



**EDUCATION EXECUTIVE**

**CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR THE HMIE SCHOOL INSPECTION  
FRAMEWORK STARTING IN AUTUMN 2011**

**REPORT BY HEAD OF EDUCATION (QUALITY ASSURANCE)**

**A. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To advise Elected Members of a suitable response to the Consultation Paper on proposals for the HMIE school inspection framework starting in autumn 2011.

**B. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Education Executive approve the terms of the proposed response attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

**C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS**

<b>I Council Values</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Focusing on our customers' needs</li><li>• Being honest, open and accountable</li><li>• Providing equality of opportunities</li><li>• Developing employees</li><li>• Making best use of our resources</li><li>• Working in partnership</li></ul>
<b>II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)</b>	None
<b>III Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)</b>	None
<b>IV Consultations</b>	Education Service Officers All Head Teachers Education PDSP

## **D. TERMS OF REPORT**

### **1. Background**

HMIE are seeking written response about their proposals for school inspections. The deadline for receipt of written submissions is 17 December 2010.

### **2. The Need for Change**

The existing school inspection framework was introduced in 2008. However, to ensure that inspection remains up-to-date and has the greatest benefit to learners HMIE has identified a number of areas within its school inspection framework that need to change. These proposed changes are in line with *The Crerar Review (2007)*, which reviewed the place of scrutiny in public services, and *Curriculum for Excellence*.

The areas that HMIE are asking for views about are:

- How schools are selected for inspection.
- How to improve partnership working and increase their focus on schools' own self-evaluation and how they are improving.
- The size and membership of the inspection team.
- How HMIE can improve their impact whilst using fewer resources.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The submission from West Lothian Council Education Service to the consultation on proposals for the HMIE school inspection framework is contained in Appendix 1.

The consultation paper proposes that there is a need to link Validated Self Evaluation more closely to the HMIE inspection process through improved partnership working. West Lothian has always worked in close partnership with HMIE resulting in our schools being well prepared for school inspections. In addition, HMIE have acknowledged that our quality assurance systems are robust and challenge schools to raise their expectations of what can be achieved through systematic approaches to self-evaluation.

## **F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES**

The Crerar Review 2007

Public consultation on proposals for the HMIE school inspection framework starting in autumn 2011

<http://www.hmie.gov.uk/generic/school+inspection+framework+review>

Appendices/Attachments: 1

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## **Appendix 1**

Response from West Lothian Council on Proposals for the HMIE School Inspection Framework Starting in August 2011.

West Lothian Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposals. The following comments relate to the numbered proposals in the Consultation Document.

### **1. Better use of information on schools and centres to make sure we inspect where it really matters**

We agree that school inspection should be proportionate. However, sampling needs to be planned to ensure that all schools have their self-evaluation validated within a reasonable timescale.

A local authority's Quality Assurance team is best placed to scrutinise its schools and to support any identified 'at risk' schools. If these procedures are rigorous and robust there should be no schools identified as 'at risk'.

### **2. Continue to inspect what really matters**

We welcome the proposals outlined in paragraph 2. In particular, the suggested focus by HMIE on the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence across the school rather than in four subject departments. We support the use of specialist inspectors taking a closer look at specific curriculum areas to identify and share good practice. More opportunity for professional dialogue would also be appreciated by staff.

### **3. Greater emphasis on getting everyone involved**

The proposal to increase parental involvement in inspections is commended. Further clarification would be appreciated about how HMIE would ensure that the majority view (rather than the minority one) was reflected.

### **4. Increasing staff involvement in inspection**

West Lothian Council's school review process currently involves school senior managers and other professionals, such as educational psychologists. Involving these professionals in inspections would seem a natural progression. However, prior to any inspection, local circumstances would need to be taken into account when determining the formation of the team.

Further clarification is needed regarding what is meant by the statement 'It will also allow inspection teams to understand better how well staff know the school's strengths and aspects for development.'

### **5. Clearer, more accessible reports**

The existing report is already 'thin' in the extreme. Therefore, we would not support the suggestion of a shorter report. We would question how a shorter report could reflect the quality of the school's progress.  
An online report is welcomed.

## **6. Shorter period of notice**

We agree that one week's notice for schools would be sufficient. However, if local authority staff (other than school senior managers) are to be part of the inspection team more notice would need to be given to the authority.