



Volunteer Training &
Learning Department

School Inspection Module

Volunteers' Guide - August 2005

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Welcome to the School Inspection Module

Who is the module for?

You may be a volunteer, a colleague of a volunteer, one of VSO's partners or a member of the programme office staff. Your background may be in primary, secondary, tertiary education or in English Language Teaching (ELT). You may have a lot, a little or no management experience. You may be working anywhere in the world when you read this. If you are a volunteer you may be reading this pre-departure or in country. What you all have in common is that you are working (or going to be working) in the field of education management in the South and to some degree you will be involved with school inspection. This may not necessarily be formal school inspection but may be supervision or teacher training. It might be at school, district, regional or national level and in a variety of different capacities. Whoever you are, read on, this module is for you and we hope it will be of benefit to you.

How will the module benefit you?

Centrally organised school inspection or evaluation has been a feature of many education systems for some years now. In the North what started as a rather cold and distant approach has progressed to inspectors now engaging in dialogue with teachers and managers of schools. In fact to take England and Wales and the Netherlands as examples, a model of school self-evaluation has now emerged. This encourages schools to take responsibility for their own improvement, with so-called 'light-touch' visits, from smaller teams of inspectors, to check on progress.

In the developing world a much more varied picture exists and models of school inspection vary greatly from detailed questionnaire-based exercises to far less structured approaches. The purpose of this module is to offer you a framework of consistency, which is not only relevant to the context of the South, but is based wholly on educational criteria. Throughout the module you are given real examples of how the framework can be applied to parts of the South and encouraged to think about how it relates to your new context and role. This may involve adapting your practice when you are in this role and/ or lowering your expectations of what can be achieved. It may also help you identify resources you may need or questions you need to ask.

How is it organised?

The module draws mainly from the Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) inspection framework for England and Wales, which it reduces and simplifies. It is divided into 8 units. Except for the first and last, the units deal with practice either before, during or after school inspection. The first unit is an introduction to the topic and the last a five-stage case study activity.

How do you use the module?

The module is designed to be interactive and encourages you to reflect. It incorporates a variety of different activities for which you will draw upon your own experience as well as apply what you are learning. It caters for differing levels of knowledge and backgrounds in education. It starts with your own experience and moves gradually to the context of the South. It may be used (and adapted) for a number of different purposes.

- Individual self-study
- Individual self-study culminating in a phone briefing
- Group self-study
- As part of a specialist briefing with a trainer
- As part of a training course

The module uses a number of different symbols to identify parts of the unit.

-  Aims and Objectives for the unit
-  Content Presentation
-  Activity for you to do
-  Feedback for activities
-  Context in the South from publications, national educationalists and returned volunteers
-  Summary of the key learning in the unit
-  What next (asks you to reflect on what you have learnt and what more you need to find out)

Every unit starts with aims and objectives and finishes with a summary and 'what next'. Otherwise they vary as to content, activities etc.

How much time do you need to complete it?

Your use of the module and background experience and knowledge will determine the time it takes to complete it. However, if you are using it as a self-study pack, we have estimated that it will take you about 10 hours.

What kind of terminology does it use?

The module uses as simple language as possible but sometimes jargon or technical words are unavoidable. In this case, the word is signalled by a star (e.g. evaluation*) and explained in the glossary at the back. We have tried to be consistent in our terminology but when we are quoting from other sources this may not be the case. For example we use the term 'student' to refer to anyone who is studying at schools or colleges (of whatever level), but some quotes will use the term 'pupil'.

The School Inspection Module

Aim & Objectives

Aim

The module aims to give you a frame of reference within which to explore the school inspection process in a development context

Objectives

By the end of this module you will have:

- Explored the principles and good practice of school inspection before, during and after the process
- Applied experience and learning about school inspection to the realities of the new culture and development context
- Considered the cyclical nature of the school inspection process, how this links in with VSO's cyclical approach to development and how your role varies within this
- Gained an understanding of how building relationships with stakeholders is at the heart of the process and may help to get under the surface to what can be done to effect change



Unit 1. What is Inspection?

Welcome to the school inspection module

Aim and objectives

Aim: to start you thinking about the school inspection process especially in relation to the development context

Objectives: by the end of the unit you will have:

-  Explored the differences between inspection, evaluation and self-evaluation
-  Reflected on your most recent experience of school inspection
-  Related this experience to the development context and identified the possible differences
-  Considered the role of evaluation criteria for use in inspections
-  Started to identify your role within the inspection process
-  Identified the parallels between the inspection cycle and VSO's participatory planning and review cycle

Activity 1.1

What are the differences between school inspection, school evaluation and school self-evaluation?

Inspection is _____

Evaluation is _____

Self-evaluation is _____

Feedback

For the purposes of this module, inspection is about process, the process of looking at the quality and standards of a school. Evaluation is the end of that process, the starting point for school improvement. It tells us what needs doing and how we should do it. Together inspection and evaluation are part of a cyclical development process. The school's own involvement in inspection and evaluation also develops cyclically. Initially a school may be passive in both inspection and evaluation but good practice encourages schools to become more and more involved as their experience and confidence grows. Eventually schools will carry out their own evaluation – school self-evaluation.

Activity 1.2

Using your most recent experience of an inspection, reflect on the following points:

-  The purpose of the inspection
-  The team of inspectors
-  The content and process of the inspection
-  The feedback
-  The aftermath
-  The institution's ability to self-evaluate
-  Your feelings about the inspection process and the inspectors themselves

The context in the South

Activity 1.3

Look at the pictures below of a VSO Inspector in Africa and the quotes from educationalists and VSOs in the South. What do you think are the similarities and differences between your most recent inspection and the process in these contexts?



Quotes from the South

“The syllabus is good. It was syllabus D when I started in 1985, and it is still D, but Maths does not change and the pupils are every time different and I know it very well by now. I’m still using the methods and the schemes that I learnt in college 15 years ago.” (Teacher, Zambia)

“By the 21st of the month, a teacher has literally nothing at home, and has to come to school hungry and having eaten nothing. In this situation, you cannot be able to deliver anything good in class.” (Teacher, Malawi)

“We don’t have chalk, attendance books [we trace them ourselves in workbooks], teaching aids, class diary...” (Teacher, Rwanda.)

“They are an amazingly dedicated, hardworking group of professionals in spite of their difficult conditions and workloads.” (VSO Teacher, PNG)

“I do not really like my work because I did not train for it.” (Teacher, Rwanda).

Feedback

On the following page are two extracts to illustrate the context further: ‘What makes teachers tick’, VSO’s policy research report on teachers’ motivation in developing countries and the second from a volunteer in the Gambia.

Inspection and guidance services

“... In all three countries [Malawi, Zambia and PNG] teachers and head teachers reported a decline in the service they received from inspectorate services. Perhaps surprisingly supervision from inspectorate services appeared to be regarded as essentially helpful and motivating – this decline consequently had a negative impact on motivation, as teachers felt there was no way for them to gain feedback and praise for good performance or to seek advice or tips on how to improve. Teachers’ desire to undergo inspection at their schools may indicate a need for professional discourse and positive reinforcement for those who have few opportunities to connect with their community of practice due to the remoteness of their situations. It may also reflect a sense that inspectors and guidance visits were an effective way for teachers to receive information about decisions made at headquarters, and to express their concerns to someone who they felt had a voice in authority.” (Fry, 2002:pp.33-34)

“The key to successful inspection and therefore evaluation/self evaluation is being able to base judgements on reliable and consistent criteria, which are essentially educational. The case of a completely competent head in a West African school, who was transferred because the stones lining the driveway had not been whitewashed recently and there were cobwebs in the corners of classrooms, demonstrates this perfectly. The inspectors in question had spent little, if any, time observing teaching and learning in the classroom.” (School Coordinator, the Gambia, 2001-2003)

Your new context may be similar or different to the situations above. VSO pre-departure training courses stress the importance of researching your new context. Here is what one volunteer did:



“...talking with Heads, officers, teachers, pupils, parents, district officials, chiefs; reading the documentation there was, existing analyses and development plans; analysing examination data; direct observation, lots of it.” (District Education Management Support Officer, Ghana, 2003-2005)

Scale of evaluation

Inspectors make a wide range of judgements or evaluations during inspections so scales of evaluation with numbers and corresponding adjectives such as 1 for ‘excellent’ and 7 for ‘inadequate’ are created to:

-  Ensure consistency by all evaluators
-  Ensure consistency over time
-  Create a common basis on which to assess performance of the education system

Activity 1.3

What kind of scale is used in your current context and how do you feel about it?

How might schools be judged differently?

Feedback

Different contexts use different scales or ways of judging schools based on educational experience. As part of your research into the country context, you will want to find out what (if anything) is being used and how effective your colleagues find it. Here is an example of a scale of evaluation.

Quality descriptor	Grade	Implications
Good	1	Worth reinforcing, developing and disseminating beyond the school
Satisfactory	2	Adequate but scope for improvement
Barely satisfactory	3	Needs attention
Poor	4	Needs urgent action

In Appendix A, you will find corresponding exemplar criteria for overall school effectiveness and the 3 key areas we shall be looking at (students' behaviour and attitudes, teaching and learning and leadership and management). This is included as an example only - evaluation criteria must be appropriate to the context.

Your role in the inspection process

You may be working at national, regional, district or school level as an advisor, co-ordinator, capacity builder, inspector etc. The amount and kind of contact that you have with the inspection process will vary. Your actual role could be unclear and may take some time to identify and develop. Here are two volunteers talking about their involvement with school inspection.

“It took a long time to establish trust and respect for my experience and skills. I could not move forward until this had been earned through role modelling e.g. report writing, training sessions and other activities that could be observed by my fellow officers. Any successes I had were implicit and could only be evidenced through a change of attitude or working practice. It was only towards the end of my placement that I began to work with fellow officers on an inspection process.” (District Education Management Support Officer, Ghana, 2003-2005)



“During these trips I am always part of the ‘team’. We are basically the inspection branch of the Ministry of Education, but we wear several different hats at different times as we are expected to do monitoring, assisting, supervising and in-service training.” (Education Methods Advisor, Malawi, 2003-2005)

Whatever your exact role or involvement with inspection, you will be part of its cyclical nature, outlined at the beginning of this unit. You will be inputting at some level into a continuous cycle of evaluating, planning, implementing, inspecting, evaluating, planning, implementing, inspecting etc. The schools' own level of participation in the inspection and evaluation stages will vary but is likely to be increasing with each cycle.

Activity 1.4

How does this cycle compare to VSO's participatory planning and review cycle¹?

Feedback

They are very similar cycles – inspection could be monitoring or analysing, school evaluation could encompass planning as well as evaluation. The level of school involvement in the process is the degree of participation at the centre of the VSO cycle. As mentioned earlier your role as a volunteer and your involvement at whatever level of the inspection process will mean inputting into these parallel cycles. This input and its corresponding impact is often very small, just a slight nudge along the cycle. Some education volunteers may find this frustrating but deep sustainable change, especially of behaviour and attitudes, takes a long time. Here is an account of one volunteer's most significant change:



“Timekeeping was no less an issue for senior staff, who although they usually turned up for school on time, were not good at keeping appointments or turning up for meetings on time. By the end of my placement all members of the senior management team had their own diary for the first time and were starting to use it to record events. This included the Principal, who because he was allergic to wearing wristwatches, was one of the worst timekeepers. In the end I encouraged him to buy a clock to put on the wall in front of him. As time went on I noticed that people were much more conscious of getting meetings started and finished on time. Keeping to the agenda was, however, a bit more of a challenge.” (School Coordinator, the Gambia, 2001-2003)

Summary

-  School inspection is about process whereas evaluation is about the end of that process. Evaluation uses the information gathered from inspection to identify and plan for improvement. The full and autonomous participation of the school in their own evaluation is the end goal. This spiralling cycle mirrors VSO's participatory planning and review cycle within which volunteers and partners work to achieve sustainable change.
-  Inspection in the South is likely to be similar to the process in our own contexts but it will also be affected by other factors, which may be new to us.
-  For the inspection process to be effective and consistent it needs to employ evaluation criteria that are clear, user-friendly and developed from within the national context
-  It is vital to research your new context and identify your role within the inspection process.

¹ You may have met VSO's participatory planning and review cycle on pre-departure courses. It is similar to other cycles used in development and adult learning. The cycle is continuous and consists of 4 stages – analysing, planning, doing and reviewing. Monitoring and stakeholder participation goes on at all stages of the cycle.

The next unit concentrates on pre-inspection issues and activities, especially the role resources play in dictating the nature of your visit to the school. However, first reflect back on this first unit using the questions below.

? What next?

What issues has this unit raised that you want to explore further?

Do you have any specific questions about the context you are going to?



Unit 2. Before Inspection

The last unit looked at the inspection process in your new context and started to explore your role within it. This unit continues to explore these factors especially how your role may be determined by the availability of resources.

Aim and objectives

Aim: to explore what needs to be done before inspection in the context of a developing country

Objectives: by the end of the unit you will have:

-  Explored the relationship between resources and the nature of the inspection
-  Listed what needs to be done before an inspection
-  Given examples of how you can adapt methods to carry out preparatory inspection work
-  Considered your role in your first inspection and the importance of building relationships within it



Activity 2.1

In your own contexts what kind of resources do school inspectors have access to? (Write your answers in this box, feedback will be given later on in the unit)



What do you need to find out before an inspection?

Ideally it is useful to find out as much as you can about the school before the inspection visit. The information that you need has been divided into four categories below:

1. The school

-  The size and type of school it is and the gender balance and age range of its students
-  Whether enrolment is increasing or decreasing
-  Whether the school population is typical of schools regionally and/or nationally
-  The profile of students, including main ethnic groups represented and number from refugee families
-  The number of students with special needs and disabilities and if possible the range of these
-  The levels of attendance and exclusions²

2. The school's performance

Looking at the most recent test and examination results and any other assessment data, which the school can provide, you need to decide:



-  how the school compares to national averages and the results of similar schools (if this information is available)
-  if there is a trend in performance over the last three years
-  if there is a noticeable difference in performance between subjects
-  if there is a noticeable difference between boys and girls and members of different ethnic groups

² Exclusion here means removed from the school for bad behaviour and should not be confused with the opposite of 'inclusion', a term which comes up on the following page (see glossary)



3. Arrangements for students with special needs

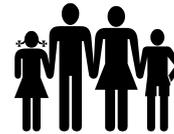
If the school has identified these students separately then you will need to know:

- ☞ if they are taught in mainstream classes or as a separate group and the corresponding timetable arrangements
- ☞ if the school has a policy for providing support in class for these students and/or promoting access to the curriculum for them (e.g. through the management of behaviour, alternative methods of communication, additional resources such as Braille and physical modifications to promote access)
- ☞ how the school assesses and records the progress of these students

4. How the school is regarded by students and parents

Through pre-inspection meetings (using interpreters if necessary) or questionnaires, a wide range of students and parents should be encouraged to express their views on:

- ☞ whether they/their children are progressing as well as they could
- ☞ whether they/their children are happy in school, well taught and well cared for
- ☞ their/their children's standards of behaviour, incidences of bullying and how well these are dealt with
- ☞ how well the school consults them, responds to concerns or acts on complaints
- ☞ the strengths of the school and things they would like improved



Some of these areas are concerned with 'inclusion', which in the context of the South may be inclusion of minority ethnic groups as in PNG, girls as in Cambodia and parts of Africa or students with special needs. Since VSO targets disadvantaged groups, many of whom are 'out of school', this area is crucial.



Activity 2.2

Go back to activity 2.1 and add to the list the extra resources that are needed for these pre-inspection activities

Feedback

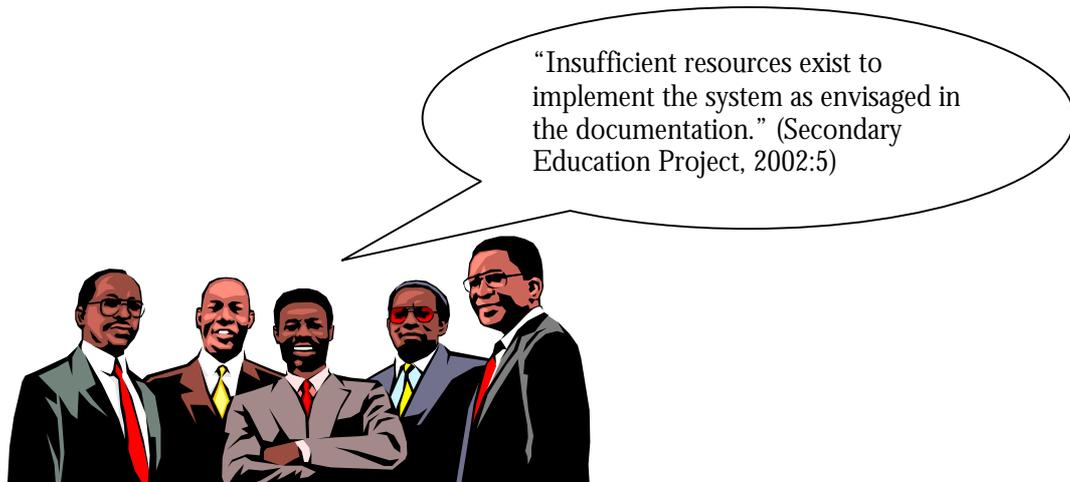
The inspection process needs a range of resources such as stationery (paper, pens, files), technical equipment (typewriters, computers, printers, phones, photocopiers), access to services (post, electricity, phone lines, internet, language translators), infrastructure (roads, transportation system), educational documentation (school websites, copies of exam results by school, previous inspection reports, demographic maps, inspection manuals) etc. It also requires human resources in terms of inspectors and support staff and sufficient time for these personnel to conduct their activities before, during and post inspection.



The context in the South

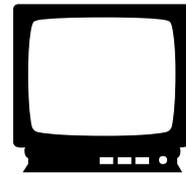
In the UK the size of an inspection team and amount of resources needed is clearly dictated by the size and nature of the school, the type of inspection and how long it is planned to last, one, two or a full five days. In the South it is often the other way around i.e. the availability of personnel and resources dictate the nature of the inspection. You may be working with a team of four or more or you may be working on your own and only have a driver for company, assuming of course that fuel is available for your trip. In the latter situation, carrying out a full formal inspection process would be near impossible. The nature of your role therefore may only be supervisory, focussing on one aspect of school improvement such as teaching and learning. Development agencies often neglect consideration of this issue. In Malawi one of the World

Bank funded projects was on improving secondary school inspection but when it was presented to a group of Education Methods Advisors, it received the following feedback:



A volunteer in the Gambia had this to say:

"All the regional offices had computers so the inspectors could write up their reports. The inspectors hardly got to use them as they were used by the Director instead. There was also a problem running them with the poor electricity supply, so why did they think they were essential in the first place?"



 **Activity 2.3**

Assuming you have the resources of personnel and time, what constraints may there be to carrying out the pre-inspection activities?

How might you work around these constraints?

Feedback

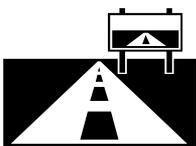
Here are some examples of good pre-inspection practice in facing the constraints of the development country context.

- Give schools plenty of notice about inspection visits so that you can use postal systems to send out and receive documentation such as questionnaires to the school, parents and/or students. Appendix B has an example of a school survey questionnaire from South Africa.
- Conduct inspections in remote areas in the dry season.
- Instead of carrying out pre-inspection meetings (such as the one with parents), do them during your main inspection visit. However, ensure extra time is allotted for this. Generally if you are conducting a full formal inspection the more you find out beforehand the less time you will need at the school.
- Gather pre-inspection information over the telephone from the head but make sure you establish a good relationship (perhaps over a number of phone calls) before launching into statistics etc. Also remember that effective research over the telephone requires a higher level of communication skills.
- If exam results exist but there is no comparative analysis of them, set up a system for doing this. (Later in the module we will hear about the huge impact of a small intervention such as this that took place in Ghana).
- Focus on what you can do (with available resources) and where you may have impact. This may mean that you cannot go into some areas to the depth that you may wish.³

These last two bullet points link back to what we explored in the first unit: the fact that you and your colleagues may only be nudging things along the inspection cycle very gently.

Your first inspection

In the first unit we also looked at your role in the inspection process. The first inspection you go on is crucial not only as a starting point for identifying this role but also in building relationships with your colleagues. It will also contribute greatly to your research of the new context. At one end of the spectrum it is quite likely that on the first trip you might just be 'tagging along'. Many countries that VSO works in already have inspection processes, trained personnel and instruments in place. Your role might be therefore just to experience the process objectively, learning about the context from what you observe and from talking to your colleagues. Here is one volunteer's account of her first trip:



“My first inspection was really interesting – on the drive there, my colleagues had told me just to watch, that was it. Of course as soon as we arrived and I found things being done differently, I just wanted to open my mouth and tell the team how we did it back home. But I restrained myself. It was not easy just to observe and be objective – I was used to being the Head, in charge, in control and with a lot of power. But I realised two things: that the only way to understand the context was to see it as it was, without comparing it to other places, and that I had to earn my colleagues' trust. Both things took a lot of time but helped me to identify where change *could* happen and what the inspectorate's role in facilitating that change might be. Moreover, by spending time getting to know colleagues and building up their trust, I was ensuring that I had a part, even if it was a small one, to play in facilitating that change process.” (Cluster Facilitator, Malawi, 2000-2002).

³Units 4-6 present 5/6 key questions in each of the three main areas of school inspection: student attitudes and behaviour, teaching, learning and assessment and leadership and management. The first three questions are essential ones to ask, the second three are desirable to ask if you want to go deeper and have the resources to do so.

However, you may find there is very little in place and that your role from the start is hands on:



“Many heads do not have the expertise that would aid them in forming a scheme of development. My inspection instruments were lists of questions - Is there a? Do you? If the answer was yes, we would look at the evidence to see how well it was done. If the answer were no, I would ask the Head if it would be a good idea if it were done and discuss it with him. So the inspection was also training, for the Head and for me. I got to understand the context better”. (District Education Management Support Officer, Ghana, 2002-2005)

What emerges from these quotes is the importance of building relationships with everyone that you are working with.

At first people were threatened by me and they didn't know what to expect. At the same time they had high expectations of me. The best strategy that I found was to sit at an empty desk and wait for people to come and talk to me, which they did. (POE Management Advisor, Cambodia, 2001-04)

As we will see this is not just for the volunteer but for all stakeholders involved in the inspection process.

Summary

-  Availability of resources will dictate the style and nature of school inspections and how deeply you will be able to go into the key areas.
-  Availability of resources may also dictate when and how pre-inspection activities are carried out. Systems will have examples of good practice in this area.
-  Your first inspection is likely to be a learning experience and the chance for you to begin to identify your future role and get to know colleagues so that you can be as effective as possible within it.

The next unit concentrates on the first few hours of the school inspection visit and how they may determine the success of the process. We will look at good and bad practice, building an effective relationship with the head and the nature of first impressions.

? What next?

You have been introduced to a lot of information and concepts in this unit. Is there anything you need to clarify, comment on, or find out more about?



Unit 3. During Inspection - Entry



The last unit looked at resources and how the availability of these might affect not only pre-inspection activities but also the nature of the inspection itself and therefore your role. This unit moves to arrival at the school and the importance of the first few hours.

Aim and objectives

Aim: to consider why the first few hours of an inspection visit are vital to its success and therefore consequent school improvement

Objectives: by the end of the unit you will have:

-  Explored aspects of good and bad inspection practice on entry into a school in relation to the developing country context
-  Considered the importance of an effective relationship with the head teacher and how to develop it
-  Identified the kinds of features that will give you a first impression of the school

Activity 3.1

The short texts below are differing accounts of the start of school inspection visits. Using two different colours underline examples of what you consider good and bad practice.

1. “Since there was no vehicle available and we didn’t want to be late, we went to the nearest village by minibus and then walked the last two kilometres to the school.”
2. “When we arrived we were greeted by the accounts clerk who told us the head had gone to the village and would be back in one or two hours. Since we didn’t have much time, we decided to start observing lessons and asked the clerk where the classroom block was”.
3. “We were shown into the head’s office and given some tea. When she arrived about half an hour later, we spoke to her for about one hour. The first 45 minutes of this conversation was not about inspection at all. Eventually we got to observe the first lessons at 11.30. School finished at lunchtime!”
 4. “The head greeted us almost immediately we arrived. He seemed really nice and showed us to his office, which was actually just at one end of the teachers’ room. We spent a few minutes introducing ourselves and then started to talk about the inspection process. At this point the head kept on disappearing sometimes for periods of ten minutes or more. Even when he was talking to us, other teachers kept on coming in and passing him messages. I felt quite frustrated and eventually asked him what was going on, saying that if there were problems, we could come back and inspect the next day”.
5. “When we arrived, we were greeted by a group of girls, who started talking to me. I asked them what they thought of school. Getting students’ opinions is important”.
6. “When we went into the head’s office, there was a large desk, which he sat behind and about seven chairs, but all a long way away from his desk. Since there were only three of us, I pulled up my chair to get closer and make the atmosphere less intimidating.”
7. “It seemed as if the school didn’t know about the inspection visit. They were totally unprepared. The head also asked us what they were being judged on – doesn’t he know that there would be no point in sharing that information?”
8. “When we arrived in the school we spoke to the headmistress for about half an hour, introducing ourselves and setting up the arrangements for the day. There had been a number of complaints about the school from parents, teachers and students. We told her this and the fact that this was the reason for our visit.”



Activity 3.2

Would these examples also be considered good or bad practice in your own contexts?

Feedback

Good and bad practice will vary between cultures and contexts but the following stand out as issues that you may want to discuss with colleagues.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Mode of transport | In some countries you will have high status as school inspectors and your role is very public. If you do not outwardly show this status then you will not be respected. Arriving on foot would imply that the Regional Education Manager does not consider you important enough to be given a vehicle. |
| The role of the head | On arriving at a school, you are stepping on to someone else's territory. The head is in charge, and however frustrating this may be, inspectors should respect this authority. Going into classrooms without his/her knowledge or talking to students before you talk to the head does not show respect. Many countries in the South have 'high power-distance' cultures defined by paternal-autocratic leadership styles (Coleman and Earley, 2005:31). This is expressed visibly in offices with big desks and chairs for staff and visitors placed a long way away. Moving these chairs is encroaching on someone else's territory and undermining authority. |
| Time | Time is a different concept in parts of the developing world, waiting for people or activities, though frustrating, is common practice. Nurturing relationships and building trust is more important than time. |
| 'Face' | If you think that the head is in a panic, you should not draw attention to it. Give him/her time to arrange things in their own style and at their own pace. |
| Advance notice of visits | It is commonly thought good practice to warn schools about inspection visits. However, in the developing world, schools in very remote areas may be difficult to contact. Moreover, inspections cannot necessarily always happen when they are supposed to: there may be no vehicles available or no money to pay for fuel, or other more important issues may have arisen, such as funerals etc. Because of this some inspectorates feel it is better not to tell schools of future visits in case they are disappointed. It is important to point out too that even if schools have been warned of inspection visits, they may not necessarily be prepared for them. |
| Transparency | It is commonly accepted that transparency, especially when working in areas of school development is vital. However, how you go about communicating transparently may vary. Some cultures are frank, explicit and direct, others diplomatic, implicit and indirect (Cart and Fox, 2004:18). Again it is something that you will need to observe in your new context and talk to your colleagues about. As part of the shared experience of inspection, it is also important for schools to know the criteria on which they are being judged before the inspection takes place. Lack of resources or access to services to communicate this information may mean that this is not the case in the South, so it is vital to share the criteria with the head at the beginning of the process. |
| Arrangements for inspection | It is important to establish with the head what arrangements for the inspection are in place and discuss the timetable for the day(s). |

First contact

It is important to establish a good relationship with the head teacher, which may have already started over the telephone. On arrival you may have to spend a lot of time talking to the head and reassuring him/her about the process. The following points may be useful to explain:

-  Where possible, you are there to celebrate good practice, not to catch the school out or criticise it.
-  The inspection process builds on this good practice to enable the school to improve in all areas and become even more successful.
-  The school must not be afraid to look at its own performance critically; only by doing this can it hope to improve.
-  The process is done in co-operation with the inspectors initially and gradually taken on by the school as it develops confidence and courage in the process.
-  The inspector should be seen as a 'critical friend' rather than a 'fault-finder'.

This scene setting and reassurance is very important as heads may have been used to a very different type of inspection previously and they will need to be convinced of the efficacy and usefulness of the system. Emphasise the use of open, shared and educational criteria. If this ice-breaking cuts into your inspection time, so be it. It is more important to have the head on board from the beginning, and if this leaves less time for gathering evidence, there will be other opportunities. You may also have to explain the inspection process and why you are there to other stakeholders at the school such as governors, teachers and parents. Forging good relationships with all the key players at the school will increase the chances of effective school development.

Activity 3.3

First impressions can often tell you quite a lot about the culture of a school and its working practices. Look at the photographs of an African school below and without turning the page, spend 5 minutes noting down what you see and what this tells you about the school.



Feedback

You may have noticed features similar to those below:

Picture 1.	The school grounds are almost empty so therefore all the students must be in class. The grounds are tidy and the classroom block in reasonable condition. The teacher in the foreground is smartly dressed but the children are not in uniform and look rather scruffy.
Picture 2.	The school has access to water. Once again the students are not in uniform. The students look happy and as if they are doing a project or exercise. The boys appear more involved in the task than the girls.
Picture 3.	Once again the teacher is smartly dressed but this time some students are in uniform. The inside of the classroom is in bad repair and there is nothing on the walls. There is enough desk space and the students are engaged in their tasks.
Picture 4.	The school has access to textbooks and quite a lot of them. They are kept in a safe and dry place. The textbooks are in good condition.

But what does this tell you about uniform policy? That some students are not well disciplined and do not follow uniform policy? That school uniform is not compulsory? That some students cannot afford school uniform? That today is laundry day for school uniform? And what does it really tell you about the use of textbooks? That they are frequently used and well looked after or that they are not used at all, perhaps because no has managed to arrange for their distribution?

First impressions can tell you a lot about the school but as you can see, they must be backed up by further investigation.



Activity 3.4

What further questions would you now want to ask to test and explore your first impressions?

Feedback

Questions should be clear, open-ended and value-free. The following serve as examples to explore the areas of uniform policy and textbook use?

- What is the school policy on uniform?
- How far is this common practice throughout the district?
- How do students access these textbooks?
- What is the best method of storing textbooks?



Summary

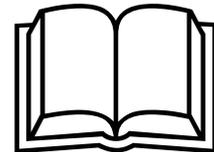
-  What constitutes good and bad practice at the beginning of school inspection may be different from what you are used to.
-  Head teachers should be treated with respect and the inspection process should be fully and transparently explained to them. Ideally, if appropriate, the relationship between an inspector and a head should be that of a 'critical friend'.
-  You can learn a lot from a school by its outward appearance but be sure to explore issues further before making assumptions.

In the next unit we will start to look at one of the key areas of inspection – the attitudes and behaviour of the students

? What next?

Look back to the 'What next?' sections from unit 1 and 2. Have any of your questions been answered?

What more do you need to find out?



Unit 4. During Inspection – Students’ Attitudes and Behaviour

In Unit 3 we looked at good practice when first entering a school and the necessity of building up a good relationship with the head. Although we noted the danger of making assumptions from first impressions about a school, we saw how these impressions can act as the starting point for exploring areas, such as the focus of this unit, students’ attitudes and behaviour.

Aim and objectives

Aim: to introduce key questions for investigating students’ attitudes and behaviour and consider how an inspector goes about answering them.

Objectives: by the end of the unit you will have:

-  Identified three essential and three desirable key questions about students’ attitudes and behaviour that will inform your inspection⁴
-  Explored ways of finding out valid answers to these key questions
-  Considered the constraints of applying this methodology to the South
-  Increased awareness of the use of evaluation criteria in conjunction with key questions

Students’ attitudes and behaviour

The students are the raw material of the school, what you can learn about their attitudes and experience will tell you a lot about the school they are in. The level of interest they show, the way they behave, the attitude they demonstrate towards their lessons and their teachers will all tell you much about the school. If they feel at ease in the school, demonstrate the right level of confidence and get on well with each other and their teachers, it is likely that other important criteria are in place. This translates into three essential key questions:

-  To what extent do students show interest in school life and the range of activities on offer?
-  How do they behave in lessons and around the school?
-  Do they experience freedom from bullying, ethnic conflict and other forms of harassment?

and three desirable key questions to ask if there is time:

-  How far do students show initiative and willingness to take responsibility?
-  To what extent do they form constructive relationships with others?
-  Do they have confidence and self-esteem?

Activity 4.1

How do you find out the answers to these questions?



⁴ As mentioned in Unit 2 for each area, we will usually suggest three essential questions to focus your inspection on and if you have time (which will depend on your resources) three further desirable questions to explore.

Feedback

You can explore the answers to these questions through:

- Observation of students around the school (in assembly, breaks, extra-curricular activities etc.) and in class
- Talking to students individually or in small focus groups about their views, impressions, experience etc. using clear, open-ended, non-judgemental questions
- Talking to parents or carers about students' views and experience
- Talking to teachers and other staff
- Looking at documentary evidence such as students' books or records of punishment etc.
- Distributing simple questionnaires to students and parents

The context in the South

Activity 4.2

Using the table below, prioritise the above methods (or any of your own) in terms of their applicability to the Southern context, giving reasons why methods are appropriate or not.

Method (in order of usability in the South)	Reason
Observing students in class	Easy to do as will be observing teacher anyway

Feedback

The applicability of the methods will depend upon your key questions, individual contexts and circumstances but the following factors may affect their use:

- Availability of personnel and time
- Availability of physical resources such as paper for questionnaires and duplicating facilities
- What parents, students, teachers etc. are used to e.g. they may not be used to talking freely in focus groups or filling in questionnaires (some parents may also be illiterate)
- Language – if you are using the local language, it may be difficult to ask probing questions or design questionnaires. You may have to use interpreters.
- Type of school e.g. if it is a boarding school, parents will not be accessible
- Documentary evidence may not exist

There are always ways round constraints and it is important to find out from colleagues the best methods of collecting information to answer your key questions. It is also important to spend time at the beginning of interviews or focus groups getting to know parents, teachers etc. Not only will this focus on relationship building make people feel more comfortable but also more able to open up.

Analysing your research and using evaluation criteria

At the end of the inspection, having researched students' attitudes and behaviour, you will now have to analyse it so that you can evaluate it on your scale. How do you know that what your research is telling you is true? Or in research jargon 'valid'? For example you get the feeling that the students are on their best behaviour because of the inspection and people may be telling you what they want you to hear. How can you get under the surface to the truth of matters?

Activity 4.3

What can you do to ensure your inspection research is valid and representative of the school?

Feedback

- Allocate as much time as is feasible to research through a variety of methods and inspectors
- Use different research methods to answer the same key questions (observation and focus groups for example)
- Spend time making your informants feel relaxed and comfortable
- Ask different groups of people the same questions (i.e. ask both students and teachers about the popularity of extra-curricular activities)
- Ask a number of slightly different questions around the same issue
- Ask open-ended questions and probe as much as you can
- Set aside enough time for analysis of your research
- Start analysing and comparing your research as early as you can as it may show that more research needs to be done or raise other new issues that need to be looked into
- Refocus your research and your daily plan if an important issue is emerging

When you are satisfied with the validity of your research, the inspection team will need to meet to evaluate each of the key questions using a scale and corresponding criteria such as the examples we saw in Unit 1. If you now look at Appendix A and the four sets of criteria for students' attitudes and behaviour, you will see how the key questions reflect this criteria. If you are therefore involved in setting up or changing the inspection process either formally or informally, it is important to establish key questions and evaluation criteria in conjunction with each other.

Students in the South

It is obviously impossible to generalise in this area but you may be surprised by students' attitudes and behaviour in your new contexts. Here are some quotes from returned volunteers:

"The kids are great – friendly ... and generally good as well which is lucky as there are 48 or so in the class". (English Teacher, the Gambia, 2001-2003)

"Children want to go to school and want to be educated...even if there is no teacher, they are not running riot..." (POE Management Advisor, Cambodia, 2001-2004)

"The room was completely silent. I was amazed. I had never known a classroom like it before – where forty students were all working and the wind could be heard blowing through the grass outside." (English Teacher, Ghana, 2002, taken from Morris 2003:20)

? Summary

- ? Students' attitudes and behaviour will tell you a lot about the quality of the school.**
- ? To research these attitudes and behaviour you need to use key questions, the number of which will be connected to your time and resources. These key questions will also reflect the evaluation criteria that you have chosen.**
- ? Your key questions, evaluation criteria, resources and individual contexts will also affect the methodology you choose for your research. This methodology should be as varied as possible to increase its validity.**

The next unit concentrates on the area of teaching, learning and assessment in the inspection process. We will be looking more closely at applying key questions and evaluation criteria, at the research method of classroom observation and at inclusive education.

? What next?

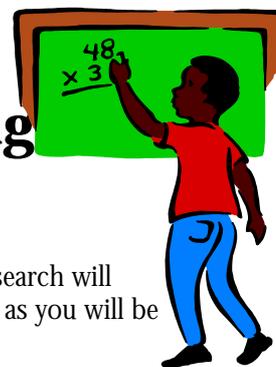
What questions would you like to ask your new colleagues in the following areas?

? Students' attitudes and behaviour in your new context?

? Key questions and evaluation criteria for inspection

? Methodology used in school inspection

Unit 5. During Inspection – Teaching Learning and Assessment



In Unit 4 we considered research into students' behaviour and attitudes. This research will continue when you start looking at the area of teaching, learning and assessment, as you will be observing both teachers and students in class.

Aim and objectives

Aim: to practically explore how to evaluate teaching, learning and assessment and use this evaluation as a starting point for development.

Objectives: by the end of the unit you will have:

-  Identified six possible key questions that will direct your inspection of teaching, learning and assessment
-  Recognised the importance of adjusting evaluation criteria and key questions to suit the priorities of the country context
-  Practised using key questions to direct classroom observation and considered how you will validate this kind of research
-  Considered your approach in developing teaching, learning and assessment
-  Explored examples and levels of inclusive practice in the Southern context

Evaluation criteria and key questions

In the last unit we considered the relationship between evaluation criteria and key questions.

Activity 5.1

Look at the example evaluation criteria for teaching, learning and assessment in the four categories in Appendix A. Based on what you know of your new country context, how appropriate is this criteria? How would you change it to reflect national, regional or organisational priorities?

Feedback

Each country has national priorities for educational development particularly in the area of teaching and learning⁵. If these translate into regional, district or school priorities, it is likely to be inspectors, supervisors and advisors who are overseeing implementation. This is obviously an area to ask your colleagues about and ensure, if possible, that evaluation criteria for formal inspection reflect current priorities.

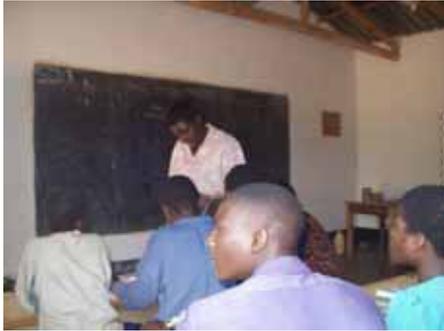
⁵ These can be found in policy documents such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers found on www.imf.org/external/np/prsp

Researching key questions

As we saw in the last unit, it is important to use a variety of methods (observation, interviews/focus groups and documentary evidence) to research your key questions. In this unit we are going to focus on classroom observation

Activity 5.3

How does the description of a lesson and corresponding photo below answer the three essential key questions on the previous page.



There are about 80 students in the class sitting in rows, three to a bench. The teacher stands at the front and reads both parts of the dialogue in the textbook to the class. The students follow the text in their own books. The teacher explains two new words in the text, which the students write into their exercise books. When the teacher has finished reading, she asks two students from the front row to stand and read aloud. A further three pairs are invited to do the same. Simple comprehension questions [addressed to the students standing] follow the text. The teacher reads each question out and students raise their hands. If they get the answer right, they are told to sit down. If they make a mistake they remain standing throughout the lesson. Finally the students are directed towards some gap-fill questions in the book.

(Adapted from Morris 2003:23)

Activity 5.4

What else will you do now to complete your research of these three key questions?

Feedback

As we saw in the last unit, to make your research valid classroom observation needs to be backed up by other research methods. After class, you may want to talk to the teacher, or students or head of department or look at their lesson plan or scheme of work. You or your colleagues may also want to observe them again as well as observing other teachers and compare notes. You will

also want to compare the performance of these teachers with what you have seen in similar environments. It is only when you have done this that you will be able to evaluate individual teachers and teaching, learning and assessment generally.

Your evaluation criteria and key questions must also reflect national and regional priorities and be relevant and achievable in the context. Our three essential key questions (and corresponding evaluation criteria in Appendix A) may not be relevant in this context. Key questions and evaluation criteria must start from where the teachers are and the latter should include contextual examples of good practice. The lesson above may well have been an example of good practice in that environment, after all the students are well-behaved, look engaged and there was some new learning and student participation.

Here are some examples of good primary teaching practice in Malawi:

Considering some of the difficulties they face, there is some pretty good teaching going on and I have some lovely memories of a Standard One English class where all 78 6/7 year olds were actively involved in doing, acting, singing and speaking English throughout the lesson and also a very windy PE lesson with children, oxen and guinea fowl all mixed up on the same field but somehow a brilliant lesson. (Education Methods Advisor, 2003-2005)

Effective teaching, learning and assessment strategies in the South

Teacher training must also be relevant to context and achievable by the teacher. Changes in classroom practice, which may involve changes in values and beliefs, can take a long time. Remember too from Unit 1 that the most appropriate change you can make is often just a small push or 'nudge' in one direction.

Activity 5.5

Remember the teacher from the previous activity. What advice/training would you give her at this stage?

Feedback

There are many ways to initiate development of this teacher, just remember to start small and from her context and her class. If this is the first time you have observed the teacher you might just want to make her feel comfortable talking to you. One way you can do this is to ask the teacher to talk you through the lesson, telling you the reasons why she does things and giving you more information about the students. At the end ask her what she would change and why if she were to do the lesson again. The concept of reflecting on a lesson may be new to teachers in the South and this is a way of initiating the process. Moreover, dialogues about teaching and learning are a good way to build up trust and prepare the ground for training.

Inclusion

Starting from where the teachers are and gently nudging their development along is crucial in the area of inclusion. Our third essential key question: 'to what extent do teachers use methods and resources that enable all students to learn effectively?' refers to this area. In Unit 2, we considered the wider meaning of inclusion in the VSO and Southern context:

“...an **inclusive education system** benefits girls and boys from all groups of society not just disabled girls and boys. Education policy addressing the needs of all marginalised groups in society is likely to be more successful. Creating policies for separate categories of children is time-consuming, expensive and divisive.” (Save the Children, 2002:49)

For VSO this means including “every child regardless of gender, ethnic group, HIV status or disability” (Webber, 2005).

Activity 5.6

The following are examples of good practice for inclusion, some of which have been initiated by volunteers. Fill in the table to explain why each intervention supports inclusion and the level(s) (school, district, national) at which they take place. The first one has been done as an example.

Intervention	Why it supports inclusion	Level
Using child-centred teaching methodologies in the classroom	Teaching methods that start from the needs of the children will ensure that all are included	School
Researching who is out of school and why		
Collecting data and analysing individual student performance by gender, race etc.		
Providing examples of inclusive classroom environments through a displays of model classrooms		
Recruiting teachers with special needs		
Appointing an officer to oversee e.g. girls' performance		
Organising meetings to disseminate good practice on inclusion		
Getting girls to register for feeding rations in the afternoon rather than morning ⁶		
Awareness raising and tackling stigma about disability or HIV and AIDS in the community		
Setting up a class 'buddy' system where older or academically more able children are assigned to work with those with learning difficulties		

⁶ Some NGOs fund food for schoolgirls' families in exchange for a certain level of monthly attendance.

Intervention	Why it supports inclusion	Level
Ensuring that teachers are not overloaded with classes		
Having the first years of schooling in children's local language		
Ensuring that the school is accessible, safe (especially the walk to school) and with access to water		
Ensuring the curriculum is relevant and flexible		
Using pilot schools to start inclusive initiatives through a whole school approach		

Feedback

The levels at which activities happen may depend on the context and the following serve only as an example.

All levels

Awareness raising activities and tackling stigma are interventions that could and must happen at every level of the education system. Teachers with special needs are unlikely to be recruited without this. Exchanging examples of good practice, researching and identifying who is out of school, analysing performance, appointing officers to specifically look for instance at girls' performance, are useful examples that could be employed at any level to have effect. Obviously the higher the level the more impact they will have.

National level

Changes at policy and national level are crucial for establishing inclusive practices. Not only does there have to be desire for change at school level but also the political will to drive that change. Different contexts will vary depending on the type and level of educational decentralisation but relevant and flexible curricula, significant changes in methodological approaches and issues around the language of instruction are likely to be interventions that are directed from the Ministry of Education.

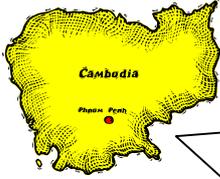
Regional or district level

In-service teacher training is usually the responsibility of the region or district so interventions in this area may happen at this level. Many 'circuit supervisors' or 'education methods advisors' are based at district teacher development centres, which often include model classrooms. Pilot schools may also be assigned by regions or districts but permission to do this may also have to come from above.

School level

Interventions that could successfully happen at school level would be identifying children with special needs and ensuring a clean, safe and accessible environment. It could involve changing registration times and ensuring appropriate teacher workload. Small changes in classroom practice such as a buddy system or the gradual introduction of more child-centred activities could also prove effective.

The appropriacy of the above interventions will depend a lot on individual contexts. Some countries will be further down the line to inclusive practices than others. It is up to you to research the context in this area. Here are the main points from a conversation with a volunteer talking about the disabled in Cambodia:



“The disabled in class are often not identified. They don’t want to be because of the stigma attached to disability. It is more important to be accepted than to know your alphabet. But things are changing – people pretend their disabilities have come from landmines because this is more acceptable. Children with physical disabilities are beginning to be supported as if they can catch fish they are useful. In Cambodia people’s perceptions are definitely changing so this is a starting point and something to build on”. (Management Advisor, National Centre for Disabled People, 2000-2003)



Activity 5.7

Think about your context, the appropriacy of inclusive education, the roles of you and your colleagues and the level at which you work. Which of the examples of good practice might you be able to initiate?



Summary

- 🔍 Evaluation criteria must be based on what is relevant and good practice in your context. The key questions in the area of teaching, learning and assessment should originate from this evaluation criteria.
- 🔍 Class observations alone will not provide sufficient answers to your key questions
- 🔍 Your approach to teacher development post-observation should start from where the teachers are and involve small and gradual shifts in one direction
- 🔍 In your new context inclusion may refer to girls, minority ethnic groups and children affected by HIV and AIDS as well as the disabled. It is important to thoroughly research the context in this area and identify interventions, which will suit this context, your role and the level you are working at.

The next unit turns to the area of leadership and management and how to approach it in inspection.

? What next?

What do you need to find out about teaching, learning and assessment in your new context?

How are you going to find out this information?

Unit 6. During Inspection Leadership and Management



Unit 4 and 5 concentrated on students and teachers respectively, Unit 6 now moves on to look at head teachers and others with leadership or managerial responsibilities.

Aim and objectives

Aim: to explore the issues around inspecting leadership and management in schools in the South.

Objectives: by the end of the unit you will have:

-  explored the differences between leadership and management and identified underlying skills
-  stated examples of key questions in the area of leadership and management
-  assessed the use of documentary evidence in researching key questions
-  considered particular issues related to school management in the Southern context

Leadership and management

Many inspection guides and instruments divide up the two areas of leadership and management so it is important to explore the differences.

Activity 6.1

Look at the following activities and decide if they fall under leadership (L) or management (M):

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Resourcing | 2. Working with staff on a vision statement | 3. Listening to teachers' concerns |
| 4. Chairing meetings effectively | 5. Encouraging the leadership of others | 6. Timetabling |
| 7. Engaging community agencies in the work of the school | 8. Helping people to set goals and targets for themselves | 9. Keeping the financial accounts |
| 10. Making quality time for parents | 11. Delegating responsibility to appropriate staff | 12. Ensuring information flow throughout the school |

Feedback

 **Leadership** is about drive and direction, getting the most out of people, demonstrating strength and flexibility and at the same time encouraging and supporting people and leading by example. (2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10)

 **Management is** more a question of effective deployment of resources, human, material and financial. (1, 4, 6, 9, 11, 12)

However, different contexts may interpret these words differently, what is important is a shared understanding of them. Both elements should be evident throughout the school and not just at senior management level, as separate but complementary features⁷.

Activity 6.2

If you are a manager, head or deputy head teacher, how would you describe your leadership/management style? If you are managed by someone how would you describe his/her style?

How do you think this will compare to common management styles in your new context?

Feedback

Just as there are different management styles in our own contexts, the same will exist in the new context. However, many of the countries that VSO works in have cultures with high levels of 'power distance' and strong 'uncertainty avoidance'⁸. This means that there is an expectation that people in power make decisions and take action and that middle and junior managers will wait to do as they are told (Hofstede 1991 in Coleman and Earley, 2005:37). Some heads or managers in the new context therefore can tend to be more directive than participative and this is expected of them by staff and students.

Qualities and skills of effective leaders and managers

Whatever the management style, the underlying skills and qualities of good managers remain the same and are identified here by Macbeath (2004:88).

Commitment	Up-to-date knowledge	Ability to initiate	Ability to direct
Communication skills	Manages staff effectively	Supports staff development	Delegates effectively
Models good teaching practice	Creates confidence in others	Inspires others	Has a positive impact on practice
Ability to evaluate others effectively	Demonstrates breadth of vision	Takes decisions effectively	Maintains good staff relationships
Maintains good relationships with students	Maintains good relationships with parents	Involves others in policy development	Disseminates information promptly and effectively

⁷Inspection frameworks also look at the area of governance, (the governing body) which helps shape the vision and direction of the school, whilst challenging and supporting the senior management.

⁸ These terms were coined by Hofstede in his research on cultural dimensions. You may have come across this in your pre-departure training. His four dimensions of culture are found in Appendix C.

Key questions

Once again your key questions, originating from your evaluation criteria, will be contextually relevant and reflect current priorities for improving the management of the school. Our examples are as follows:

Essential key questions

-  To what extent does leadership show clear vision and a sense of purpose as well as inspire, motivate and influence staff and students?
-  To what extent are leaders good role models for other staff and students?
-  How effectively are staff managed (recruitment, induction, deployment and development)?

And if there is time:

-  How do approaches to financial and resource management help the school achieve its educational priorities?
-  Does the school ensure the partnership with parents contributes to all aspects of school life?

Using documentary evidence

As well as through questionnaires, interviews and observation, you will also be looking at documentary evidence to research these questions.



Activity 6.3

Here is a list of some administrative documentation needed by inspectors in Malawi (NED:2001)

Staff list	Fees register
Duty roster	Staff circulation file
Log book	Timetable
Visitors book	School calendar
Stock book	Minute book (of meetings)
Library accession register	Punishment book



What are the advantages and disadvantages of using this kind of documentary evidence as part of your inspection research generally and for the areas of leadership and management?

Feedback

Documentary evidence can provide good background on the school and, similar to first impressions (that we looked at in Unit 3), a starting point for other questions. Some documents such as the minute book or staff circulation file provide a useful insight into internal relations and communication. Also if there is a variety of different authors of the documentation, this will tell you that some delegation is happening.

However, as we have seen before, all is not what it seems; just because something is happening on paper does not mean that it is necessarily happening in practice. The most effective use of one research method, such as documentary evidence, is in conjunction with other methods: to back up and support analysis and lead to fair evaluation.

The context in the South

Some heads and deputies in the South may struggle with leadership and management. This can be for a number of reasons: little remuneration, workload, lack of interest in being a head, lack of support and respect at both school and district level, little training etc. It may or may not be an area for you and /or your colleagues to work on and it might depend whether you are working at school, regional or national level. Researching the context thoroughly, getting to know head teachers and focusing on discreet nudges with caution may be the best approach. Here is what two returned volunteers have done:

One way to encourage a more consultative management approach I found was to push the idea of the 'team' at senior management level. In fact the principal with whom I worked was very keen on this as it gave him a sense of security and also enabled him to canvass other views from senior colleagues, before coming to what he could call a joint 'SMT' decision. I could see this definitely left him feeling less isolated. Some heads may find this more difficult at first, but it is definitely worth slowly and persistently promoting the idea, with senior team meetings at least once a week. Argue that this is not a way of diminishing power, but of enhancing it in fact, as any decision is based on a wider range of views and consensus. (School Coordinator, The Gambia, 2001-2003)

What I did, whenever we were discussing school performance and ways to improve it, was to hold the sessions with all the staff and arrive at a collective agreement as to what to do. I would finish by describing the roles everyone had to perform, highlighting that of the Head and emphasising the importance of cooperation with the Head as he monitored and directed performance. (District Education Management Support Officer, Ghana, 2002-2005)

Parents and community involvement in the school

As you have seen one of our key desirable questions is:

-  Does the school ensure the partnership with parents contributes to all aspects of school life?

Activity 6.4

How are parents involved in school life in your own context?

Why is this parental involvement important?

To what extent do you think the type of involvement and reasons for it may be different in the Southern context?

Feedback

The type and level of parental involvement in school life will vary from context to context but it is likely to be lower than what you may be used to. This is for a number of reasons:

-  Parents may be uneducated and illiterate
-  Parents are too busy making a living and surviving to consider contact with the school a priority
-  Parents may live some distance away from the school
-  Parents are not used to being involved in school life
-  No structures exist to involve parents
-  The education system and schools are highly centralised

However for reasons of accountability, funding, student learning at home, curriculum relevance and above all enrolment and retention particularly of girls, children with special needs and minority ethnic groups, parental involvement in all aspects of school life is crucial. Schools must nurture good relationships with parents and the community who can be involved through Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) or governing bodies/committees. It is part of the inspection process to research the effectiveness of bodies such as these.

Here are the duties of primary school committees and PTAs from a region of Malawi (NED:2002)

PTA:

- Promotes warm relationships at a school
- Provides a forum for all stakeholders at school level to discuss issues of common concern affecting the smooth running of the school
- Acts as a link between the teacher and the community
- Addresses needs of pupils, teachers and parents in an attempt to promote quality education
- Initiates self-help projects
- Makes recommendations to the School Committee to fulfil the wishes of the community on the education of their children

School Committee

- Assists the proprietor in the management of the school
- Employs and dismisses non-teaching staff such as watchman
- Participates in solving discipline problems in the school
- Assists on the admissions of pupils at the recommended age of 6
- Encourages parents to send pupils to school regularly
- Ensures that teachers are paid their salaries on time
- Initiates and monitors implementation of self-help projects
- Advises parents to provide basic needs for their pupils e.g. food and clothing
- Raises and manages school funds for the development of the school
- Advises the District Education Office on the staffing position of the school

? Summary

- ? Inspecting school leadership and management involves looking at a number of areas which are both overarching and day-to-day
- ? School management styles and practice may be different from what you are used to. Conducting school inspection and development activities in this area should therefore only be approached after sufficient research consultation with colleagues
- ? Researching documentary evidence is an important part of the inspection process but as always must be used in conjunction with other methods
- ? Parental involvement in their children's schooling is crucial for development

The next unit moves on from the actual inspection of the school to what happens after inspection: reporting and school development. It also looks at the wider picture of quality improvement and how you can identify your role at placement level.

? What next?

? What do you want to find out about management and leadership styles and practice in your new context?

? How will you do this?

Unit 7. After Inspection



Having looked at before and during inspection, we now turn to what happens after school inspection. This generally involves feeding back the evaluation to the school (and other bodies where necessary) and starting the process of action planning and school improvement. It will also feed into school self-evaluation where applicable⁹.

Aim and objectives

Aim: to demonstrate different ways of feeding back on inspection and how this links in to action planning, school improvement, school self-evaluation and ultimately quality improvement and progress towards the goals of Education for All (EFA)

Objectives: by the end of the unit you will have:

-  Compared differences in post-inspection practice between your own context and an example from the South
-  Considered examples of good post-inspection oral feedback
-  Identified the contents of a school action plan and practised writing one
-  Explored the area of quality improvement as a target of EFA and the extent to which your role can provide a way in

Feeding back to the school

Here is an account of the end of an inspection visit by a returned volunteer in Malawi.

“At the end of the day we managed to get a half an hour in the library to talk together. We compared what we had seen in the classrooms and elsewhere and the information we had gathered from talking to students, teachers etc. Mr N. collated all this information under the headings of teaching and learning, students, school environment and management. We didn't evaluate the areas but talked about what was good and what needed improvement. We also discussed the issue of community involvement, which was worrying us. We also decided on what we would feed back to the head that day and our approach in doing so.

At 6.00pm we met the head and another teacher who was standing in as his deputy in one of the classrooms. Chairs had to be brought in from the teachers' room as the student benches were too small for us. Mr N. began by thanking the head for allowing us to spend the day with them and for his and his staff's full cooperation. He outlined some of the positive things we had seen and then highlighted one or two improvements that could be made in each area. He gave the head and his stand-in deputy (who was taking notes) the chance to comment on matters if they wanted to. The head did so only twice to correct minor details. Mr N. asked what the head thought should be included in the school action plan and the head agreed on all the points that had been raised. At the end Mr N. asked a question about community involvement. The head responded in a roundabout way, not really answering the question. Mr N. probed with other questions until finally the head admitted that the school was finding it difficult to work with the community. Mr N. recommended a meeting in the morning between both parties facilitated by the inspectors. The head said he would set it up for 7.30am.

We then thanked the head again but he was even more thankful, inviting us to come again as soon as possible so we could see how the action plan would be implemented. About a month later, we each wrote up our reports on classroom observation and interviews and Mr N. and the Manager evaluated the school. Mr N. wrote the final report which the secretary typed up and sent to the Ministry” (Cluster Facilitator, Malawi, 2000-2002).

⁹ There is an optional add on unit to this module on 'self-evaluation' if you think you or your colleagues may be involved in this area



Activity 7.1

How does this differ from post-inspection practice in your own context?

What are some examples of good practice from the account?

What other examples of good practice can you think of?

Feedback

Many schools in the South are quite remote, making access and communication difficult, it is therefore quite common practice to give feedback and sort out any serious problems on the spot. It is therefore extremely important to have a good team relationship so you work together efficiently. Here are some examples of good practice for oral feedback, many of which were demonstrated in the above account.

- Inspectors discussing and agreeing feedback beforehand
- Explaining the post-inspection process
- Meeting school management on neutral territory (i.e. not in the head's office)
- Starting with the positive aspects
- Emphasising less good aspects as areas for improvement
- Keeping the positive and negative in balance
- Not giving the minor positive and negatives in oral feedback
- Ensuring that your comments are backed up with examples
- Making sure your message is understood
- Encouraging comments from school personnel
- Starting the action planning process
- Probing management further if appropriate
- Not rushing, you will only have to go back and repeat
- Thanking all concerned

Many of the above tips are connected to building up trust with the head and creating a non-threatening environment for change.

What happens after the inspection also depends on the type of inspection you have conducted and possibly your role. The above account sounds as if it was quite a formal inspection, demanding the use of set formats and processes, certainly at least for written feedback. It is

important to find out what these processes and formats are. If, on the other hand, your visit to the school has been less formal, focusing only on areas for supervision, it may just consist of informal feedback with individual teachers and the head. It may be too that your role only involves working with one institution, producing interim reports or evaluation on school development. Appendix D is an example of this kind of report.

Action planning

As we saw in the earlier account from Malawi, when weaknesses are found, schools often need help addressing those concerns and setting out a plan to improve upon them. A useful mnemonic for the content of an action plan is TREE, or more precisely T-T-T-R-R-E-E because there are seven elements it should contain:



1. **Target/s.** What the school wants to achieve e.g. ensuring better planning by classroom teachers. By definition targets need to be 'SMART'- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.
2. **Tasks.** These are the activities, which need to be carried out in order to meet a certain target. The tasks for the above example target are to observe or meet with all teachers to discuss with them how this can be done. Alternatively a training workshop could be set up in order to exchange good practice as a group. This could be supplemented by work with identified individuals who have particular problems.
3. **Time scale.** Clear parameters need to be set in terms of when or by when a certain target is going to be met. This need not involve one final date. Targets can be broken down into short-term (4-6 weeks), medium-term (3-6 months) and long-term (1-2 years) goals, reflecting both the importance and the complexity of what is being developed.
4. **Resources.** This involves money and materials, but just as importantly time will need to be built in. Decisions will need to be made about how long to allow for certain activities, for meaningful progress to be made.
5. **Responsibilities.** Who is going to be responsible for a given target and related task/s? It need not always be a member of senior management, although they may be given an overall brief to observe progress. This sort of work is ideal for challenging and developing other members of staff, who do not normally get the chance to engage in this role.
6. **Evaluation.** This is normally based on a number of 'performance indicators' or 'success criteria'. These measures tell us when a goal or target has been reached and describe the new situation in concrete and concise terms.
7. **End result.** Has everything been achieved, which the school set out to achieve? What did it learn along the way? Has the process helped make it a more self-evaluating institution? Does the school now have the courage and confidence to look at its own performance and make realistic, if sometimes difficult, judgements?

(An action plan based on this mnemonic can be found in Appendix E but it is an example from the UK and may not be appropriate to all contexts.)

As we can see the End result of the action plan looks at process as well as product and will feed into the next cycle of inspection-evaluation-action plan-action-inspection etc. as well as start the process of moving towards autonomous 'whole school' self-evaluation.



Activity 7.2

Using the school report in Appendix D, choose one area (e.g. teaching and learning or leadership and management) and draw up a simple one-target action plan.

Feedback

Here is an example of a simple one-target action plan for this school in the area of leadership and management.

Target	to improve the management of year teams
Tasks	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Distribute updated job descriptions to classroom teachers and year heads 2. Train year heads in their duties (e.g. organising and chairing meetings, supervising and supporting classroom teachers, monitoring and evaluating administrative duties, etc.) 3. Year heads chair meeting with classroom teachers on updated job descriptions 4. Year heads run training session on completing registers with classroom teachers 5. Year heads set up system of regular meetings with teachers
Timescale	All tasks completed and system in place in 3 months
Resources	2 hours training time for year heads 1 hour meeting time with teachers 2 hours training with teachers 1 hour every two weeks for meeting between year heads and teachers Copies of updated job descriptions for classroom teacher and year heads Training materials
Responsibilities	Head of year 10 to manage all tasks, overseen by vice principal
Evaluation	Registers being taken in once a week Registers correctly filled out Meetings taking place between year heads and teachers every two weeks
End result	Management of year teams by year heads improved Realisation that regular meetings or forums for discussion such as the ones with year heads and teachers can feed into to other ideas for school improvement



Quality improvement and Education for All (EFA)

The World Conference on Education in 2000 in Dakar reconfirmed commitments to ensuring Education for All. These commitments focus on 6 areas (UNESCO:2002)

- Improving and expanding early childhood care and education
- Ensuring access to primary education for all by 2015 particularly girls, children in difficult situations and belonging to ethnic minorities
- Improving learning needs and life skills of young people and adults
- Achieving a 50% increase in adult literacy especially for women by 2015
- Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2015
- Improving the quality of education

As a small development agency VSO sees itself as being most effective by inputting into the sixth commitment of improving quality at school, district, regional and national level. This includes work on teacher training, curriculum and textbooks, improving school environments, training heads and district staff and 'whole school' and organisational development. Success in these areas also impacts on the other targets. For example if the quality of teaching and learning is

increased then more children will stay in school rather than leaving after one or two years. If curricula and textbooks are made more relevant (particularly for girls and ethnic minorities) then parents will see the benefits of education and start to send their children to school.

Visiting schools to conduct school inspections or supervision is a good 'way in' to quality improvement. The overview that you get (of the school and of other schools in the area) helps to identify which interventions would be most effective and suitable for you and your colleagues to work on and at which level. If you are based at a district or regional office, you will also have the advantage of an overview and work there may feed into the process of inspection and supervision itself. Here is a case study from a volunteer in Ghana.

Case Study – Ghana

VSO placed a volunteer Management Support Officer at the District Education with the Director, Front Line Assistant Directors (AD), Circuit Supervisors, and Head teachers.



Before

Before the volunteer arrived the District Education office used to analyse the District Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in a fairly simple way to show which schools were leading and which schools were last as well as pass rates for girls and boys. This was not followed up with planning with individual schools as to how the situation could be turned around. Communities were less involved in talking about improving school results.

The VSO volunteer started to look at the analysis of the BECE results together with the examinations officer. He trained the examinations officer in how to analyze the performance of the schools on a subject basis, come out with district average performance for each subject, determine which school fell below or above the district average, etc. A meeting was held with head teachers led by the examinations officer; AD supervision and the volunteer to discuss the results, find reasons for poor performance and set targets for improvements. The targets were written and copies given to the District Education office team. There was intensified supervision by Circuit Supervisors, volunteer, AD supervision and other members of staff to check on how schools were progressing towards the target. Issues identified were shared among staff back at the office for corrective measures to be taken.

Outcome

As a result, all the worst performing schools falling below the district average in 2003 came up above the district average in 2004. The overall effect was that it moved the district from 53rd position on the league table to 29th position. Girls' performance improved even though it was still lower than for boys. Head teachers were equipped with planning and management skills. There was improved and regular supervision: as one circuit supervisor put it "we were encouraged to visit schools more, for as we saw him [the volunteer] go we were also encouraged to go". It improved teamwork for the AD supervision who now worked more with the examinations officer and all of them more with head teachers. There was also potential to improve motivation of teachers as subject teacher wards were introduced. (PL&A, VSO, 2005)

It is important to celebrate the success of interventions, such as the one above, so both VSO and our partners can learn for the future.

📌 Summary

- 📌 The processes of feeding back to the school after an inspection in the South may be different to what you are used to. Good practice in this area involves respect, clarity and the joint identification of a way forward.
- 📌 Action plans for school improvement should clearly lay out where the school wants to be, how it will get there and how it will know when it has arrived.

- ④ Your VSO placement is likely to focus on improving the quality of education at some level. Ideas for appropriate interventions and how to initiate them are likely to come from researching, visiting and inspecting schools. These initiatives or nudges will eventually feed into the process of inspection itself in an on-going cycle of learning and development.

The final unit applies what you have learnt from the module through a 5-stage case study activity focusing on the before, during and after of an inspection.

? What next?

? Reflect back on the whole module so far. What have you learnt about the process of school inspection?

? What else can you do to extend this learning?



Unit 8. Over to You

This unit gives you the opportunity to apply and practise some of the tasks you have learnt about during this module through a case study. For those of you studying this pre-departure, issues arising from this case study may also act as a starting point for specialist training or phone briefings.

Aim and objectives

Aim: to put into practice some of the principles and processes of inspection through a case study in the Southern context

Objectives: by the end of the unit you will have:

-  Applied learning from the module to planning, researching and reporting on school inspection
-  Assessed your own learning and what you need to do to take forward personal development in this area

The case study - instructions

You will now work on a five-stage case study based around a school inspection in Sub-Saharan Africa. At each stage you will be given some information and then an activity to do. It is important that you do not move on to the next stage until you have done the activity. After each activity there is some feedback, which you can find in Appendix F. However, you do not need to consult the feedback until the end if you prefer. The case study is based on real examples from the South but the situation and issues that arise may not necessarily apply to your new context. The feedback too is only one person's perspective; there are other ways of approaching the issues.

Stage 1. Introduction

<p>Your role</p> 	<p>You work as part of the supervision and inspection team in the Northern region of a country in Sub-Saharan Africa. You have been in placement for 6 months. It is the dry season and 3 months into the beginning of an academic year. Your female colleague has mentioned that there is a chance the two of you will be asked to inspect a school the following week. She gives you some information about the school, some of which has been supplied by the head.</p>
<p>The school</p>	<p>It is a Community Day Secondary School with four forms (1-4) located in a rural area about 4 hours from the regional centre where you are based. It is about 40 kilometres off the tarmac road and near a small town. There are small charges for school fees.</p>
<p>Enrolment (maximum 50 students per class)</p>	<p>148 students (70% boys) (single stream) Form 1 - 50 students Form 2 - 43 students Form 3 - 30 students Form 4 - 25 students Last year total enrolment was 133</p>
<p>Characteristics of students</p>	<p>Many students are three or four years older than the year. This is especially the case in forms 3 and 4 where there are a number of boys in their early twenties. Most of the students are from the same local tribe and speak the same local language - Chitumbuka. About 5% come from the lakeshore region and speak another local language. There are no students with special needs.</p>

Language of instruction	English																										
Facilities	There are 4 classrooms, 3 administrative rooms (head's office, accounts office and teachers' room), a small library and a toilet block. There is no electricity in the school and no phone line.																										
Curriculum and subjects offered	The school follows the national curriculum teaching the core subjects of Maths, English Language (joint national language), Chichewa (joint national language), Social and Development Studies, Integrated Science, Life Skills (Forms 1 and 2 only), Physical Education (PE) and the following optional subjects: History, Geography, Biology, Physical Science, Literature in English and Literature in Chichewa																										
Number of teachers and staff	There are 8 teachers (6 men and 2 women) in the school including the head and deputy head. Three of the teachers and the deputy are from the central or southern regions of the country, the rest (including the head) from the Tumbuka tribe in the North. All the teachers have been at the school for three years or more apart from the two female teachers who have been there just over a year. They were upgraded from the local primary school, are only trained at this level and were recruited to fulfil a need for more women teachers. There is also an accounts clerk, a secretary, a messenger and a night watchman.																										
School leadership and Management	Both the head and deputy head have been in post for 2 years. They are both men.																										
Community involvement	The community is mostly made up of small-scale and subsistence farmers. There is some employment in the nearby town in shops, stalls and local services.																										
Performance	The school has pass rates of 75% for junior certificate (end of Form 2) and 15% for senior certificate (end of Form 4). This is fairly average for rural community day secondary schools in this region. The school usually does well in the sciences. This year's grades showed poor performance in English and in the new subject of life skills. Girls perform worse than boys in every subject.																										
Timetable	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>7.30-7.40</td> <td>Assembly</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7.40-8.20</td> <td>Period 1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8.20-9.00</td> <td>Period 2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Break</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>9.20-10.00</td> <td>Period 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10.00-10.40</td> <td>Period 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Break</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>10.50-11.30</td> <td>Period 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11.30-12.10</td> <td>Period 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lunch</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1.30-2.10</td> <td>Period 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2.10-2.50</td> <td>Period 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>From 3.00</td> <td>Extra curricular activities</td> </tr> </table>	7.30-7.40	Assembly	7.40-8.20	Period 1	8.20-9.00	Period 2	Break		9.20-10.00	Period 3	10.00-10.40	Period 4	Break		10.50-11.30	Period 5	11.30-12.10	Period 6	Lunch		1.30-2.10	Period 7	2.10-2.50	Period 8	From 3.00	Extra curricular activities
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11.30-12.10	Period 6																										
Lunch																											
1.30-2.10	Period 7																										
2.10-2.50	Period 8																										
From 3.00	Extra curricular activities																										
Last inspection	3 years previously																										



Activity 8.1

On first looking at this information about the school, is there anything particular that you want to investigate?

Stage 2. Planning

It is Monday morning and the regional education manager confirms that he wants you and your female colleague to go and inspect the school. He says that the head has been to see him a number of times requesting an inspection but he does not know why. Since the school is 4 hours away you will be provided with a vehicle and driver. However, the budget can only cover one night's accommodation in a rest house in the nearest town to the school. So you will leave the next day and return Wednesday evening. The school has been informed of your visit and is expecting you.



Activity 8.2

Plan the two days' timetable and activities for you and your colleague at the school. You will need to think about the following points:

- the focus of the inspection bearing in mind the resources you have
- your research methods
- your arrival
- your analysis and feedback



Stage 3. Change of Plan

Fuel vouchers for the vehicle had to be collected from the Office Supervisor who did not arrive at the office until 8.00am on the day of departure. This delayed your journey and you did not arrive at the school until just before lunch. The head fully understands and you have a good meeting with him. You look at your timetable together, making appropriate changes and planning when you will observe and interview people. You will not be able to observe life skills until the next day. You also tell him the documentary evidence you need. He informs you that the deputy head is attending a funeral. He hopes he will back the next day. When you ask the head why he has requested an inspection, he just says he wants to know how the school can improve.



Activity 8.3

If these issues affect your plan how will you change it?

Stage 4. Conflicting evidence

It is the end of the first day and despite the earlier disruption you and your colleague have managed to conduct quite a lot of research. However as you are comparing notes over a cup of tea, three issues arise.

1. One of the students came up to your colleague after she had observed an English lesson and informed her that the students had done that lesson once before – when it was observed by the deputy a couple of weeks ago. The student also said that they had been given the answers to the questions and some questions to ask the day before. The student does not want to be identified.
2. Each of you conducted a focus group. Your colleague had the two women teachers and the female secretary and you had 3 of the male teachers. Her group of women told her that the teachers respect and like the head but you found the opposite with the teachers you spoke to. They said that the head does not command respect and it is the deputy that runs the school.
3. Your colleague's documentary research of the timetable has shown that there are no periods allocated to life skills, despite it being a core subject for Forms 1 and 2



Activity 8.4

What are you going to do to address these issues?

Stage 5. Reporting back

You decided to concentrate on three key questions for teaching and learning (in Maths, Life Skills and English) and one key question for management. Here are the initial findings of your research around the key questions:

Teaching and Learning

↔ To what extent do the teachers show good subject knowledge?

Maths

Both teachers observed showed a **good** knowledge of the subject. They presented mathematical theory with a clear understanding of the process and answered questions well, which in the case of Form 4 were challenging. Research into the marking of homework and comments given to individual students also indicated sound levels of knowledge. The schemes of work divided up the syllabus effectively, and for Form 4 allowed enough time for pre-examination revision.

Life Skills

(Although this core subject for Forms 1 and 2 did not appear on the school timetable, the head assured us that it happened twice a week as part of the compulsory extra curricular activities for Forms 1 and 2. Although there was normally no class on a Wednesday, the teachers managed to change clubs around and one inspector was able to see a life skills class with Form 1.)

The teacher's knowledge of the subject was **poor**. His presentation on different types of media involved him reading from the syllabus documents. Students were not encouraged to ask questions. In conversation with the teacher after the lesson, he did not appear to know what was on the syllabus for life skills and could not recall what he had done in the previous lesson. The inspectors were told that the schemes of work and students' books for this subject were at the teacher's house since he did not usually teach it on this day. The Form 2 teacher for life skills was the deputy head who up to now had not been present during the two days of inspection.

English

The inspectors saw four English classes. One teacher (observed twice) showed a **satisfactory** knowledge of the subject. Her first lesson, which practised the skills of reading demonstrated excellent knowledge of the subject as she was able to answer some challenging questions from the class. Her second however, which revised the rules of reported speech, showed her knowledge to be only satisfactory and was disappointing in comparison to the day before. Discussing the lesson and her scheme of work with the teacher also backed up this latter view. There are some gaps in her knowledge particularly in the area of lexis and idiom that the teacher needs to fill. The knowledge of the other two teachers was **barely satisfactory**. The level of English of the teachers themselves was actually poor and it was therefore not surprising that they had difficulties answering students' questions about grammar and vocabulary. One teacher even spoke in Tumbuka for 5 minutes of the lesson. The division of content in both their schemes of work was confused and one was only partially completed.

☞ To what extent do the teachers plan effectively with clear learning objectives and suitable teaching strategies?

Maths

Good - the lesson plans came from the scheme of work and fitted into the rest of the week well. The learning objectives in both lessons were clear and achievable. The strategies chosen to meet the objectives were appropriate and interesting. In one, students listened to the teacher's explanation, had a chance to ask questions, did one problem together as a class and then worked in pairs on other problems from the textbook. At the end pairs swapped books to check each other's answers against the correct ones the teacher had put on the board. In the other class, students were finishing off some research into class heights and age. In groups they then had to plot or design graphs to show the results of their research. Having done this they presented their findings to other groups.

Life Skills

Poor - The inspector was not given a lesson plan and there was no evidence that the teacher himself had one. The objective for the lesson that the students were told was to 'learn about different kinds of media'. Teaching strategies consisted only of the teacher talking (mainly to the boys), writing on the board and the students copying down the information.

English

Satisfactory - All the teachers had planned their lessons and the plans showed some direct links to the schemes of work, reasonably clear objectives and some suitable teaching strategies. All the teachers had included elements of pair or group work for skills development or to practise new grammar and/or vocabulary taught.

☞ To what extent do teachers use methods and resources that enable all students to learn effectively?

Maths and English

Barely satisfactory. Although inspectors saw examples of well-managed pair/group work in all classes in these subjects, it is not clear whether this was organised to specifically address different learning needs or to show inspectors they were using more child-centred methodology. In interviews with the teachers and students concerned, it was clear that pair and group work were regular features in these lessons but teachers were not able to justify why they chose to do them. In all classes, but especially in English and in forms 3 and 4, there were large differences in ability. Some students seem only to speak English in lessons, never around the school or outside school. In Maths there was a plan to address these differing abilities in the scheme of work through different homework activities but the teacher said he had not had enough time to do this and had to concentrate on the more able students, who were more likely to pass the exam. Both inspectors identified students who could not see the chalkboard. In all the lessons in these subjects there was much greater participation from the boys in plenary and group work. One of the English teachers spent 5 minutes explaining something in Tumbuka. The inspector could clearly identify the 2 students who did not have Tumbuka as their first language and who were struggling to understand her explanation.

Life Skills

Poor. No attempt was made to use methods or resources that enabled all (or any) students to learn effectively. Even the presentation, which was read out from the syllabus, was directed at the boys, who were sitting on one side of the room.

Leadership and Management

→ How effectively are staff managed? (recruitment, deployment and development)

Above all both inspectors noticed divisions amongst the teaching staff and this seems to be divisions between the local Tumbuka teachers and those from other parts of the country. The local teachers respected and liked the head whereas the other teachers deferred to the deputy. There also seems to be disagreement over the hiring (over a year ago) of the two female teachers who are untrained at the secondary level.

The school has the right number of teachers, and their subjects skills are matched to the needs of the school overall but the teachers are not being deployed effectively. The two primary trained teachers are teaching English but their skills are in maths and life skills respectively. The deputy head, who is teaching life skills, is trained in English but not teaching any classes in this subject. Otherwise deployment of teaching staff is fair and most teachers have one period free a day. They use this time to plan lessons and mark homework.

Professional development of the teachers is minimal. There is no appraisal scheme and there is little evidence of any on-going training. There have been one or two observations of English lessons by the deputy head but it seems as if these were for assessment rather than development. Both maths teachers have attended two-day workshops organised by the region and funded by DfID. All the teachers express a need for more training especially in using more child-centred methodology and in planning schemes of work.



Activity 8.5

It is 3.30pm on the second day of your visit. You are meeting with the head and deputy (who has just arrived back) at 4.00. How are you going to organise your verbal feedback? What targets would you suggest for the school action plan and what activities could it organise to meet these targets? How will you solve any outstanding issues?

That is the end of the case study. If you have not already looked at the feedback, you can find it in Appendix F. Finally remember that if you were really faced with the situation in the case study, you would have your colleague to consult.

Summary & what next?

1. What have you learnt from doing the case study?

2. What issues has the case study raised?

(If you are having specialist training or a phone briefing, you may want to discuss some of these with the trainer)

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Glossary

Term	Definition
appraisal	as in staff appraisal, form of professional and personal development using target setting to enhance achievement
assessment	process to ascertain how well students have learnt and understood material taught, either by examination, test or less formal means
chalk and talk	traditional method of teaching, addressing whole class and writing on board
deployment	bringing or putting into place and/or effective action
descriptor	word or expression used to describe something
development	the promotion of material and socio-economic growth and advancement
evaluation	also describes process of judging quality and standards of education, but used here as final or summative judgement of those themes
evaluation criteria	points or issues against which judgement is made
exclusion	process whereby a student is asked not to return to school, normally on grounds of behaviour
governance	office or function of governing (see governing body)
governing body	officially-appointed group of persons with overall responsibility for running a school, supporting yet holding the head or principal to account
inclusion	process aimed at involving and including all students in education and making them feel valued
induction	formal programme to familiarise individuals with new place of work or study
inspection	exercise carried out, usually, by outside agents to judge quality and standards of a school
key skills	Usually literacy, numeracy, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), communication and information handling
key stage	Period of compulsory schooling eg key stage 2 (KS2), years 3-6 of primary education (ages 8-11)
leadership	drive and direction, encouragement and motivation of those for whom one is responsible
management	deployment of resources, human, material or financial
participatory planning and review cycle	VSO's monitoring and evaluation framework which involves the 4 stages of analysing, planning, doing and reviewing. Throughout the cycle there is full participation of all relevant stakeholders and continuous monitoring of both the process and the product.
performance management	form of staff monitoring and appraisal, which can also be linked to salary increments and bonuses
PTA	parent teacher association, a non-statutory grouping aimed at improving liaison between home and school
recruitment	seek and/or find personnel to fill vacancies e.g. teaching posts
scale of evaluation	range of numerical scores which match evaluation judgements eg 1 = good, 2 = satisfactory
school committee	group of school staff and/or others appointed for a specific purpose eg curriculum committee
self evaluation	judging quality and standards of education by the school itself
sixth form	usually post-16 students studying for 'A' level GCE or similar qualifications (based on traditional numbering of secondary school years)
stakeholder	anyone who has an effect on or is effected by a particular issue or activity
target setting	system for motivating and improving individual performance by setting goals for achievement

Appendix A - Evaluation Criteria

Grade	Overall effectiveness	Students' attitudes and behaviour	Teaching, learning and assessment	Leadership and management
1 Good	<p>Almost all students progress very well and the achievement of most is high. The school has effective inclusion strategies. Students relate well to each other, respect staff, are keen to learn and behave well. Most sixth form¹⁰ students are successful in progressing to their higher education or employment goals. Most teaching is at least good, with a considerable amount that is better than this. Any minor weaknesses are recognised and dealt with effectively. Leadership is strong and well developed through the school, while management ensures that the school runs smoothly and improves. Leaders are quick to identify and tackle weaknesses, dealing with them in their order of importance. The school has the confidence of parents and others, and promotes equality issues actively.</p>	<p>Students like their school and take a full part in all that it offers. They are normally interested or absorbed in their work and keen to achieve as well as they can. They behave well in and around the school and are willing to undertake work on their own accord. Relationships are harmonious. Students willingly accept responsibilities and carry them out well.</p>	<p>Most students make good progress and achieve well. Teaching methods are imaginative and lead to a high level of interest from most students. Individual needs are well catered for. Adults relate well to students and expect them to work hard, but the level of challenge is realistic and students are productive. Staff understand the next steps students need to take in their learning and they provide a wide range of activities to help them learn. Homework is challenging and extended assignments, for example in the sixth form, effectively enhance what is learnt in lessons. Marking is diagnostic, helps students to improve their work and gives teachers a clear picture of their knowledge, skills and understanding. This information is used well to inform planning and set challenging targets for all students</p>	<p>Leadership is principled, well established and dynamic at different levels in the school. There is a drive for improvement and a strong sense of direction. Staff share a common purpose and make an effective contribution to the school's goals and values. Relationships are cordial and characterised by mutual respect. The school reviews its performance and evaluates systematically. In terms of management, the school is organised efficiently and managed effectively. All staff are clear about their roles, responsibilities and personal objectives, and have ready access to guidance, support and relevant training. There is effective delegation of responsibilities. Target setting and the monitoring of achievement are well established for individual students and policies for behaviour, planning and assessment are reflected consistently throughout the whole school.</p>

¹⁰ Sixth form is the last year of school before higher education and students are approximately 18 years of age

Grade	Overall effectiveness	Students' attitudes and behaviour	Teaching, learning and assessment	Leadership and management
2 Satisfactory	<p>Most students make at least satisfactory progress across the range of subjects and courses. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in all stages, and often they are good. Students show sensible attitudes towards each other and school. Their care, support and guidance are sound. The curriculum is broad, well planned and meets statutory requirements. The school is committed to inclusion. The school is competently led and managed, there are clear lines of responsibility, and important weaknesses are identified and tackled. The school is improving steadily and parents are satisfied with it.</p>	<p>Most students like school. They willingly cooperate with teachers and other adults and take part in activities in and out of lessons. They work independently and cooperate well in groups. Behaviour is good and nearly all students are considerate to others.</p>	<p>Most students' learning and progress are at least satisfactory. Teaching is accurate; teachers have secure understanding of the curriculum. They seek to make work interesting and varied, and they involve students productively. Students understand what they are expected to do, and tasks have sufficient challenge to keep them working well independently or cooperatively. The school provides successfully for students who do not respond well to school or who have difficulties in learning. Relationships are constructive and there is sensitivity to the needs of individuals and groups. Homework extends class learning well. Students are given scope to make choices and apply their own ideas. Work is marked regularly and students are aware of the overall quality of what they have done. Teachers base their planning on their knowledge of student achievement.</p>	<p>Leadership is firm, competent and committed, and there are clear lines of responsibility. Staff reflect the school's aims and policies in their work; they understand the school's goals and their role in achieving them. The school monitors its performance and tackles weakness. There are examples of effective teamwork among staff, within and across key stages. The leadership team is respected and has the capacity to effect change. In terms of management, the school day runs smoothly and procedures are clear and generally followed. There is an up-to-date management plan that outlines the school's priorities for development. Improvements are being implemented and monitored effectively. The head teacher has identified staff leaders and appraisal systems are properly established. There are considered approaches to professional development. The school is supportive of new and supply teachers. Finances are managed efficiently and effectively and the deployment of resources discussed and agreed with senior management and governors.</p>

Grade	Overall effectiveness	Students' attitudes and behaviour	Teaching, learning and assessment	Leadership and management
3 Barely Satisfactory	The school, despite many satisfactory features, has marked weaknesses. A significant minority of students do not make enough progress. Some teaching (which may be as high as 10%) is unsatisfactory. There may be problems of behaviour, attendance or punctuality that have not been tackled. Leadership is slow to identify and act on weaknesses.	A significant number of students are either anxious about or indifferent to school. Most students work willingly on the tasks set, but the poor behaviour of a small minority has a detrimental effect on others. Some students pay little regard to the needs of others during break times. Some have a casual attitude to work; few take adequate responsibility for learning and there is an over-dependence on teachers. The contribution of sixth-formers is limited.	A significant proportion of students make limited progress and underachieve. Teaching is dull and fails to capture students' interest and enthusiasm. Activities are mundane and because of limited tuning to individuals' needs, some students get little from them. Greater effort is exerted on managing behaviour than learning. Some students are easily distracted and lack the motivation to work. Staff have an incomplete understanding of subjects or courses, resulting in patchy coverage. Their sights may be set too low and they may accept students' efforts too readily. Insufficient use is made of assessment in planning students' work. Targets set for most students are too low, too high or too general. Marking does little to help students improve. Recording is unsystematic and not related to progress.	Leadership at the top has little effect and lacks confidence and drive. It pays insufficient attention to teaching, learning and standards in one or more subjects or stages. Its style may be autocratic and insensitive, or so participative that there is a lack of decisiveness when it is needed. It is anxious about external evaluation. Management is disorganised, quirky or inexperienced, with the result that the school works inefficiently. Alternatively it may be so regimented that it inhibits the work of staff and the enthusiasm of students. Staff may be unsure of their responsibilities. Policies tend not to be employed systematically across the work of the school. Good intentions may not always be followed through. Performance management shows little sign of being linked to improvement. Staff development may be based on responding to a menu of opportunities rather than on an assessment of need.

Grade	Overall effectiveness	Students' attitudes and behaviour	Teaching, learning and assessment	Leadership and management
4. Poor	There is widespread underachievement. The teaching in a significant number of lessons (over 10%) is unsatisfactory or worse, and there is a poor climate for learning. Behaviour is poor, relationships are unsatisfactory and unauthorised absence is high. Leadership and management are ineffective, lacking a sense of direction, and any recent changes have not had time to have a significant effect. The school is, at best, static and shows little capacity to improve.	Many students are bored and unwilling to work as hard as they can. Poor behaviour in class disrupts more than a few lessons. Action to remedy the situation is ineffective. Observations of break times and discussions with students and parents reveal that some students are harassing others. There is little or no provision for students beyond lessons. Sixth form students do not participate in the wider school community.	Many students underachieve and make little or no progress. Teaching lacks challenge and little or no account is taken of what students already know. Groups of students may not be able to cope, and may disengage or misbehave. Inaccuracies in teaching show insecurity in the subject matter or in understanding how students learn. Many students are unwilling to work without supervision, and group work is unproductive. Target setting is based on hunches rather than any systematic assessment of students' work. Their work is marked infrequently and then superficially without any sense of it being used for improvement. Mistakes in work frequently go unchecked. Students are given very little idea of how well they are doing.	Poor leadership is muddled, besieged or incompetent. The school lacks a sense of direction. Senior staff are preoccupied with daily tasks and incidents and find it difficult to prioritise the most important issues and focus their efforts accordingly. Teamwork is weak or little in evidence. Staff do their own thing. Those with leadership skills or potential in middle management positions get little encouragement or support to develop their ideas or talents. Morale is low and there is frequent staff absence. The leaders do not demonstrate much capacity to improve the school. In terms of management, the school is disordered. It does not run smoothly and is frequently overtaken by events, even crises. Managers are defensive, staff are unclear about policies and responsibilities and time is not planned or used well. The school manages assessment procedures ineptly and records of students' progress are very uneven. Budget management is careless or unnecessarily cautious, leading to excessive surpluses or overspends. There is high staff turnover and probably falling enrolment. It is no place for a trainee teacher.

Adapted from Ofsted (2003)

Appendix B - LINK Community Development School Survey Questionnaire¹¹



Instrument 1 School Survey Questionnaire

For official use only

Record Number	Data entry conducted by	Data entry date (dd/mm/yy)
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Data Collection Details

1. Name of school
2. District
3. Fieldworker name (surname then initials)
4. Fieldwork date (dd/mm/yy)
5. Name of respondent (surname then initials)
6. Gender of respondent
 Male Female
7. Position of official in school (check box)
 Head Deputy Other (specify)

Indicator 1.1: Improvement in pupil learning outcomes

Standardized Learner Test Results (contextualise for each country)

	Literacy	Numeracy	Other(s)
8. year ()boys			
9. year ()girls			
10. year ()boys			
11. year ()girls			
12. year ()girls			
13. year ()boys			

14. Describe any factors that have adversely or positively affected learner outcomes

¹¹ LCD worked closely with VSO volunteers in the production of these materials and this is one of the instruments developed. Used with permission of LCD.

Indicator 1.2: Improvement in rates of educator attendance

15. Is the head teacher present today? Yes No

16. How many teachers work at the school (including head teacher)?

17. How many teachers were present and how many absent at the start of teaching today?

Present	Absent

18. Source of information for question 15 (tick as appropriate)

i. Direct observation	<input type="checkbox"/>	ii. Attendance book	<input type="checkbox"/>	iii. Other (specify)	
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19. Describe any factors that have adversely or positively affected attendance of teachers in the schools.

Indicator 1.3: Improvement in % rates of pupil attendance

20. What is the present official enrolment for the school?

21. What is the recorded number of pupils in attendance over a selected week?

22. Complete the following Pupils average Attendance Summary Table for (week date)

Year of school	Official enrolment girls	Official enrolment boys	Actual attendance boys	Actual attendance girls
1 st				
2 nd				
3 rd				
4 th				
5 th				
6 th				
Other				
Total				

23. Describe factors that have adversely or positively affected pupil attendance this year.

Indicator 1.4: Improved identification of pupils with special needs

24. Complete the following table. Please note that special needs must be documented in some manner in order for them to be recorded in this chart.

Year	No. pupils with documented special needs Boys	No. pupils with documented special needs Girls
1 st		
2 nd		
3 rd		
4 th		
5 th		
6 th		
7 th		
Total		

25. Describe any factors affecting education for pupils with special needs (ie a policy for SN pupils. The nature of support offered)

Indicator 1.5. Increase in the gross pupil/teacher ratio

Fieldworker establish the following information

26. Total school enrolment	
27. Total teacher number (incl HT)	
28. Pupil Teacher Ratio	

29. Describe any factors affecting the number of unfilled teaching posts

Indicator 1.6. : Improved infrastructure and teaching / learning resources

32. Number of classrooms	
33. Permanent	
34. Temporary	
35. Average number of learners per classroom	

36. Evaluate the following resources against local or national statutory guidelines

1. Meet or exceed requirements
2. Are below requirements
3. Are significantly below requirements

	1	2	3
School buildings			
Head teacher's office			
Staff room			
Staff accommodation			
Library			
Toilet facilities			
Drinking water			
Electricity			
Telephone			
School furniture			
Visual Aids			
Textbooks			
Teacher's handbooks			
Storage space for resources			

37. Describe any factors affecting infrastructure and teaching / learning resources

Appendix C - Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

<p>Collectivist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identity is based on membership of a social network or group - Strong family and social ties - Relationship prevails over task - Collective interests prevail over individual interests - Employer-employee relationship is like a family link 	<p>Individualist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identity is based on individual - People focus mainly on their own interests - Task prevails over relationship - Individual interests prevail - Employer-employee relationship is based on contract to mutual advantage
<p>Small Power Distance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inequalities should be minimised - Managers and staff are considered to be of equal importance in an organisation - Authority can be questioned - The ideal boss is a resourceful democrat - Decentralisation is popular - Subordinates expect to be consulted - Power is based on formal position, expertise and ability to give rewards 	<p>Large Power Distance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inequalities are expected and desired - Managers have considerable power over staff - Whoever holds the power is right - The ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat or good father - Centralisation is popular - Subordinates expect to be told what to do - Power is based on family or friends, charisma and ability to use force
<p>Feminine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prominent values in society are caring for others and preservation - People are warm and relationships are important - Everybody is supposed to be modest - Stress on equality, solidarity and quality of work life - Resolution on conflicts by compromise and negotiation - Women's liberation means that men and women should take equal shares both at home and at work 	<p>Masculine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dominant values in society are material success and progress - Money and things are important - Men are supposed to be assertive, ambitious and tough - Stress on equity, competition among colleagues and performance - Resolution of conflicts by fighting them out - Women's liberation means that women will be admitted to positions hitherto only occupied by men
<p>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comfortable with ambiguous situations and with unfamiliar risks - Students comfortable with open-ended learning situations - Few and general laws and rules - Belief in generalists and common sense - There should be no more rules than are strictly necessary 	<p>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acceptance of familiar risks; fear of ambiguous situations and concern with the right answers - Students comfortable in structured learning situations and concerned with the right answers - Many and precise rules and laws - Belief in experts and specialisation - Emotional need for rules, even if these will never work

Adapted from **Hofstede** (1991) in VSO's Skills for Working in Development (SKWID) Participant's Handbook (2004)

Appendix D - Verymany Senior Secondary School - an interim report

Standards of attainment

These are low, especially in the core subjects of English, maths and science, although individual subject results for biology and agricultural science are good (70% and 62 % respectively). Otherwise attainment in English-6%, maths-15% and in general science, chemistry and physics-13%, 13% and 4% respectively, are well below average. Reasons given are the poor grounding in English and maths of students entering the school in Grade 10. Maths is also seen as a 'difficult' subject and there is too little tradition of speaking or reading in English in the local community.

A writers' club has been set up to encourage more practical use of English and it is recommended that the maths department set up something similar in the form of a maths club, for example. The aim of this would be to make maths more accessible, more practical and more applied.

In history, government and geography, however, standards of attainment are high (92%, 89% and 60% respectively) as they are in Islamic Studies (92%). In commercial subjects standards of attainment are average-accounting 29% and economics 52% and in technical subjects they are varied and based on smaller numbers of candidates, (given in brackets). Home science 42% (36 candidates), woodwork 8% (40), visual arts 84% (25) and metalwork 71% (7). The above are based on the percentage of passes in the 2001 WASSC examination and do include some credits and distinctions. Results for the previous year were not available in this form.

It is recommended that these are found and tabulated in the same way so as to form a basis for comparison and a means of setting targets for following years. Results for 2002 can then be added to form a three-year rolling average. A breakdown of results according to gender would also be useful to track the progress of boys and girls separately.

It is further recommended that the good practice found in subjects like geography, where borderline candidates are identified, encouraged and given extra tuition, is replicated in other curriculum areas.

Progress and achievement of students.

Unlike standards of attainment as an objective measure of student performance, progress and achievement are based on the way individual students develop and consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills against their *own* prior attainment, rather than in comparison with other students.

It is recommended that the school explores ways in which individual student progress can be judged and celebrated as a way of motivating students who appear to be under-attaining. A comment to this effect could then be included on student report cards, instead of the redundant repetition of information already given i.e. 'weak pass, credit, etc'

Quality of teaching

This is at least satisfactory in the majority of cases. Subject knowledge is usually good and relations with students and classroom management sound. Most practice is quite didactic, relying on teacher input for the main part with some discussion and question and answer work. The size of some classes and the reticence of many students to answer in class often make this difficult, however.

Best practice seen is characterised by a lively presentation with an opportunity for the students to become involved in their learning. This was the case in geography, maths, English, physics and biology, but less so in some other subjects and with some other teachers, where notes were simply dictated or written on the board. Few extra resources are used, except for a globe in

geography to demonstrate the earth's axis and a model of the human skeleton in biology. Pace and timing are often missing from teachers' planning and sessions sometimes overrun. Valuable teaching and learning time is frequently lost from single and double periods of 35 and 70 minutes respectively, because teachers do not arrive in class on time, or more seriously do not arrive at all. Examples of even senior teaching staff not turning up for classes because they are 'busy' are seen too often.

Teaching classes must be the priority at all times for all staff with a teaching commitment and administrative duties fitted in around them.

Quality of learning, attitudes and behaviour

The quality of learning is varied. Where pupils pay attention, interact with the teacher and take part in the learning process, the quality of learning is good. However it is not always certain that students, although physically present and not being obviously disruptive are necessarily always following the lesson and taking part in the learning process. The fact that only a small number of them have textbooks and that other teaching resources are limited does not help. Some students also appear to have a phobia of subjects like maths and science.

The majority of students display positive attitudes towards their learning, however, and behaviour in class is usually good, although a significant minority of students are consistently late for school and for lessons. This is not always picked up by duty staff or subject teachers in a consistent way. The majority of class teachers do not mark their own register on a regular basis and it is therefore difficult to monitor lateness and attendance effectively.

Student attendance can be erratic anyway, especially before and after certain holidays. This was the case at Tabaski, for example, when attendance was very poor on the day before the holiday and for the whole week after it. Measures have now been taken by the administration to counter this by suspending students who illicitly extend holidays, using the formula: one-day extension, one-week suspension.

It is recommended that the school explores ways in which students can take more responsibility for their own learning, both in class and out. This could usefully form the focus of a staff workshop.

Curriculum and assessment

The curriculum offer at the school is broad-based and accommodates a range of student interest. There are specialist classes for commerce and science and students can choose from a number of 'elective' subjects. Content is dictated mainly by the WASSCE syllabus, which in many cases is extensive and difficult to cover in the three years allowed. Contact time is seriously eroded by the large number of public holidays and sporting events, particularly in the second term. It is therefore particularly important that classes start on time and are always taught, unless staff absence is unavoidable. If a system of cover for absent colleagues cannot be introduced, then absent teachers should set work for classes if they have prior notice of a workshop, for example. If illness keeps a teacher from class, the head of department should ensure that the class has meaningful work to get on with. All too often classes are left to their own devices with the result that if private study is done, it is not always done consistently or effectively.

Subject departments do have schemes of work for teachers to follow, but they tend to be cursory and form more of a course description, rather than making wider reference to methodology, resources or assessment opportunities.

It is recommended that subject departments take as a priority for development the revision and updating of their schemes of work. This could usefully be begun during the departmental time allocated at midday on Fridays.

Assessment is usually carried out in the form of twice-termly tests, which count eventually as 30% of the total examination marks in the final WAEC examination. Annually continuous assessment accounts for 60% of each student's marks (20% per term) with 40% for the end of

year examination. These tests, or continuous assessments as they are called, are given and marked by individual teachers, without departmental moderation and an agreed mark scheme. This can lead to inconsistency in the student results.

It is therefore recommended that these assessments are linked to the schemes of work in a more coherent way so as to ensure consistency in the way student performance is judged and recorded.

Leadership and management

The school is ably led by the former vice-principal, who was appointed as principal in November 2001. Since that time he has made an effort to streamline some of the functions of administration and remedy some of the poorer practice, which had previously developed. He is supported by the new vice-principal and a senior management team (SMT) of four senior masters, all of whom have different extra responsibilities. Two of them are also year or grade heads with teams of class teachers under them (the third is the head of English, who although on a higher grade is not a member of SMT.)

There is an issue surrounding the management of year teams and the effective monitoring and evaluation of class registers, both in being taken at all and also in being correctly completed. Lines of responsibility and management need to be made clearer, year heads need to monitor class teachers and the vice-principal needs to take a firmer overall role in co-ordinating the whole exercise. Job descriptions, although recently updated, have not been distributed to relevant staff. The job description for the classroom teacher is particularly important and needs to be made explicit and public, along with the job descriptions for all other posts.

The personalities and management approaches of the former vice-principal, now principal, and the present incumbent, differ substantially. The principal may find it necessary to continue his former role as vice-principal in being a presence around the school, at least at significant times of the day, in order to monitor staff and student activity. This is simply a question of playing to strengths as part of a management strategy. The principal will also need to further induct his deputy into the good practice that he himself developed in the post of vice-principal, as well as encouraging him to take more responsibility in helping to manage the whole school. He should be at ease in this role in the case of the principal's absence.

There is also a question surrounding the line management of heads of department (HoDs), who seem only willing to accept administrative supervision and not academic. This seems to stem from the fact that four out of the seven heads of department are non-nationals and see themselves as better qualified and experienced than their putative line managers, i.e. senior teachers/masters. This issue of status and promotions of relatively inexperienced staff over others more experienced is a sensitive one and will need to be dealt with accordingly.

The example given previously of the head of grade 12 being recognised by being placed on a higher point on the pay scale is a case in point. This individual has been at the school for a number of years and is bringing his family up in Verrymany; both his children were born here. Non-nationals need to feel and be involved in the running of the school and decision-making, particularly those who demonstrate commitment and ability. This should include promotion to senior posts on objective criteria; the school is self-governing and the board needs to interpret national guidelines pragmatically.

Other management issues include forward planning and time management and time keeping. This applies at both senior and middle management levels. There is a clear need for all managers to have and keep a diary for recording events and commitments and keeping to them.

An annual calendar of events with clear deadlines published well in advance will also avoid the sort of last-minute crisis management seen recently in returning WAEC continuous assessment forms and getting student report cards out on time, for example.

A more-detailed termly schedule of events including deadlines, meetings and workshop dates will also enable all staff to plan their time to accommodate such events, especially if they include weekends. If staff are sent on workshops by senior management, then the HoD must be informed and the teacher must leave work for classes left untaught.

Time has now been allocated on Friday at midday for departmental meetings. These should be attended by the principal and vice-principal on a rota basis to give them the profile they deserve. Agenda and minutes should also be published and a copy kept by the senior management.

Staffing, resources and accommodation.

The school is at present adequately staffed except in English and a certain lack of specialism in science. The bursar is finding it difficult to reconcile the responsibilities of his post with his newfound role as member of the House of Representatives. This has placed an extra burden on the Principal who has found himself having to concentrate on financial management at the cost of the general running of the school.

The majority of teaching staff is non-national, and issues surrounding this have been discussed under management. In order to avoid any feeling of marginalisation or alienation, a staff association should be set up, to be consulted and involved in the decision-making process. There is also a need to develop staff appraisal for non-nationals as well as for nationals. This is an equal opportunities issue.

Resources are scarce, although they have been improved with Girls Education Fund (GEF) money but there is a need now to set in place departmental capitations and to make these public. These would be based on the needs of the subject and the numbers of students involved. Few students have their own books in subjects outside the core, the promised computers for the new block have still not arrived and there are concerns about the running costs for generating electricity, especially if the air-conditioning plant is in operation.

Accommodation and furniture are both problem areas. Accommodation is insufficient at times of pressure such as public examinations and requires students to attend in two separate shifts at all times anyway. Classrooms are often very dirty and unwelcoming and sweeping floors with traditional switches is both impractical and a health hazard. Dust is simply pushed into the air, is breathed in by students and then settles again on the floor. Afternoon shift students leave rooms dirty for others to clean in the morning. Classrooms need to be wet cleaned each day by caretaking staff, not by students, before morning session begins. Students are not supervised anyway as class teachers rarely attend for registration and it is nearly always the girls who end up with the task of sweeping, in the face of any notion of equal opportunities. Desks and benches need to be wiped with a damp rag as well.

There is an urgent need for a whole-school audit of accommodation in order to judge whether certain redundant or underused areas can be adapted for general use. Further applications to the Department of State for Education (DOSE) for the provision of adequate furniture should also continue to be made.

School Co-ordinator
June 2002

cc Permanent Secretary, Department of State for Education;
Chair of Board of Governors;
Principal;
Country Director, VSO.

Appendix E - Example of High School Improvement Plan

Target

Improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise the GCSE results in English, Maths, Science and ICT

Action	Lead staff	Resource/Inset needs	Monitoring and evaluation procedures	Deadline	Success Criteria	Overall costs
Training for staff in baseline data, target setting and tracking. Data available in teacher planners and via ICT in staffroom	SB/TM/LY	Access to pupil tracker software in staffroom	Monitored by HoDs/SMT link on a term basis Evaluation June 2005	September 2004 June 2005	All staff understand and can apply a range of data	£8500
Provide whole school training on assessment for learning	LEA, SMT/HoDs	One whole school inset day in 2004	Monitored by HoDs/SMT link on a term basis Evaluation June 2005	September 2004 June 2005	All staff giving effective oral and written feedback	£2000 and LEA grant
Provide whole school training on effective group work leading to peer coaching (including observations in the summer term)	LEA	Inset on Group work in February 2005	Monitored by peer observations. Evaluation by learning log to HoDs	June 2005	Staff express greater confidence in utilising group work activities	£1500 from Standards fund
Support under-performing subject staff following Department Review process by developing a coaching programme	BS/MT/SMT/HoDs	Inset appropriate to individual need. Support from LEA	Target monitored by line manager on half term basis. LEA/Chairs committee Evaluation July 2004	July 2004	Individual targets met. 100% lessons 'satisfactory' or better	£2500

HoD = Head of Department

SMT Senior Management Team

ICT = Information Communication Technology

LEA = London Education Authority

Appendix F - Feedback on case study from Unit 8

The following pieces of feedback for the five stages of the case study are suggestions only. They serve as examples. Your own plans, questions and reports will also contain valid strategies and analysis and may be discussed as part of your phone briefing.

Feedback on introduction activity 8.1

On first looking at the information about the school the following questions arise:

- Why is enrolment better this year?
- Is the high percentage of boys in the school representative for this area?
- Are there more girls this year than last year?
- What is the ratio of boys to girls in each year?
- Why are students dropping out from Form 2 onwards and who is dropping out?
- What does the school consider to be 'special needs'?
- What kind of a professional development programme has been introduced for the two primary teachers?
- Where were the head and deputy head working before their appointments?
- What do the majority of students go on to do? (Those who pass the final exam and those who fail it)
- Why does the school do well in the sciences?
- Why did the school do badly in English and Life skills last year?
- Why do the girls perform badly in all subjects?
- What kind of extra-curricular activities does the school offer?
- What was the school action plan following inspection three years ago?

Feedback on planning activity 8.2

Your timetable should take account of the following issues:

Focus of the inspection	<p>Given your limited resources, it may be better to focus on one or two areas only. Since the head has asked for the inspection, there may be some issues around management. The poor performance in English and life skills in last year's set of results might also be a priority. Since English is the language of instruction, it is crucial that students are taught well in this subject. Life skills deals with important issues such as communication, relationships and HIV and AIDS – its introduction into the curriculum is part of the government's mainstreaming of gender and sexual issues. However, how much do you and your colleague know about these subjects at secondary level? This also might effect what you focus on.</p> <p>Within these two areas of management and teaching and learning, you will want to choose between 1-3 key questions to direct your research.</p>
Research methods	<p>You should employ a variety of research methods to match your key questions. It is probably too late and too time-consuming to design questionnaires. So for management you will want to observe generally, talk to teachers and other staff and the head and deputy themselves. You will also want to look at documentary evidence such as personnel files, timetable, training records and materials, duty roster etc.</p> <p>For teaching and learning you will want to look at documentary evidence such as lesson plans, schemes of work and students' books. You will want to talk to teachers and students and observe classes. You will obviously want to watch English and life skills classes and you may want to choose another more neutral subject such as maths or social studies to use as a benchmark.</p> <p>You need to factor in time to carry out all this research, fitting in with lesson times and when teachers and students are free.</p>

Your arrival	You will need to spend some time with the head at the beginning of the inspection. Introducing yourself, building the relationship, taking him through the stages of inspection and what happens afterwards etc. You will also need to fine tune your timetable with him, and ask him for the documents that you need. It is also a good idea to ask him where you can base yourselves in the school (libraries are often good for this). You may also want to ask him some questions to gather more information about the school (for example why he requested this inspection).
Your analysis and feedback	Remember to factor in time when you and your colleague can update each other on progress. This is important at the end of the first day so that you can change the second day if necessary. It is also vital to meet before you give feedback to the head. You may need some time to talk about your approach and what you want to raise. It may be common practice to also give feedback to individual teachers. You may have to do this in the breaks. In many parts of the South it gets dark by 6.00pm and since there is no electricity in the school you will want to start your feedback as early as possible, allowing for additional meetings to clear up any other problems.
Travel and Contingency	Remember that it takes 4 hours to get to the school. You are unlikely to leave before 6.00 so your timetable should start anywhere from 10.00 onwards. Always allow for the fact that in the development context, things do not always go to plan especially if there is travelling involved. Add in some extra time to allow for this.

You may find that rather than plan your visit down to the last minute, you leave it fairly flexible so that you can draw it up when you are with the head.

Feedback on change of plan activity 8.3

Late arrival – if you have factored in some time for contingency, this may not be too disastrous. You may have to reduce the number of observations and focus groups. Or reduce the scope of your research - to just English for example. You might also be able to do more outside school hours.

Deputy's absence – this is more serious as there will only be one perspective from management. You will have to hope that he is back tomorrow. Or you could reduce the scope of your research to just teaching and learning. One strategy might be to ask the head what his preferred focus would be. You may get a more satisfactory answer than the one he gave when you asked why he had requested the inspection.

Feedback on conflicting evidence activity 8.4

1. It would not be ethical to break the students confidentiality. The best thing to do would be to request to observe the teacher again. In your final report you can make loose reference to the difference in the two lessons without giving anything away. You may also want to talk to the teacher (if you haven't done so already) using the second lesson or her scheme of work as a starting point for the dialogue.

2. This is interesting and usually means that there might be more under the surface. It is worth talking through in depth with your colleague to pick up any obvious patterns or hints from your other research. You can either organise to talk to the same focus groups again, or swap inspectors or swap around the groups. You may also want to include other staff. You may want to interview staff separately. You may have to probe more to get to the bottom of the matter.

3. This is also interesting and may explain why the results in this subject are poor. You will want to ensure that you see two lessons in this subject so make it a priority to check that with the

head the next day. You may also want to factor in time (if you haven't done so already) to research life skills schemes of work and speak to the life skills teachers and some of the students.

Feedback on reporting back activity 8.5

The first thing you may want to do is talk to the deputy head since up to now he has not been part of your research. He can help you on a number of issues: his life skills classes, his role in observing the subject of English and his relationship with the head and the teachers. His answers are likely to inform your key questions further.

How are you going to organise your verbal feedback?

Start off by thanking the head and outlining the process of the inspection and the feedback. Tell him the focus of your inspection if you have not already done so.

As we saw in Unit 7 start with the positives, perhaps something general about the school you have observed (e.g. students look happy or behave well). Then move on to the specific positives such as some good practice in the classroom especially in the subject of maths and in the area of lesson planning. You may also want to say something positive about his recruitment strategies as his teaching staff now has a range of subject skills and includes two women (which has pushed up enrolment of girls from 25% last year to 30% this year).

You now need to be specific about improvements that could be made. The main three touch on both the areas of management and teaching and learning – timetabling of life skills, deployment of staff in the subjects of English and life skills and the professional development of staff in these and other subjects. Professional development may be content upgrade for the two primary trained teachers and work on inclusive practices for other teachers. You may find that you still need to ask more questions in these areas such as why the deputy head is not teaching English? This is your opportunity to do so. But make sure you are clear about what is unsatisfactory with the current arrangements. Also give the head and the deputy the chance to offer comments if they want.

You may now want to move on to the action plan and specific targets. Encourage them to come up with the targets and ideas as much as possible. When you have a basis for an action plan, agree the next stage in the process.

What targets would you suggest for the school action plan?

Targets

1. Improve the deployment of staff so that English and life skills are adequately covered with skilled teachers and life skills classes take place within school hours
2. Set up a professional development programme for all staff
3. Train all teaching staff in basic inclusive classroom practice

What activities could be organised to meet these targets?

Activities

Target 1

- Change around the timetable
- Organise peer observation programmes for English and life skills
- Upgrade language skills of teachers where appropriate
- Initiate a staff development programme (see target 2)
- Send teachers on workshops in these subjects if appropriate

Target 2

- Consult teachers on their professional needs
- Develop programme based on needs and resources (use mentoring, peer observation, visit neighbouring schools, source books)
- Implement programme

Target 3

- Send one or two teachers on a workshop on inclusive classroom practice (one of the Maths teachers already has some sound knowledge which could be built on)
- Use these teachers to train others in these practices at school level
- Use these teachers to observe others and offer ideas

How will you solve any outstanding issues?

Having spoken to the deputy head before reporting the feedback, one might have a better idea as to the issue between himself and the head and how to address it. The best solution might be to raise it as a question to both the head and the deputy at the end. For example:

“How are you working together?” Or

“How do the teachers respond to the two of you as a team?”

This may lead to useful discussion. It is important to be respectful and non-judgemental as to the situation but also clear how the issue is impacting on the school's effectiveness. One strategy might be to call a meeting of all the staff and discuss what is going on. Bringing conflict out into the open is often the first step towards solving it.