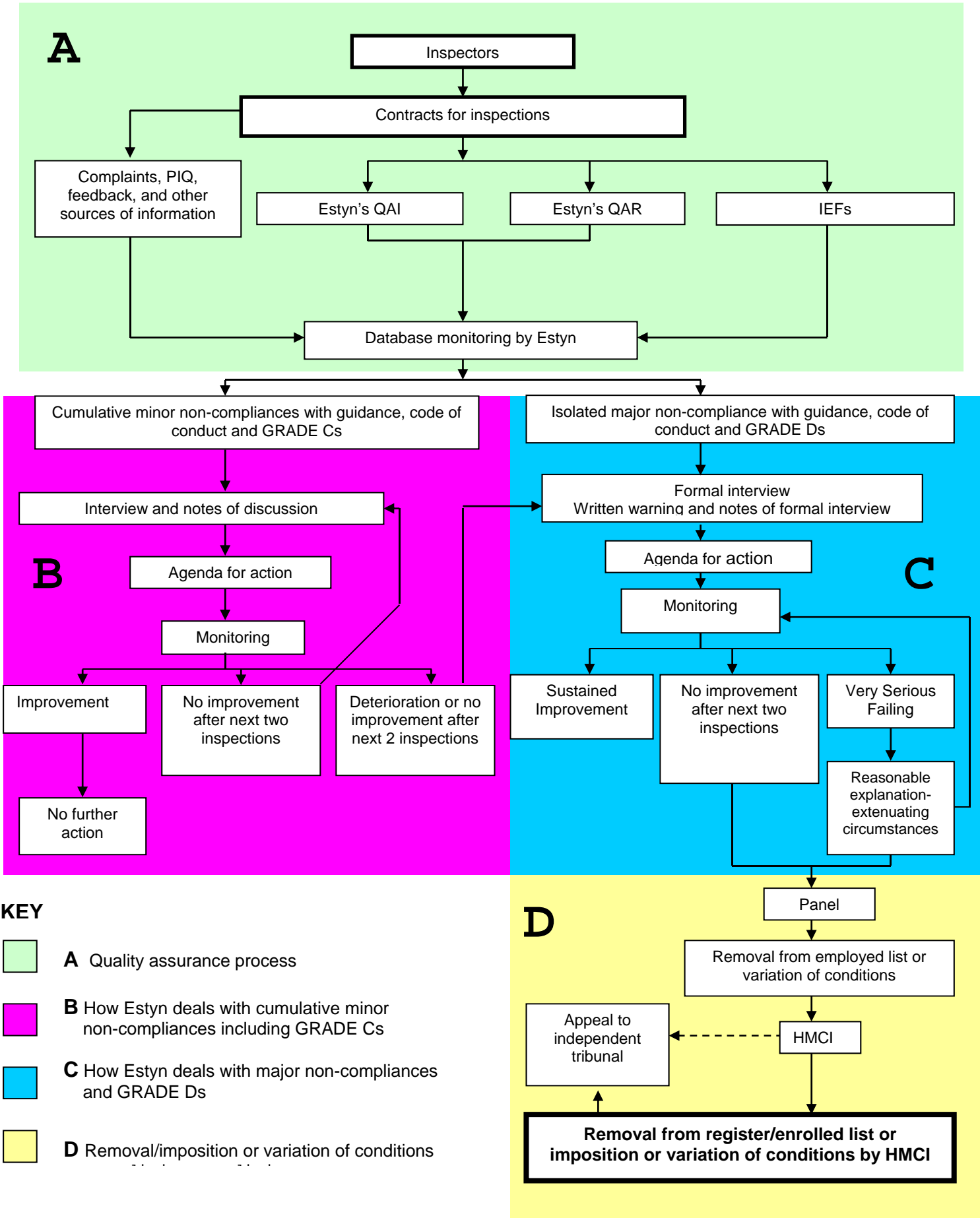
Appendix 1

Quality assurance procedures for inspections



Appendix 2

Responding to performance that fails to meet requirements



Appendix 3

Quality Assurance forms and guidance

The QAI and QAR forms are submitted electronically through a web-based system using Estyn's Virtual Inspection Room extranet. The A-D grades relate to Contractor-led and AI-led inspections. The Yes/No (Y/N) indicators relate to HMI-led inspections.

Quality assurance of inspections (QAI)

Reporting Inspector name:

Staff ID:

Responsibility (Inspection type):

School/provider name:

School/provider number:

Inspection number:

First day of inspection:

Sector:

Local authority (where appropriate):

Date of QAI:

(Generated by system)

Quality	QA issues A/B/C/D/Y/N	Comment
Pre-inspection commentary		
Team preparation/organisation		
Observation/evidence forms		
Judgements (using guidance protocols)		
Team discussion/challenge/questions		
Nominee involvement		
PI involvement		
Overall QAI Grade		

Quality assurance of reports (QAR)

Reporting Inspector name:

Staff ID:

Responsibility (Inspection Type):

School/provider name:

School/provider number:

Inspection number:

First day of inspection:

Sector:

Local authority (where appropriate):

Date of QAR:

(Generated by system)

Quality	QA issues A/B/C/D/Y/N	Comment
ReportingJF and Report uploaded on time		
ReportingJF is complete		
Summary judgements follow protocols		
Recommendations are appropriate		
Follow-up level fits overall judgements		
KQ judgements follow protocols		
KQ1		
KQ2		
KQ3		
Appendices, including data commentary		
Conforms to Writing Guide		
Overall QAR Grade		

Guidance on QAR judgements

Minor and major shortcomings in ReportingJFs and reports

Estyn requires Reporting Inspectors to produce ReportingJFs and reports of good quality. Where these contain major shortcomings, the ReportingJF and/or report will fail to meet Estyn's requirements. A major shortcoming is any weakness in the ReportingJF or report that affects the judgements awarded or detracts significantly from the overall quality of the ReportingJF or report.

A major shortcoming undermines confidence in:

- the accuracy and validity of any top-level, Key Question (KQ) or Quality Indicator (QI) judgement(s); and/or
- the quality of Estyn inspections and reports.

For contractor-led and AI-led inspections, HMI allocate a quality assurance grade to reports (QAR). These grades reflect the balance of minor and major shortcomings in the ReportingJF and Report.

The grade definitions are as follows:

A - meets requirements, but may contain one or two minor shortcomings

B - meets requirements, but a number of minor shortcomings

C - meets requirements, but a number of shortcomings

D - does not meet requirements

Any major shortcoming may lead to the award of a C or D grade.

For AI-led inspections, HMI will highlight minor and major shortcomings in the report (using track changes) during the edit phase for further consideration by the Reporting Inspector and complete the relevant QAR form before the draft report is sent to the school/provider for a factual check.

For contractor-led inspections, the QAR form should record the minor and major shortcomings and HMI will allocate an appropriate QAR grade. The QAR is completed after publication of the report on Estyn's website.

The following table sets out further general guidance on the allocation of QAR grades in relation to minor and major shortcomings in reports.

Judgements		
Meets requirements	Minor shortcoming	Major shortcoming
Consider an A grade*	Consider a B grade*	Consider a C or D grade*
Judgements are secure	One or two QI judgements are borderline in terms of being slightly too high or too low	One or more KQ and/or QI judgements are clearly too high or too low
Judgements match the balance of strengths and weaknesses	The balance of strengths and weaknesses is not quite right in a few cases	The balance of strengths and weaknesses is clearly incorrect
Judgements match protocols and any protocol deviations are explained	CIF criteria are not applied appropriately in one or two minor cases	A judgement protocol is not followed and not explained fully
Excellent reads like it is sector-leading practice	The difference between excellent and good is not always clear	Excellent does not read like sector-leading practice
Level of follow-up is appropriate	There is some doubt over level of follow-up	Level of follow-up is inappropriate
All statements match CIF criteria and relevant report sections	There are minor omissions	There are significant omissions, eg agreed statement on safeguarding is missing
Generally, a report where you feel the judgements are spot on	Generally, a report where you feel the judgements are OK, but with some uncertainty here and there	Generally, a report where the judgements are shaky and would be unlikely to stand up to rigorous public scrutiny
Presentation		
Meets requirements	Minor shortcoming	Major shortcoming
Consider an A grade*	Consider a B grade*	Consider a C or D grade*

*QA grades in the table below relate to Contractor-led and AI-led inspections only.

Style is clear and plain with very few passives and no jargon terms.	Some use of passives and over-complex sentences	Style is too dense and sentences are confusing in too many places
Very few/no lapses in relation to grammar, spelling or punctuation	Occasional, minor errors of grammar, spelling and punctuation	Errors of grammar, spelling and punctuation throughout text
Emphasis is on evaluation over description	A bit too much description in places	Too much description
Follows Writing Guide in nearly all cases	A few, persistent deviations from Writing Guide (e.g. caps for key stage)	Regular deviations from the Writing Guide
All sections complete, formatted correctly and in the right place	An occasional small formatting error, for example with setting out bullets	A section of the report is missing or in the wrong place or formatting is clearly wrong
Generally, a report that requires little or no editing – a report that could go out pretty well as it is	Generally, a report where there are some lapses here and there, and which need tidying up before you would feel happy about its publication	Generally, a poor report, with little evidence of robust editing, that is likely to undermine confidence in inspection outcomes when/if published
ReportingJF/VIR		
Meets requirements	Minor shortcoming	Major shortcoming
Consider an A grade*	Consider a B grade*	Consider a C or D grade*
ReportingJF is present in the VIR in the correct format	ReportingJF is in the correct format but the file name has changed from the original	ReportingJF is not in the VIR ReportingJF or is in the wrong format
All text sections of ReportingJF are complete and match Report	ReportingJF and Report do not match in a few insignificant ways	ReportingJF and inspection report text do not match in a number of significant ways
All judgement boxes in ReportingJF are complete	One drop-down judgement box is not complete though the judgement is clear	One/more drop-down judgement box is blank and judgement is not clear from text
ReportingJF does not contain any track changes or comments	A comment or track change is left in the ReportingJF	The ReportingJF still contains a number of comments or track changes

*QA grades in the table below relate to Contractor-led and AI-led inspections only.

ReportingJF has appropriate supporting evidence to support all judgements	One or two supporting evidence sections do not contain much evidence	Supporting evidence is missing in one or more sections of the ReportingJF
Report contains only formal and appropriate content	ReportingJF contains a name of an individual or an informal comment	ReportingJF contains too much inappropriate content, eg informal language and/or personal comments
Generally, the RI has met all the JF/VIR requirements; no further work required	Generally, the ReportingJF and VIR processes are OK, but the content has one or two shortcomings; a little tidying required	Generally, a ReportingJF of weak or poor quality that will create issues for Estyn in relation to further remedial work or gaps in the inspection database

*QA grades in the table below relate to Contractor-led and AI-led inspections only.

Inspector Evaluation Form (IEF)

Inspector name:

Role (PI / AI / LI):

Staff ID

Responsibility (Inspection type):

School/provider name:

School/provider number:

Inspection number:

First day of inspection:

Sector:

Local authority (where appropriate):

Date completed by inspector
(Generated by system)

Criteria	Grade (A-D)	Comments
Records evidence effectively		
Judges provider's work accurately and fairly		
Understands/applies CIF/handbook guidance appropriately		
Communicates orally and in writing clearly and unambiguously		
Conducts the inspection to a high professional standard		

On contracted-out inspections: for PIs only

On AI-led inspections: for PI(s), AI(s) and LI

On HMI-led inspections: for PI(s), AI(s) and LI

RI name:
Staff ID:

Date completed by RI
(Generated by system)

Criteria	RI Grade (A-D)	RI Comments
Records evidence effectively		
Judges provider's work accurately and fairly		
Understands/applies CIF/handbook guidance appropriately		
Communicates orally and in writing clearly and unambiguously		
Conducts the inspection to a high professional standard		
Overall IEF Grade		

INSPECTOR EVALUATION FORM (IEF) CRITERIA FOR THE QUALITY ASSURANCE OF INSPECTORS

The following table exemplifies the criteria contained in the Inspector Evaluation Form for the work of inspectors.

On HMI-led and AI-led inspections, the reporting inspector will complete an IEF on each member of the inspection team (i.e. team inspectors, Lay Inspector and Peer Inspector(s)).

On contracted-out inspections, the reporting inspector will complete an IEF on the Peer Inspector only.

On all inspections, the reporting inspector should send a copy of the completed form (either a scanned copy or an electronic copy) of the completed forms to Estyn as an upload to the Reporting Inspector area of the appropriate VIR.

1. Records evidence effectively

In making their assessment, the Reporting Inspector will consider the extent to which inspectors:	Report	Inspection
1a. use sufficient first-hand evidence to effectively evaluate the provider's work;	x	✓
1b. analyse and interpret inspection information, including performance information and the provider's self-evaluation report;	x	✓
1c. record evidence effectively, including the use of ICT, and use this record to support the process of inspection.	✓	✓

2. Judges the provider's work accurately and fairly

In making their assessment, the Reporting Inspector will consider the extent to which inspectors:	Report	Inspection
2a. judge the provider's work accurately and fairly;	✓	✓
2b. arrive at corporate judgements;	✓	✓
2c. give the provider a clear and practicable basis for action.	✓	✓

3. Understands and applies the criteria in the Framework and Guidance handbooks appropriately

In making their assessment, the Reporting Inspector will consider the extent to which inspectors:	Report	Inspection
3a. understand and apply the criteria in the relevant Framework and Guidance handbooks;	✓	✓
3b. cover the relevant requirements of the Framework and any further Estyn guidance.	✓	✓

4. Conveys judgements orally and in writing in a clear and unambiguous way

In making their assessments, the Reporting Inspector will consider the extent to which inspectors:	Report	Inspection
4a. convey judgements, orally and in writing, in a clear and unambiguous way;	✓	✓
4b. communicate in a style and manner that is appropriate to the audience.	✓	✓

5. Conducts the inspection to a high professional standard

In making their assessments, the Reporting Inspector will consider the extent to which inspectors:	Report	Inspection
5a. are well prepared for inspection, and understand the context of the provider and the requirements of the Framework;	x	✓
5b. keep to the code of conduct set out in the Part 1 of the inspection Guidance;	x	✓
5c. develop a professional relationship with the provider's staff.	x	✓