

Extending the school inspection cycle

Consultation response form

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Responses should be returned by 25 November 2019 to:

Education Business Planning and Governance Division
The Education Directorate
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

or completed electronically and sent to:

e-mail: Education-BusinessPlanningGovernance@gov.wales

Question 1 – Do you agree to the making of The Education (Amendments Relating to the Intervals for Inspection of Education and Training) (Wales) Regulations 2020 which will come into force on 1 September 2020 to allow the partial suspension of school inspections to take place in 2020–2021?

Agree	✓	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Supporting comments

The Council previously expressed its support for the suspension of school, nursery and PRU inspections during 2020-21, in its written response to the consultation document published by Estyn in May 2019. The Council therefore supports the making of the Education (Amendments Relating to the Intervals for Inspection and Training (Wales) Regulations 2020, in order to facilitate this change.

Question 2 – We would like to know your views on the effects that the making of The Education (Amendments Relating to the Intervals for Inspection of Education and Training) (Wales) Regulations 2020 would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:

- i) opportunities for people to use Welsh
- ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Supporting comments

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Question 3 – Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy to make The Education (Amendments Relating to the Intervals for Inspection of Education and Training) (Wales) Regulations 2020 could be formulated or changed so as to have:

- i) positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language
- ii) no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Supporting comments

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Question 4 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

In addition to expressing support for the draft regulations, which will allow Estyn to partially suspend its inspection cycle during 2020-21, the Council wishes to restate a number of key points that we made previously, in response to Estyn’s (May 2019) consultation on the proposed transition year.

The Council wishes reiterate its support for Estyn’s proposal to continue to monitor schools within statutory follow-up categories during 2020-21. The Council also notes that there was a general

consensus amongst those responding to the Estyn consultation, in favour of continued inspections for these schools, during the transition year.

The Council also wishes to once again highlight the fact that Estyn will be inspecting the delivery of new ITE partnerships (those that started in September 2019 and those beginning in 2020), during the 2020-21 transition year. It is important that Estyn provides the partner schools with clarity regarding its expectations for both ITE inspections, interim visits and transition year engagement visits, including confirmation of how many times they are likely to be visited during the year.

Finally, the Council wishes to reiterate a number of points regarding the planned engagement visits and how to ensure their usefulness. These are as follows:

- It will be important to ensure that the purpose and format of the engagement visits are carefully thought out and fully explained to schools and headteachers as early as possible in the process.
- Schools should be reassured that the engagement visits will be different to inspections and that the focus will be on supporting schools and teachers as the new curriculum is introduced. It is particularly important to make this clear in order to ensure that schools do not over-prepare for visits. EWC has become aware of anecdotal evidence that suggests schools are already adopting this mind set in preparation for the engagement visits.
- Engagement visits could be used to help foster a supportive environment, in which schools are encouraged to experiment as the new curriculum is introduced.
- The success of the engagement visits will largely depend on the quality of guidance and information provided to schools by Estyn, during (and in advance of) the visits.
- Greater clarity is required, from Estyn, regarding what will happen in the event that concerns regarding the quality of provision become evident during an engagement visit.
- It will be important to ensure that Estyn has the organisational capacity to achieve its stated intention of visiting all schools and PRU's during the transition year.
- The approach of inspectors must clearly communicate the distinct and more informal nature of the engagement visits, emphasising the importance of a two way dialogue and mutual learning. Estyn will therefore need to provide appropriate training to inspectors, in advance of the engagement visits, ensuring that they understand their personal role in reassuring schools that they are not being inspected.
- Consideration should be given to the possibility of involving other sectors affected by the curriculum changes (including further education and youth work) in the engagement process.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: