Jacqueline Baxter   *Editor*

School Inspectors

Policy Implementers, Policy Shapers in National Policy Contexts

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Foreword: Inspecting Schools—Assembling Control?

It seems a strange paradox that in this era of 'rolling back the state', school inspection has been revived, reinvented and rolled out by so many governments seeking to find new approaches to controlling schooling. Yet school inspection is surely an idea whose time has come, even if the practice of inspecting schools has been around, in some form or another, for centuries. Inspection has become a critical weapon in the armoury of 'reforming' states seeking to secure new means of control over public services in a period where conventional hierarchical/bureaucratic systems of government control have been dismantled. Inspection processes promise solutions to different problems of governing in these transitions. They offer a way of tracking policy implementation and performance 'at a distance'; a process for scrutinising the performance of semi-autonomous professionals; a means of installing and promoting a competitive ethos in educations systems; and a legitimating independent and objective evaluative process in an era where publics have become increasingly sceptical about government claims.

Such promises have underpinned the spread of school inspection in many jurisdictions. Nevertheless, fulfilling these promises has proved harder in practice and there is a strong sense that regular reinvention sometimes known as continuous improvement or even permanent revolution has been significant for the organisation and practice of school inspection as states try to find the 'right mix' for governing schooling at a distance. That includes trying to work out how big that distance should be (how long is an arm's length in governmental terms?)—and how it should be spanned: what personnel, practices, and organisational forms should constitute school inspection. When 'an inspector calls' who are they? How do they evaluate schools? What sorts of expertise do they bring to bear on the school? What sorts of knowledge do they collect? And what do they do with that information? The school inspector is an apparently vital cog in the machinery of governing schooling, but has only recently become a focus for sustained study.

The thing we call school inspection has proved to be a shape shifting activity. In part, this reflects the pressures for change and innovation that weigh so heavily on the organisation of public services in the contemporary world. There is an almost

constant demand for improvement, innovation and transformation as a means of demonstrating that organisations—and the governments that direct them—are not standing still or 'coasting' in the face of a turbulent environment. The variety of systems of school inspection (sharply revealed in this collection) also reflects the different institutional inheritances of the national systems in which inspection is organised. However, it is important not to make too much of this institutionalist view of 'path dependency', since many of the cases featured here reveal radical breaks in design, or even abolition followed by reinvention.

This variability of inspection might also be viewed in terms of the diversity of elements that have to be assembled in order to bring school inspection into being (borrowing loosely, as many have done, from the Deleuzian idea of assemblage/ *agencement*). Inspection needs a *place*—both a location in the apparatuses and relations of governing and a set of physical spaces that it inhabits (at different levels—national, international, local). Those places, as Doreen Massey (2005) and other geographers have argued, are relational: they are formed out of, and condense, patterns of connections, flows of power and more. In the process, they produce the distances involved in 'governing at a distance'. Second, what sort of *knowledge* does inspection require? What sort of expertise supports inspection as a practice and what sort of knowledge does it produce? Third, what sorts of *objects* are deployed in the process of inspection (handbooks, recording devices, forms, standardised vocabularies, etc.)? Fourth, in what sorts of *practices* is the process of inspection enacted—how are inspections conducted (on and off stage)? Perhaps most importantly, inspection needs particular types of *people*: Are inspectors current teachers or school leaders? Are they previously experienced teachers? Are they formed in conventions other than pedagogy (the law, scientific observation, etc.)? Inspectors embody and enact the process of inspection—without them, there would only be data. National school inspection systems vary in each of these elements—and in how they are combined into an agency and a process that appears coherent. In the chapters that follow, it is possible to see some of these variations, the different national practices of inspection that result and their embodiment in different types of inspector.

As this collection demonstrates, this attention to variation matters in several ways. It matters because school inspection has become so significant for the ways schooling is governed and yet too often sounds as though it is the same practice. It matters because school inspection has been deployed by governments for many different purposes (evaluating performance, improving performance, regulating professionals, enforcing policy, demonstrating governmental competence and more) and yet involves divergent types of mechanism which may be more or less appropriate to these objectives. It matters because school inspection has occasionally become the focus of professional, public and political controversy (reflecting its increased salience in governing terms) and it would be useful to know what aspects of inspection make it vulnerable to controversy. Finally, it matters because the temptation is to treat school inspection as a sort of 'black box' for school improvement—a governmental tool whose effects can be assessed or evaluated. But unless we open the black box and understand the complex assembly of

elements that go into a particular version of school inspection, we cannot hope to understand any effects or why they might be different from those visible elsewhere. In particular, the different arrangements of inspection and the different embodiments in types of inspector are critical to these ambitions of governing. This book takes an important step towards unlocking the black box and laying bare some of the mysteries of school inspection.

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Contents

Chapter 1
School Inspectors as Policy Implementers: Influences and Activities

Jacqueline Baxter

Abstract This chapter introduces the idea of school inspectors as implementers of public policy, framing their role within the context of policy implementation and the governance of education. Using a framework for policy implementation developed by Weible and Sabatier (Handbook of public policy analysis. Taylor and Francis, London, pp. 123–136, 2006), it presents a modified framework for investigating inspectors' work and practices as policy implementers. In so doing it questions their role as policy shapers and policy coalition workers in the context of the practice of inspection in Finland, Sweden, England, Germany, The German State of Lower Saxony, The Netherlands, The Republic of Ireland and The Austrian province of Styria. Introducing the idea of policy learning it examines the ways in which policy learning theory has contributed to implementation theory, in order to further reflect on these issues in the final chapter of this book.

Keywords Policy implementation · Governance · School inspection · Policy learning · Advocacy coalition framework

Introduction

Education policy in common with other public services has over the last 20 years undergone significant change, in response to global economic, social and political drivers. International turbulence, the rise of neoliberal modes of thinking first posited by The Chicago School of Economics in the form of Milton Friedman's approach to economic policy and the diminished role of the public sector within this (Friedman 1993, 1995, 2009).

As part of this more general trend or neoliberal turn as it has been termed, there has been an upturn in the growth and expansion of public service regulatory bodies

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(see for example Clarke 2007), which have grown in response to governments' belief in the so called citizen consumer who is entitled to choice in public services and which is premised on the tenets of public choice theory (see for further information Clarke and Newman 1997; Clarke et al. 2007). Regulatory agencies, used interchangeably here with the term inspectorate, have mushroomed in order to offer readily available statistics and information that will aid the citizen consumer to choose services in what amounts, in many OECD countries to a quasi-public service marketplace.

In the case of education, school inspection as a means of both governing and improving standards in education, has witnessed an exponential growth in popularity, and across Europe Inspectorates are developing new inspection methods and modalities that respond to increasing levels of decentralized governance. This decentralisation is characterised by a shift from central bureaucratic forms of governance to a dispersal of governing power over a wide variety of new networked organisations (Newman 2001). Inspectorates play a central part within these new systems, acting as policy implementers that drive and facilitate the achievement of policy goals. They also function as a central element within national accountability mechanisms of individual countries.

Inspectorates are a key element in policy networks that have developed since the decline of hierarchical model of government and a move away from the public bureaucracy state (Hood 1990). They are one amongst numerous organisations or 'assemblages' (Clarke and Newman 1997), that offer both expertise and the opportunity for government to govern at arm's length. They provide the, 'many eyes', many hands,' approach that have permitted the reformulation of traditional approaches to regulation, whilst also performing accountability mechanisms which provide any or all of the following:

1. Prevention of abuse, corruption, and misuse of public power

2. Assurance that public resources are being used in accordance with publically stated aims and that public service values (impartiality, equality, etc.) are being adhered to.

3. Improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of public policies.

4. Enhancing the legitimacy of government and improving public trust in politicians and political institutions

5. Lesson learning and preventing the recurrence of past mistakes. (Flinders 2008, p. 169)

Increasingly education and inspection policy can no longer be said to be confined to the national context but emerge as part of a, 'new policy community in Europe (Grek 2015, p. 38). This community manifests through organisations such as The Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI), and is shaped by policy innovations and brokering which emanate from international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and development (OECD). International comparisons such as the OECD's PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), have produced a system in which school improvement is driven largely by data and notions of what constitutes quality in education is crafted and shaped by international reports on national systems of education (Ozga 2011).

These international comparators have proven very seductive to policy makers, resulting in efforts to form and shape inspectorates in order to make them more 'effective' in their work. This in many cases, for example England and Sweden, has resulted in a remodelling of the inspection workforce (see Chap. 3, this volume). Even in cases where the workforce has not been entirely re modelled, the implications and effects of policy changes, driven by the constant desire to effect school improvement, have had a profound influence on inspectors and the ways in which they go about their work. What constitutes 'school improvement' is by no means clear cut, but the discourses created by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) have become in many senses, hegemonic, the organisation becoming 'a transcendent carrier of reason' creating a 'consensual community' in which education functions primarily as an economic driver (Grek et al. 2011, p. 47). Discourse within this volume is understood as Foucault elaborated it (Foucault 1969), describing it as the myriad ways of constituting knowledge, together with social forms of subjectivity, social practices and power relations which not only produce and reproduce meaning but that are also constitutive of the nature of the individuals that create and are governed by this discourse. In relation to Fig. 1.1 it is envisaged as a dynamic process of creation, acting between and within the various elements that go to make up implementation practices and processes.

Within this international discourse inspectorates and inspectorates are one of a number of policy actors,' who may be classed as 'policy brokers', that is, people
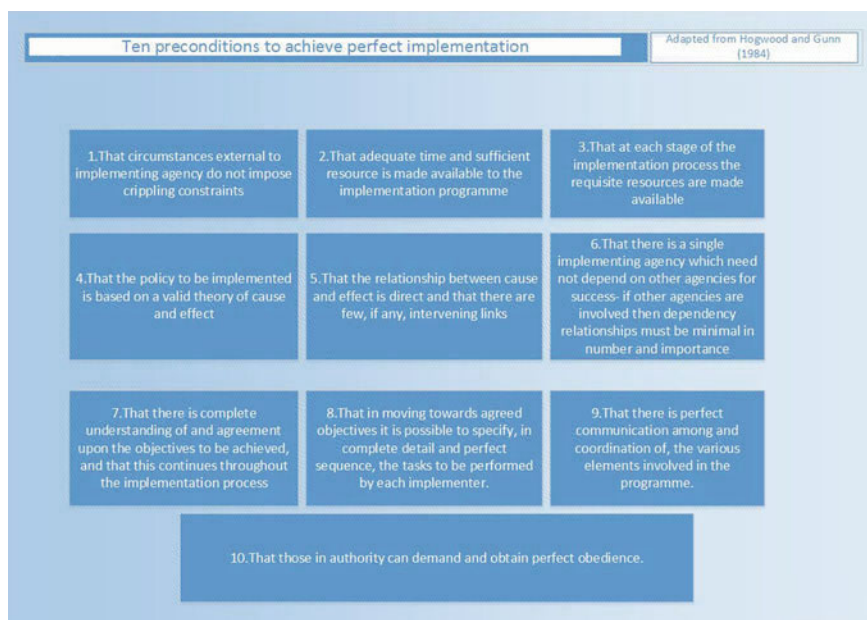

Fig. 1.1 Ten preconditions necessary to achieve perfect implementation (adapted from Hogwood and Gunn 1984, pp. 123–136)

who are located in some sense at the interface between national and the European and who 'translate' the meaning of national data into policy terms in the European arena, and who also interpret European developments in the national space.' As Grek and colleagues understand it (Grek et al. 2009, p. 2), it forms part of an international growth in available data about education and technologies available, such as, software, data sharing systems, statistical techniques, statistical and analytical bureaux),' which, 'connect individual student performance to national and transnational indicators of performance' (ibid, p. 3). As such these data have been, 'aligned across the OECD, Europostat and UNESCO and together work as a 'magistrature of influence' in helping to constitute Europe as a space of governance (Lawn and Lingard 2002 in Grek et al. 2009, p. 3).

It is not clear what inspection achieves, either in terms of its impact or the side effects produced by the process (Ehren et al. 2015; Ehren and Visscher 2006). What is clear is that inspectorates, and by that definition inspectors, are central in implementing national education policy which is frequently driven by cross national discourses on education and the measurement of educational outcomes.

The term 'School inspection' is not in itself unproblematic, but is rather one in which tensions between 'hard regulation' and 'soft' developmental evaluation approaches reside in an often uncomfortable relationship (Grek et al. 2010; Ozga et al. 2013; Lawn 2006). Nowhere is this more prevalent than, for example, in England, where for many years the inspectorate has struggled with conflicting discourses—on the one hand as a government regulator-an aegis of robust independence—who, 'inspects without fear or favour,' (Baxter 2016, p. 112), whilst on the other, an organisation which seeks to develop a 'professional' dialogue with schools in order to effect their improvement and development. This tension is far from unique to England, as the chapters in this volume and other research into inspection and educational regulation reflect (see for example: Ehren and Visscher 2008; Grek and Lindgren 2014).

The reason for these tensions is not easy to discern, as already explained, inspectorates have largely grown up as part of a wider neoliberal turn in governance, as one of any number of quasi-governmental agencies that permit the state to, govern at arms-length (see for example: Flinders 2008; Clarke 2011). A complex interplay of the neoliberal need to 'govern by numbers'—using data to discern improvement, and the unassailable fact that schools are complex organisations in which improvement (however that is defined), is never attributable to single factor. This leaves the very act of inspection and the work that inspectors perform, open to interpretation by all actors concerned with the process. Not only open to interpretation, but cognitively framed according to actors and policy brokers in the implementation chain (see Spillane et al. 2002; Spillane 2000). As such the act of inspecting is not reducible to the application of a set of criteria to a set of organisations but involves multifarious activities, relationships and innovations that constantly shift and evolve in response to social, political, cultural and economic factors. These tensions play out in policy formation and implementation processes as states seek to manipulate education in pursuit of social and economic goals.

Inspection as Governance Within the Policy Process

Changes to national education policy and discourses on the ways in which schools are expected to improve outcomes has been found to exert a profound influence on the work and practices of inspection agencies. These influences range from changes to what inspectors are expected to achieve, to the knowledge that they are expected to employ within the process (Ozga et al. 2014). Education and school inspection are frequently caught between competing discourses that position them on one hand as public service regulatory agents, whilst on the other hand, interpellating them as providers of information to public consumers in an education market place (Ozga and Segerholm 2015). These tensions also affect the ways in which inspectorates are conceptualised and imagined by policy makers and public, and contributes to the 'infrastructure of rules' and regulations that condition how inspectors go about their work (Baxter et al. 2015, p. 75). These rules are not confined to policy documents and artefacts, but represent policy traditions which exert a profound influence over the practices and processes of inspection.

Inspectorates are central to the political projects of governments as regulatory enforcers and organisations that act as knowledge brokers within the policy process. As such the inspectors themselves are policy implementers and their work, professional identities and processes affected by political, economic and social change that in turn affect inspection policy. As such they are, in common with other regulatory bodies, expected to maintain a high degree of separation from their political masters (Boyne et al. 2002). However as the chapters within this volume reflect, there are tensions inherent within this supposition. A recent study by Ennser-Jedenastik (2015), revealed a direct correlation between politicisation of regulatory bodies and the amount of de jure (legal) independence from government they possess. The study which investigated 700 top level-appointments in regulatory agencies in 16 Western European countries, showed that, 'individuals with ties to a government party are much more likely to be appointed as formal agency independence increases' (p. 507). This is an interesting finding for inspectorates that were largely established in order to create impartial assessments of educational quality, yet which are driven by economic and political policy imperatives, and which struggle to maintain legal and political independence as core elements in their legitimacy and credibility.

Studies in earlier work by Kopecký et al. (2012), concluded that the principal reason to employ party patronage is no longer to reward loyalty among party supporters but to exercise control over and increasingly fragmented and decentralized public sector. Politicization is thus an organizational adaptation by parties faced with a state apparatus that can no longer be steered effectively with a top-down approach (Kopecký et al. 2012 in Ennser-Jedenastik 2015, p. 511). The extent to which inspectorates are perceived to be disinterested and impartial has always been key to their legitimacy and perception of this, an important part of education and inspection policy implementation (Clarke 2007; Ozga et al. 2013).

Implementation of Public Policy

A symposium which took place in 2004 and arose out of a series of five ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) seminars called 'Implementing Public Policy: Learning from each other,' discussed, amongst other issues, the ways in which to theorize public policy implementation (Schofield 2000). One of the most important questions emanating from the symposium asked whether it was time for a revival in implementation studies. According to the authors the article detailing the symposium, the question arose due to the way in which the study of policy implementation had changed, and, to some extent been marginalized by the advent of New Public Management. Thus leading to an emphasis on regulation and performance management and sidelining the field of implementation studies. As this volume reflects, this is certainly a contributory factor in the rise of inspection as a means of implementing education policy and of governing education systems more broadly. The second question asked, what the role of knowledge, learning and capacity is in ensuring that policy is enacted (Schofield and Sausman 2004, p. 235). The third examined the utility of theoretical models of implementation, while the fourth examined the role of context. As Susan Barrett and Colin Fudge point out, all public policy forms part of wider ideological debates about the role of the state in society and the 'governability' of an increasingly complex and globalized society (Barrett and Fudge 1981). These ideological debates are by no means confined to the creation of public policy at government level, but affect implementation processes and practices as 'street level bureaucrats' (Lipsky 2010), paid to implement them are themselves influenced by ideologies and assumptions based around the purpose of the policy in the context of the particular area.

In the case of education and inspection policy, as this volume demonstrates, ideologies behind the creation of inspection policy at governmental and organizational (inspectorate), level, are colored and influenced by the ideologies and beliefs of inspectors.

But this is not a book about implementation theory, this already exists in the extensive literature on the topic, (see for example Spillane et al. 2002; Hjern and Porter 1980; Hill and Hupe 2002; Hill and Ham 1997). But rather seeks to investigate a very particular kind of implementation process within the field of education and the effect that those implementing it-school inspectors- have on the process. Through this lens and through the studies within the volume, the book examines how national and international policy influence inspection policy, and if and how inspectors not only influence the way in which policy is implemented but affect and shape policy in a cyclical manner.

Within a good deal of the literature concerning policy implementation a distinction is made between, 'policy making, policy implementation and the evaluation of policy outcomes'. Up until the mid 70's there had been a great focus on policy implementation as a 'top down activity'; indeed earlier work by Wildavsky focused specifically on this. The 'top down' approach is well illustrated by Gunn (Hogwood

and Gunn 1984), who outline ten key elements of this model, these are illustrated in Fig. 1.1.

The top down approach has been roundly criticised for its lack of consideration of both the micro politics of implementation and its inherently normative assumption that implementation was a 'one way street' that it operated from the top down, and that there was no influence on the process from either those subject to the particular implementation nor the actors responsible for it (see for example: Hogwood and Gunn 1984; Lane 1987). In the early 1970's the field of public policy identified a so called 'missing link' in the study of the policy process, giving rise to what is now termed 'implementation theory' (Hargrove 1975). This field of study places policy implementation as central to the field of policy making and the literature relating to the policy process. Its inception was in part marked by the publication of Pressman and Wildavsky's seminal text, 'Implementation'. which investigates in some detail how 'bottom up' processes and the individuals tasked with implementing policy affect not only how public policy is implemented, but equally how it is informed and shaped by the very individuals tasked with its implementation (Pressman and Wildavsky 1984).

One of the most virulent proponents of the bottom up approach was Susan Barrett who writing with Colin Fudge built on the work of Hjern and Porter (Barrett and Fudge 1981 in Hjern and Porter 1980;). Hjern and Porter argue that interaction is a key factor in implementation and that power dependency also plays a big part in how policies are implemented on the ground (Hjern and Porter 1980). Barrett along with Hjern and Porter, suggest that implementation is political, with actors negotiating throughout the process. Barrett and Fudge also note that in the top down (administrative) approach to policy making, which emphasises control and compliance, compromise by policy makers, resulting from interactions at all levels of implementation, could well be viewed as implementation failure. But if, on the other hand, 'implementation is seen as 'getting something done', then performance rather than conformance is the main objective, and compromise a means of achieving it (Barrett and Fudge 1981, p. 258). This approach places far more emphasis on the interactions between actors in the policy implementation process. In terms of inspection as policy implementation, this is important; placing understandings of what inspection is for as central to the policy implementation process.

As Ham and Hill report, 'implementation studies face problems in identifying what is being implemented because policies are complex phenomena,' (Hill and Ham 1997, p. 104). Furthermore, they suggest that, policies are sometimes deliberately made, 'complex, obscure, ambiguous and even meaningless…no more than symbolic gestures to gain political advantage,' (ibid, p. 104), bringing a performative element to the implementation process. This performative element is undoubtedly highly visible in terms of the role played by school inspectors whose actions place them in the eye of public and media attention. (see Baxter and Rönnberg 2014; Wallace 1991). It is also reflected in the extent to which teaching itself has become a performative activity, characterised and coloured by neo liberal discourses which frame it as a techno ratio occupation rather than a profession (see for example Ozga 1995).

The position of policy implementers—in this case inspectors is undoubtedly complicated by intentions behind the policy and the way in which the policy is framed by government and the media. Barrett and Hill point out that,

> many policies represent compromises, and that these compromises are fundamentally based around: conflicting values; key interests within the implementation structure; key interests upon whom the policy implementation will have an impact and add that many policies will also be framed without due attention to the way in which underlying forces (be they political, social or economic) will undermine them at the implementation stage (Barrett and Hill 1981 in Ham and Hill 1984).

Values at play during the policy formation stage and those at play during implementation, have been highlighted by several writers as being key to the ways in which policies play out at operational level and to the extent to which cognitive framing is key in both understanding and implementing policy (Spillane 2000; Baxter 2016). As Ken Young points out, 'value analysis in the policy process is without a doubt a theoretical and methodological minefield' (Young 1977, p. 1). These values appear not only in the policy making process, but also within its implementation (Grin and Lober 2006; Elmore 1979). The field of political philosophy has investigated values at play during policy making, particularly from the perspective of the extent to which they may be said to be redistributive—addressing issues in terms of socio economic approaches—or whether their approach is one of recognition of a fundamental issue in society that requires a broader more integrated approach (see for example Fraser and Honneth 2003; Fischer 2003a).

How the values of policy implementers coalesce or conflict with those inherent within the particular policy has received a good deal of attention, particularly at school level (Bunar 2010; Braun et al. 2010). Conflicting values between policy makers and policy implementers has also received a great deal of attention in the field of professional identity research (see for example Alvesson and Willmott 2004; Baxter 2011; Burke and Reitzes 1991). This volume explores both aspects, framing them in terms of the policy process, wider cultural traditions of inspection and the political background against which education and inspection policies are implemented.

The factors at play in the implementation of public policy are not limited to the complex, confounding and often competing values at play when education policy is formulated, but also vary according to the lens through which the process is viewed. Ham and Hill, writing in 1997 draw on the work of Lane and Majone and Wildavsky (Majone and Wildavsky 1978), to identify to four key ways of viewing the implementation process: Evolution (Lane 1987, p. 532 in Ham and Hill 1997), learning (Lane 1987, p. 534 in Ham and Hill 1984, p. 108), coalition (Lane 1987, p. 539 in Ham and Hill 1997, p. 108) and responsibility and trust (Lane 1987, p. 539, in Ham and Hill 1997, p. 108). Determining the extent to which the inspector as policy implementer is instrumental in influencing and affecting policy change, depends largely on which of these lens you employ to view the process.

The evidence presented in this volume offers useful insights into the degree to which each lens may be used to analyse the effects of inspectors on the

implementation process, and what this means for education and inspection policy. Framing this in terms of a model of policy processes enables the reader to appreciate the complexity of the inspector role.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework Approach to Policy (AFC)

A useful framework for policy implementation and one that is particularly relevant to the case studies in this volume, was developed in the late 1980s by Sabatier (1988) and has since been employed and refined within numerous studies on policy implementation (see Sabatier and Weible 2016). It has a number of advantages in terms of investigation of education and inspection policy as Weible and Sabatier state, 'It is best served as a lens to understand and explain belief and policy change when there is goal disagreement and technical disputes involving multiple actors from several levels of government, interest groups, research institutions, and the media (Hoppe 1999) in Weible and Sabatier (2006, p. 119). The model is useful in describing the authors call 'policy subsystems', and the ways in which these subsystems—which include actors at all levels within the policy progress—work together as policy coalitions or policy advocates.

The original model has been praised for being theoretically comprehensive, rigorous and integrative; but is as a number of researchers point out, is 'essentially limited by its underlying positivist epistemology and methodology' (Fischer 2003a, p. 100). It is however very useful in that it holds that policy beliefs guide action and makes the link between learning, action, continuity and policy change. Used in collaboration with interpretative, hermeneutic methods and combined with the acknowledgement that rather than the hierarchy that the model suggests, movement and change can be directed from both a bottom up and top down perspective, it is a very useful lens through which to examine implementation.

In order for the model to be functionally effective it must encompass and allow for the understanding that individuals are coloured and conditioned by their learning, bounded by their frames of understanding-filtering perceptions through their individual belief systems and hegemonies; key elements in the work of Goffman (1974), and Weik (2001); theories around which I base much of my earlier work on inspection as a governing tool (Baxter 2011; Baxter and Clarke 2013; Ozga et al. 2013). This cognitive framing also forms a central part of how understandings of inspection and its purposes are conveyed in media representations (Baxter and Ronnberg 2014). It also keys into Karl Weik's work on sensemaking in organisations, work that has been instrumental in research into organisations (Weik 2001). Both Weik and Goffman's work offer important insights for those interested in policy implementation, due to their capacity to identify the ways in which perceptions of the world and the limits of those perceptions, evolve and change in response to new and existing information and stimulus. Building on this is the idea that that once individuals find a way to justify their belief in such a

way as to hone with their worldview; they are particularly resistant to any attempts to change or modify those beliefs (Baxter and Clarke 2013; Baxter and Wise 2013). This way of thinking also reflects current development in policy analysis which includes interpretative modes of inquiry that look at argumentation, processes of dialogic exchange and interpretative analysis in order to better understand the ways in which policy is converted into practice (see for example Fischer 2003b; Majone 1989; Wagenaar 2014). Due to the fact that it acknowledges (both implicitly and explicitly), forms of networked governance and the possibility of what Warren terms 'expansive democracy (Warren 1992): a form of democracy which goes beyond the ideas of standard liberal democracy, and which reflects, 'a more general failure of standard liberal democracy to appreciate the transformative impact of democracy on the self, a failure rooted in its view of the self as prepolitically constituted (p. 8).

Adopting an interpretative and dynamic approach within the model also allows for it to key into the idea of professional identity and values of policy actors within the implementation chain and the ways in which they in turn colour and condition policy implementation (see for example Baxter 2011, 2013a). This resistance to information that conflicts with their particular belief system and to which they are resistant is counterpoised by information that coheres with existing beliefs and which they therefore more readily accept. This constant tension and interplay between the two positions—challenges to beliefs and opportunity to realise them-results in a defensive position which results in an often overly emotional response to certain policy, based on 'lost policy battles,' or policies individuals have had to implement in the past and which may have countermanded their values. This way of approaching the whole area around beliefs assumes that individuals have a three tier hierarchical belief system: The top tier comprises, '*deep core beliefs, which are normative/fundamental beliefs that span multiple policy subsystems and are very resistant to change… (For example political/ideological beliefs)…in the middle tier are policy core beliefs, which are normative/empirical beliefs that span the policy subsystem… (gained by experience) …on the bottom tier are secondary beliefs…empirical beliefs that relate to a sub component of a policy subsystem*. Exploration of these beliefs offer potential in terms of examining the strength and extent of the values that those implementing a policy exhibit and how they shape the policy at implementation level.

The ACF also lends itself well to the investigation of the impact of inspectors on education and inspection policy in that it introduces the idea of what it terms *advocacy coalitions:*' stakeholders who are primarily motivated to convert their beliefs into actual policy and, 'thereby seek allies to form advocacy coalitions to accomplish this objective. This prompts the question not only of whether inspectors are themselves a powerful advocacy coalition in the shaping of inspection policy, but equally raises the question of what other advocacy coalitions are active in the process and whether they align with inspector coalitions or act as a countervailing influence upon them.
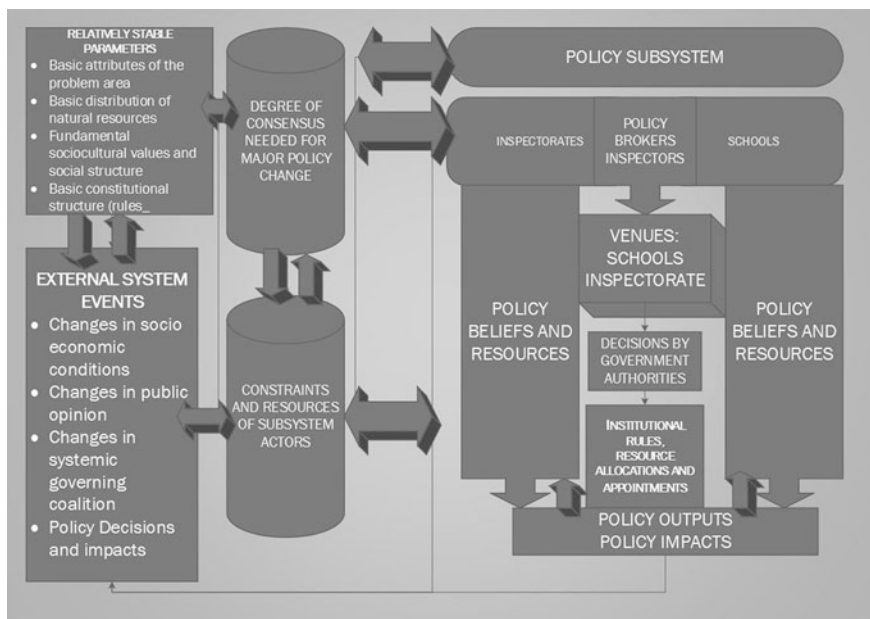
Fig. 1.2 An Adaptation of the Advocacy Coalition Model: Adapted from Weible and Sabatier (2006, p. 124, taken from the original model as seen in Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999)

Figure 1.2 illustrates how policy subsystems and policy actors map to national and international system events. Drawing from this model, this volume reflects on national and international drivers for policy change and how this then affects and impacts upon education policy subsystems. It then drills down into the very particular policy subsystems of inspection and investigates to what extent inspectors, as policy actors, and in relation to policy coalitions, influence policy change and how their practices are coloured and conditioned in turn by national and international policy directives. The model has been adapted for the purposes of this book in order to render if fit for purpose in exploring the dynamic, 'backwards and forwards' processes of policy making and implementation recognised in the work of Grin and Van De Graaf (1996). A perspective that was also taken by the by the 'bottom up' implementation theorists of the mid to late 1970s and early 80s (see for further information Majone and Wildavsky 1978; Barrett and Fudge 1981; Hargrove 1975). The model also permits (in its adapted form), policy learning to occur during all phases of the implementation stage. Thus allowing for consideration of models of social and situated learning for example: Lave and Wenger (1991a), Bandura (1977), whilst also permitting consideration of models of professional learning and reflection such as (Kolb 1984). Although initially empiricist in nature, the adapted version also allows for the interpretative approach to policy actors and influences within both policy subsystem and external system events.

Policy Learning and Knowledge

The idea of policy implementation as a learning activity has found favor with researchers who align it with work into organizational learning and single and double loop learning (see the work of Argyris and Schön 1978). The work of Argyris and Schön has been particularly influential as it hones in on the idea of learning that alters an individual's (and eventually an organisation's) frame of understanding or reference, their schema, resulting in incremental changes in an individual's problem solving capacity. The extent to which an individual's learning can then translate into organizational learning taps into one of the key focuses for literature on knowledge transfer (Lam and Lambermont-Ford 2010).

As much of the literature on professional learning has indicated, a good deal of the knowledge possessed by professionals is tacit and difficult to codify (Polanyi 2009; Eraut 2000). This is a difficulty that inspectors face when evaluating teaching: inspector tacit knowledge may be based around a number of sources of 'knowledge': for example teaching knowledge, research knowledge or legal knowledge, which will influence the way that they approach their practices. Tacit knowledge is also strongly linked to professional and personal identities and parsing the type of knowledge acquired from personal experience both inside and outside of the day job is one of the most difficult forms of knowledge to theorise. The extent to which inspectorates 'teach' implementation of inspection policy is interesting when placed alongside the extent to which inspectors employ tacit knowledge in their day to day role (Lam 1998; Lindgren 2012).

In the case of inspectors who cope constantly with dilemma, the idea that their learning could then lend itself to organizational learning, which in turn may affect policy decisions, is unpacked throughout this book, and one that I shall return to in the concluding chapter.

Inspectors as Street Level Bureaucrats

The role of policy implementers is explored within the interpretative literature on policy implementation. Bevir and Rhodes (Bevir 2011a; Bevir and Rhodes 2006) examine 'bottom up 'inquiry through an interpretative lens focusing on, 'denaturalizing critiques-that is; critiques that expose the contingency and unquestioned assumptions of narratives,' (Bevir and Rhodes 2006, p. 3). Asserting that, 'no practice or norm can fix the ways in which people will act, let alone how they will innovate when responding to new circumstances'(ibid, p. 3). Within the policy process the interpretation of the inspector role lends itself to interpretation in the form of one of the numerous 'street level bureaucrats that, 'must exercise discretion in processing large amounts of work with (frequently) inadequate resources (Lipsky 2010, p. 18). Their work not only coloured by the conditions in which they work but how they perceive themselves, their role and the source of their legitimacy, in

order to derive professional satisfaction from their work (Baxter 2013). This work is also conditioned by the set of criteria that they must work with and the relationship they have with those they inspect (Maclure 2000; Grek and Lindgren 2014). In common with other professionals, they have relatively high levels of discretion in the ways in which they go about their work, whilst also being required to work to tight time scales and firm frameworks (Baxter et al. 2015; Ehren et al. 2013a). Their work is carried out within in a 'tradition' of practice: 'a set of understandings someone receives during socialization,' (Bevir and Rhodes 2006, p. 7) into a particular practice. This view of inspector work is not inconsistent with the work of Lave and Wenger on learning and community of practice (Lave 1988; Lave and Wenger 1991b), in which actors progress from the periphery of a practice to a central role or expert within that practice. This has value in its ability to recognise the cognitive, situative and affective elements of policy implementation, and may also encompass notions of professional reflection within it too. But using it to probe inspector learning is problematic given that inspectors themselves appear to align with many different communities of practice, some of which are located well outside of their inspectorates.

What is certain is that the practice of inspection is defined and shaped at least in part by policy goals, defined by both organisations—the inspectorates—and goals, both implicit and explicit, within the policy inspectors are tasked to implement (Ehren et al. 2015, 2013b). Inspectors are also constrained and conditioned by the traditions in which they implement it (Bevir et al. 2003; Bevir 2011a): The defining narratives within which their practice is articulated and given voice, influence how they perceive their practices and how they fit with education policy (Bevir 2011b). Also, and in common with other professionals, they must be able to deal with high levels of ambiguity: assessment data may tell them one thing but going into schools —observing teachers and other staff may well indicate another (Baxter 2013b; Grek 2015; Hult and Segerholm 2012). In the course of steering through the complexity of the workings of a school they must not only navigate the inspection process itself, but equally strive to retain professional credibility.

Inspectors, in common with other professionals, at least on the surface, appear to possess relatively high levels of discretion in terms of the way they carry out their work, as previous research has shown (Earley 1997; Matthews et al. 1998; De Wolf and Janssens 2007). They are guided by firm criteria but many of the decisions that they must make are dependent upon their professional judgement (Gilroy and Wilcox 1997; Sinkinson and Jones 2001; Baxter 2013a). In this respect the field of organisational theory lends much to the scrutiny of the processes and practices of inspection. As Ham and Hill highlight, 'in organisational and industrial sociology many writers have drawn attention to discretion as a, 'ubiquitous phenomenon, linked to the inherent limits to control' (Ham and Hill 1984, p. 151). Morgan's seminal work on images of organisations, places levels of discretion as core to the organisation as a political system, whilst also featuring highly in the view of organisations as systems of domination (Morgan 1997). The degree to which inspectors not only exercise discretion, but are aware of their ability to do so, is central to the way in which they think about their role and professional identities

(Baxter 2013a), when this is in conflict with the degree to which the implementing organisation permits discretion, there are profound implications for that particular role and the way in which professionals imagine their work. Some of the issues raised by this are discussed throughout this volume, as policy changes shift understandings, values and identification with the role of inspector as policy implementer and shaper.

In exploring the challenges faced by school inspectors as they go about their daily work the book probes and brings to light the often occluded role of the inspector. Taking case studies that are situated within seven different national policy contexts the authors explore how the inspectors' work is coloured and conditioned by their national policy contexts, and how these national policy contexts are conditioned in response to international policy drivers. In so doing it raises questions as to the extent to which policy implementation can be seen as a political process, as: evolution, learning, coalition or a process involving responsibility and trust and what implications this may have on future research in this area.

The Chapters

The book begins with a chapter by Kathrin Dedering and Moritz Sowada who explore the pioneering role adopted by Lower Saxony in terms of inspection, and the changes made to inspection processes and dialogues as a result of the first round of inspections. The chapter takes as its starting point the fact that that school inspections represent an institution whose transformation is also influenced by the specific actions of the professionals involved. From there the authors investigate the extent to which a link can be established between the concrete actions of school inspectors as professionals involved in the institution of school inspection, and the changes made to that institution. Using data from interviews with stakeholders alongside documentary evidence, Dedering and Sowada identify five key changes to the formal structure of the school inspection procedure between the first and second cycles of inspection. Some of these include adaptation to changes in the institutional environment and adaptation to institution-specific processes of school inspection.

Following from this, in Chap. 3 Agneta Hult and I examine and compare changes within the inspection workforces in England and Sweden, investigating the ways in which political and policy drivers have shaped what is required from inspectors in order that they remain credible and legitimate within the national policy context. The changes, premised on perceptions in each case that education standards were slipping, has prompted radical changes in approach to each inspectorate. A key element within these changes included a re-modelling of the workforce. In Sweden the aim has been to make inspection more 'objective', with an enhanced emphasis on compliance, in direct contrast with England in which we have witnessed a move to a more ostensibly 'developmental' view of inspection—employing in service heads as inspectors, in the belief that this will contribute to a

self-improving school system. Viewing inspection as a form of governance we employ Jacobsson's theory of governance as a regulative, meditative and inquisitive activity, in order to examine how the re-modelling of the workforce in both countries has impacted on the ways in which inspectors carry out their work. The chapter concludes that inspection operating within a neo liberal framework of regulation must constantly shift and evolve in order to remain credible. We also point out that these shifts in themselves create tensions around the role and operational work of inspectors in both countries.

Chapter 4 deals with a very different challenge for inspectors as Martin Brown, Gerry McNamara, Joe O'Hara and Shivaun O'Brien investigate how inspectors are positioned in a system in which school self-evaluation is mandatory. This shift is significant and reflects a broader trend within OECD countries to approach education through a lens of systems thinking. The concept of the self-improving school system is the subject of a great deal of research by academics and policymakers and this chapter reflects some of the challenges that are implicit (yet rarely made explicit) in the nature of schools' capacity to effect their own improvement. In Eire the relationship between school inspection and school self-evaluation has shifted from a largely theoretical one, to that of a regulatory requirement: one in which schools are mandated to engage with an externally devised process of self-evaluation. The conduct of self-evaluation in schools is then quality assured by the inspectorate. Drawing on documentary analysis of the changing landscape of school self-evaluation policy and practice from 2012 onwards, interview data and a national survey of school principals who have been charged with the implementation of these initiatives, the authors examine the changes that this has led to in the work of inspectors and highlight the ways in which it looks likely to change the relationship between schools and inspectors. In so doing they highlight some of the challenges that this move looks likely to pose.

In Chap. 5 Marjolene Dobbelaer, David Godfrey and Herman Franssen look at new innovations in inspection policy which look to effect school improvement by improving the quality of feedback by inspectors to school leaders, special needs coordinators and teachers, following the inspection process. This new innovation has been implemented as part of a new mission to improve education in all Dutch Schools. Although in real terms Dutch education has improved with most Dutch schools meeting quality standards, the government is keen to improve on this. The chapter begins with a review of the literature on the role of feedback and its capacity to effect school improvement. Within the sphere of the inspectorate's mission, inspectors are expected to adapt their practices depending upon the type of work they do as part of the policy. This essentially includes three quite different tasks: the first to monitor basic quality in schools, the second to stimulate school improvement and the third, by carrying out thematic and problem-orientated inspection. Dobbelaer et al. describe the three different inspector behaviors as: correction, critical friend and researcher: contributing to research questions at system level by thematic and problem-orientated research. Following on from this the authors discuss the results of two pilot studies carried out by the Dutch Inspectorate. As implementers of this policy the chapter describes the considerable challenges facing

inspectors in terms of how the policy is operationalised within the school context and how this in turn affects perceptions of school leaders and staff with regard to inspection policy.

Moving on from new ways in which inspectors are expected to carry out their role, in Chap. 6 Agneta Hult and Christina Segerholm examine the extent to which inspectors feel that they make a difference to schools via their work. Rather than looking at the effects of inspection on schools as many other studies have done, this study explores inspection effects as they are perceived by Swedish inspectors and inspection managers at different levels of the Inspectorate, and in light of the policy problems the creation of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (SI) was set up to solve. Drawing on policy documents- official directives and data on problems reported in interviews with inspectors and inspection managers, the chapter explores a key area of policy implementation: The 'assumptive worlds' of both inspectors and managers at the Inspectorate—their ideas, values and beliefs about inspection. As the earlier part of this chapter reflected, inspector beliefs about their work and its purpose are potentially powerful not only in terms of the way that inspection is carried out, but equally in light of the credibility that inspectors themselves bring to the process.

In Chap. 7 Henry Moreton, Mark Boylan and Tim Simkins pick up a theme that emerged in Chap. 2, looking specifically at the phenomenon of head teachers as inspectors. In this chapter they investigate how the recent change to inspection policy in England has introduced a new cadre of inspectors to the workforce—practicing head teachers and senior leaders. Using the idea of these practitioner inspectors as boundary crossers and brokers they examine the conflicts and challenges faced by these individuals who carry out this dual and sometimes conflicted role. In so doing they argue that the practice of employing head teachers as system leaders who inspect is not unproblematic, whilst also outlining some of the more positive aspects of the policy and practice.

In Chap. 8 Joakim Lindgren and Linda Rönnberg report on a key area within education and inspection policy implementation: the role of knowlege. Exploring it in relation to the governing work of Swedish school inspectors. As professionals, inspectors are situated as relays and brokers of policy standing in contact with both the political arena and practice arenas. School inspectors use and produce knowledge and they rely on, search for, accumulate and communicate different forms of knowledge. In this chapter the authors look to understand knowledge in the inspection context framing its existence in three iterations: embodied, inscribed and enacted (Freeman and Sturdy 2014). In so doing they aim to identify and discuss different phases of knowledge in inspectors' work by asking how different forms of embodied, inscribed and enacted knowledge are manifested, incorporated and transformed in the course of inspection. In implementation terms the chapter illustrates how different forms of knowledge are intertwined with issues of legitimacy, accountability and control, which the authors argue to be important for how inspection and the work of inspectors' are perceived and judged in different contexts and settings.

Leading on from this in Chap. 9 I move to examine a different but none the less potent influence on the work of inspectors: the media. Studies into implementation theory have shown that an important element within the rollout of policy (of any type) is the credibility of the organisations seen to be effecting the change. The media form part of the complex and convoluted processes of implementation within modern systems of governance (see for example Henig 2009; Herman and Chomsky 1994). They are also instrumental in forming and shaping public perceptions of 'public value' (Benington and Moore 2010). This in turn colors and conditions the ways in which those involved in the delivery of public services go about their work and duties. In the world of the 'street level bureaucrat,' the media is just one of a number of influences that can make policy goals more like receding horizons rather than fixed targets, (Lipsky 2010). This has prompted governments to place great emphasis on the media in relation to policy making and implementation. In this chapter I focus on how the influence of the media impacts on inspection and academy policy. Since 2010 the government has implemented radical changes to the English education system, creating a new system of autonomous schools that support one another through formal or informal partnerships. These changes have suffered from considerable resistance from both schools and Local Education Authorities who often perceive these changes to be ideologically motivated and largely ineffective in raising standards of teaching and learning. The changes are largely implemented following inspection visits by Ofsted—the English schools' inspectorate—in which schools are deemed to be underperforming. For this reason Ofsted has become a powerful driver within the implementation of this policy: lending both legitimacy and rationale to the process. Yet Ofsted, is arguably an independent agency, purporting to inspect 'without fear or favor. This argument and the work of inspectors are both undermined when the agency is framed by the media as being used to implement what is perceived to be ideologically motivated policy. This chapter investigates to what extent Ofsted is used within the framing of education policy and what this means in terms of perceptions of the agency (its impartiality) and for education more broadly.

In Chapter 10 Herbert Altrichter investigates the cyclical nature of inspection in outlining the case of the development, implementation and replacement of 'team inspection', a 'modernised' inspection system in the Austrian province of Styria. The Austrian case examines what happens when elements of 'evidence-based governance' are embedded into a system of long-standing centralist bureaucratic school administration. Working from the premise that a number of countries have recently introduced (and for which there is ample evidence in this volume), another 'new generation of inspections', School inspection as a 'travelling policy' is examined through the particular case of its application to Styria. Although on a general level many features of national inspections have many features in common this chapter explores how they take on different meanings when embedded into different national and cultural frameworks. In so doing the Austrian case allows

cross-national comparison of reasons and principles behind these changes focusing on how this policy system (Fig. 1.2) affects the policy subsystem.

In the penultimate Chapter Maarten Penninckx and Jan Van Hoof take the Flemmish Inspectorate to explore what aims inspection should pursue. Taking as a standpoint that 'desirable aims' should be defined by the shared expectations of various stakeholders in the field of education: including inspectors, policy-makers and other professionals with a role in quality assurance in education. The chapter reports on a Delphi study within the Flemish education, considering the opinions of 15 stakeholders, in order to contribute to the construction of an inventory of inspection aims that should underpin the process and act of inspection. The case is interesting in that within the Flemish system, unlike other systems scrutinised within this volume, there is a very firm distinction between school inspectors who control schools, and school counsellors whose role it is to offer advice to schools. A distinction that relates directly to the constitutional principle of 'Freedom of education', which implies that an inspectorate should solely be focused on school output and results. Although in principle many countries in the past have argued for exactly the type of separation of functions that occurs in this system, this research shows the very real tensions that are invoked within this parsing of the functions. The tensions within this are clearly articulated within this study, as pressure on inspectors to contribute to school development and broadening their present remit intensifies at school level. The research unearths the fact that underlying beliefs, issues and ideologies rarely result in consensus on the true purposes of inspection.

The factors at play in the implementation of public policy are not limited to the complex, confounding and often competing values present when education policy is formulated, but also depend upon the way the lens through which the process is viewed. In the final chapter of the volume I move to examine what understandings the country studies in this book reveal about the impact of policy subsystems in education and inspection policy, and the role of the inspectors within this. In so doing I examine how far the implementation of inspection policy can be said to convene to a model of ten preconditions necessary to achieve perfect implementation (Hogwood and Gunn 1984). Moving on to examine the contribution of inspectors to the idea of policy implementation as: evolution; learning; coalition; responsibility and trust (see Lane 1987, p. 532, in Ham and Hill 1984, p. 108), the chapter examines to what extent inspectors can be said to be 'coalition workers' in influencing inspection policy. I also examine how their role aligns with view of implementation as a process involving both responsibility and trust. The chapter concludes that the work of inspectors is a key element within policy implementation and formation within the governance process and should be seen as central to any future research which investigates accountability from a governance perspective. It also concludes that it forms an important element within future research into the intended and unintended consequences of inspection and accountability policy in the context of education more broadly.

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Chapter 2
Changing Policies—Changing Inspection Practices? Or the Other Way Round?

Kathrin Dedering and Moritz G. Sowada

Abstract In many of Germany's states the procedures for school inspections were amended following completion of a first evaluation cycle. This chapter examines the way changes carried out in the course of reform were configured with respect to content and process. It is based on the assumption that school inspections represent an institution whose transformation is also influenced by the specific actions of the professionals involved, and investigates the extent to which a link can be discerned between the concrete actions of school inspectors as professionals involved in the institution of school inspection, and the changes made to that institution. Using documentary analysis and qualitative interviews with stakeholders within the system, five central changes to the formal structure of the school inspection procedure between the first and second inspection cycles are identified, (including process orientation based on core tasks and dialogue orientation based on self-evaluation). Actions of school inspectors in the run-up to procedural changes which point toward such changes are also identified. Against the backdrop of these findings the reform of the inspection process is interpreted as a blend of adaptation to changes in the institutional environment and adaptation to institution-specific processes of school inspection.

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Introduction

School inspection was introduced as a procedure of external evaluation in each German state between 2004 and 2008 as one of several reforms in the field of education (Dedering and Müller 2011; see also Huber and Gördel 2006). Just over ten years after implementation began in the first German states, schools in almost all states have been externally examined. While some states have since abolished or suspended their inspection procedures, others—having revised their procedures—have entered a second assessment cycle.

This chapter focusses its attention on those states which have undertaken reform of their inspection procedures. We take the pioneering role adopted by the state of Lower Saxony (*Niedersachsen* in German) the first German state (aligning with the inspection models of the Netherlands and Scotland) to put a procedure of external evaluation of schools into place (see Dedering and Müller 2011).

From the perspective of institutional analysis, this chapter assumes that school inspection is an institution which, while it represents a permanent regulatory system, is at the same time subject to transformation. We argue that this transformation is not determined solely by changes in the institutional environment (to which the institution adapts through transformation in order to secure its legitimacy), but that the specific actions of professionals within an institution can also exert influence (in such a way that the transformation can also be interpreted as adaptation to institution-specific processes).

Against the background of these assumptions, the chapter examines the extent to which a link can be made between concrete actions of school inspectors as professionals within the institution of school inspection, and the changes undertaken within that institution. In doing so it investigates (1) which changes can be identified in the formal structure of school inspection procedures between the first and second school inspection cycles, and (2) the extent to which certain actions were carried out by inspectors in the run-up to procedural changes and which point to those changes.

In order to answer these questions, we reference empirical findings that emerged out of national[1] research. We begin by defining the theoretical framework of the paper (Section "Theoretical Framework: School Inspection as a Changing Institution"), we then turn to the methodological procedure (Section "Methodological Approach: Analysis of Public Documents and Interviews"), empirical findings (Section "Empirical Findings: The Reform of School Inspection Procedures and Actions of the Inspectors") and what we can conclude from these findings (Section "Conclusion and Outlook").

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[1]In the course of the project "Experience of Lower Saxony School Inspectors", school inspectors of the German state of Lower Saxony were questioned about their activities during the first round of inspections (see Dedering and Sowada 2013).

Theoretical Framework: School Inspection as a Changing Institution

In line with specific theoretical perspectives, school inspection is characterised in this paper as an *institution* which is tied to an organisational context and subject to *institutional transformation*. According to a definition by Scott (2014), institutions are relatively stable social regulatory systems or structures. In the case of the institution of school inspection in Lower Saxony, it is also part of a public authority and therefore linked to an organisational form. The stability of institutions is based on the fact that they are supported by regulative, normative and cognitive elements, to varying degrees (see Scott 2014).

Regulative elements: These elements refer to those aspects of institutions which constrain or regulate action. Here Walgenbach and Meyer (2008) define regulations, control and sanctioning of behaviour as playing a key role. School inspections possess both a legal foundation and comprehensive procedural guidelines. In Lower Saxony, school inspections were established as an authority answerable to the Education Ministry following a collaborative project with Dutch school inspection authorities in the school year 2002/2003 and a pilot project between 2003 and 2005 (§ 123 a of Lower Saxony's School Law (NSchG), see Kultusministerium 2015). Its objectives and working methods are stipulated by the edict "School Inspection in Lower Saxony", issued 7 April 2006.

The Lower Saxony State Institute for the Quality Development in Schools (NLQ; *Niedersächsisches Landesinstitut für schulische Qualitätsentwicklung*) was established in 2011 as the successor authority to the Lower Saxony School Inspection (NSchI; *Niedersächsische Schulinspektion*) and the Lower Saxony Institute for Teacher Qualification (NiLS; *Niedersächsisches Landesamt für Lehrerbildung und Schulentwicklung*), and has been responsible for school inspection since then. The introduction of school inspections was carried out according to the concept of autonomous schools: underpinned by the idea of allowing schools greater freedom to innovate. In line with this, schools were given autonomy in the areas of financial, personal and organizational matters, but in return had to prove that their work is effective. The relevant decentralisation measures were introduced into law in 2007, when school inspections were already underway.

Normative elements: These refer to the prescriptive, evaluative and binding dimensions of institutions, and include standards which serve to evaluate behaviour or norms which stipulate how actions should be carried out (see Walgenbach and Meyer 2008). With regard to school inspections, we turn first to the functions relating to inspection procedures, in which functions are understood to be desirable objectives rather than actual conditions of inspection.

School inspections when first introduced, functioned as an instrument for generating knowledge. They are intended to provide school actors with data-based information on the current level of quality in different aspects of schooling. They are also an instrument of school development: In using the knowledge generated, they are designed to initiate processes of school and teaching development which

serve to compensate for qualitative deficits or to build on strengths. As an instrument of reporting or control, school inspections are intended to provide schools with a credible pool of data with which qualitative work can be justified to political authorities and interested members of the public. Finally, they also function as an instrument for communicating normative expectations of scholastic quality to schools and were expected to function as guidance for school improvement work (see Landwehr 2011).

Cultural/cognitive elements: These elements refer to those aspects of institutions which determine the perception of reality. The cognitive processes of the inspectors are co-determined by cultural frameworks. In terms of school inspections, the significant factors in this context include the general orientation towards performance, performance evaluation and performance improvement. The belief in the capacity of inspection to positively affect school performance is fundamental to the cultural legitimacy of school inspection.

Because institutions are essentially seen as relatively stable social entities whose stability contributes to their predictability, there has long been insufficient attention paid to issues around conditions of transformation in institutions (see Walgenbach and Meyer 2008). If change processes then become the central focus—as they are in this chapter—then the theory behind possible institutional transformations needs to be explored (at least in basic terms). However, a basic distinction can be drawn between discontinuous and continuous transformation. Discontinuous change processes can be revolutionary in nature and thereby alter institutional logic, whereas continuous transformation processes tend to represent evolutionary development within an existing institutional logic. Mahoney and Thelen (2010) propose a theory of gradual institutional transformation which operates from the premise that institutions do not remain stable over time. Instead, they believe that institutions are dynamic as issues of power and distribution are implied. Different actors are variously favoured or disadvantaged by institutions and consequently their motivation to contribute to their preservation or transformation varies too.

Mahoney and Thelen (2010) also distinguish between four types of institutional transformation: displacement, layering, drift and conversion. *Displacement* refers to the abolition of previously existing rules and their replacement with new ones. *Layering* describes the introduction of supplementary rules which alter the significance of originally existing ones. Within this typology, *Drift* refers to a transformation in which the institutional rules officially remain the same, whilst their impact nonetheless transforms due to changes in external conditions. With *Conversion*, too, the rules officially remain in place, but are interpreted and implemented differently by the participating actors. Differences between the four types of institutional transformation are summarised and illustrated in Table 2.1.

Mahoney and Thelen (2010) contend that the likelihood of institutional transformation occurring, and which, if any of the four types, are evident in that transformation, depends on the following: the characteristics of the political context, the characteristics of the institution as well as the nature of the dominant type of *change agent* in the actor constellation. With a view to the political context, the authors differentiate between strong and weak veto options which influence the type

Table 2.1 Types of institutional transformation (after Mahoney and Thelen 2010, p. 16)

	Displacement	Layering	Drift	Conversion
Removal of old rules	Yes	No	No	No
Neglect of old rules	–	No	Yes	No
Changed impact/ enactment of old rules	–	No	Yes	Yes
Introduction of new rules	Yes	Yes	No	No

of institutional transformation. With respect to the characteristics of the institution, the extent of the margin of discretion in the interpretation and implementation of institutional regulations are used as a distinguishing criterion.

Methodological Approach: Analysis of Public Documents and Interviews

To answer the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter, we selected a methodology which encompasses two approaches: (1) analysis of publicly accessible documents of Lower Saxony's school inspection authorities which relate to procedure and procedural changes between the first and second phases, and (2) qualitative interviews with central actors of the inspection process and its transformation, at the various levels of the school system.

For (1): This included a corpus of textual analysis which encompasses texts originating from the Ministry of Education and the NLQ (see Section "Theoretical Framework: School Inspection as a Changing Institution"), an authority answerable to it, and which relate to changes in school inspection procedures in Lower Saxony. A total of 10 documents included: the final report from the first cycle of school inspection, the new principles of class observation and manuals on school inspection procedures.

It should be noted that the documents referenced are available on the internet and were drawn up with this publication medium in mind, along with specific publication objectives. This means that the documents are not created for internal purposes, but rather for external appearances. Here we work from the assumption that it is precisely these documents in which officially sanctioned attempts at creating and justifying legitimacy are preserved. In analysing these documents, the formal/structural changes were identified whilst also identifying reasons given for the changes.

For (2): Two different empirical studies were used to form the data corpus. For the first study, Lower Saxony school inspectors were interviewed about their experience of the first inspection cycle (see Dedering and Sowada 2013).

For the second study, we interviewed individuals from various levels of the school system and who were participating in the process of procedural change (see Sowada and Dedering 2016).

In both studies, the interviewees were regarded as experts who enjoyed privileged access to information as well as knowledge (see Meuser and Nagel 2009). Expert status was linked to certain positions and functions. For the first study, we included a total of 28 of the 40 current Lower Saxony school inspectors, in the second study, we interviewed an employee of the Education Ministry, two employees of NLQ and two school inspectors who had been active in various work groups tasked with amending inspection procedures, as well as a headteacher of a school that had participated in a pilot of the amended inspection procedures and who were therefore familiar with both procedures.

Both documents and interviews were subject to textual evaluation and the analysis was computer-assisted, using the software programme MAXQDA. A hierarchically structured category system was developed with the aim of structuring the amount of data in line with the underlying technology of the programme, with text segments (codings) assigned to its various elements (codes). For the documentary analysis of the official publications, categories were formed inductively on the basis of information contained in the text; for the interviews, they were formed both deductively—on the basis of aspects contained in the interview schedule—as well as inductively, from the data itself. A technique drawing on procedures of thematic qualitative text analysis (see Kuckartz 2014; Mayring 2014) was then applied. This was followed by analysis of the published texts and coded interview transcripts through the collation, paraphrasing and analytical commentary of thematically relevant coding.

At this point it is important to emphasise that the topic of this paper was not the explicit subject of questioning in either of the two interview studies. The interview material was therefore re-analysed in light of the issue of inspectors' methods which differ from the procedural guidelines, already pointing ahead to procedural changes.

Empirical Findings: The Reform of School Inspection Procedures and Actions of the Inspectors

School Inspection Procedures in Lower Saxony Between 2006 and 2012

Before presenting results of the documentary analysis and interview studies, we begin by outlining conditions prior to formal modifications—the school inspection procedure in Lower Saxony between 2006 and 2012.

In Lower Saxony, school inspection authorities—as is the case in other German states—are responsible for determining the quality of individual public schools as well as the quality of the school system, with the objective of enabling quality improvement measures.

As in every other state, school inspection in Lower Saxony was based on a normative framework with uniform quality criteria. The 16 criteria were drawn

from schools' results as well as their process qualities and were outlined in more detail in 92 sub-criteria (see Schulinspektion 2010). School inspections were carried out after schools were notified—according to standardised procedures and instruments—by trained teams of between two and four inspectors each. The inspection itself consisted of a school visit with interviews and lesson observations carried out in a fixed sequence and was preceded by analysis of school documents. At this point school inspectors primarily directed their attention to the question of whether or not the school was able to submit certain documents (e.g., pedagogical concepts). The procedure was therefore considered "product-oriented". The extent to which the documents were actually embedded or implemented in the processes of school development was of secondary importance. For example: It was important that a school provided a school programme, but it was not necessarily checked as to what extent the goals and measures fixed in the school programme were the guideline for the actual school development work. The findings were aggregated and transferred to a strengths-and-weaknesses profile which was first reported back orally in presentations to members of the school as well as school supervisors, and then some weeks later also submitted in a written evaluation report to the schools (and the schools' supervisors).

In both oral and written feedback of results, the primary aim was to generate knowledge which could be used by the school itself to initiate development processes (i.e. school development function) (see Landwehr 2011). Elements of advice (recommendations, for example) were deliberately avoided. There were no consequences deduced from the results on the side of education policy and administration, nor were the findings published.

In contrast to inspection procedures in most German states, the Lower Saxony procedure included a fixed minimum standard and identified those schools that fell short of this standard as "school with serious defects". Where such an assessment applied, prompt follow-up inspections were scheduled. Further state-specific variations in the Lower Saxony procedure include the absence of recommendations for action from result reports and a comparatively high level of standardisation in the procedural sequence as well as the instruments.

Between 2006 and 2012, all 3000 schools in the state of Lower Saxony were inspected using the inspection procedure described above (see NLQ 2015).

The Modified Procedure: Five Key Changes in the Formal Structure

In Lower Saxony, the Ministry of Education sent a development order to the NLQ with a view to revising the school inspection procedure in the scholastic year 2011/12. It formulated concrete targets for the revision which—following a phase

of drafting and piloting—entered into law on 16 July 2014 with the circular entitled
"School Inspections in Lower Saxony". With respect to the orientation and scope of
the changes undertaken, Lower Saxony here once again assumed a pioneering role
among German states. The following five key aspects can be deduced from the
available documents and statements by our interview partners.

Process Orientation on the Basis of Core Tasks

The revised procedure is distinguished by a focus on school *processes*. The form of
these processes is accorded central importance for the quality development of
schools, therefore they are regarded as core tasks for schools. The core tasks (and
their model) are introduced as a new instrument which further references the
Orientation Framework School Quality in Lower Saxony (*Orientierungsrahmen
Schulqualität in Niedersachsen*), but instead of the 16 former quality criteria, it
encompasses just five areas of action (see Fig. 2.1). So with the reorientation of the
procedure came a reduction in the inspection profile. This was accompanied by a
reduction of the elements in the underlying level, from 100 sub-criteria to 21 core
tasks.

The new procedure requires a selection from the core tasks. While five tasks are
obligatory and are therefore monitored in every school inspection, two core tasks
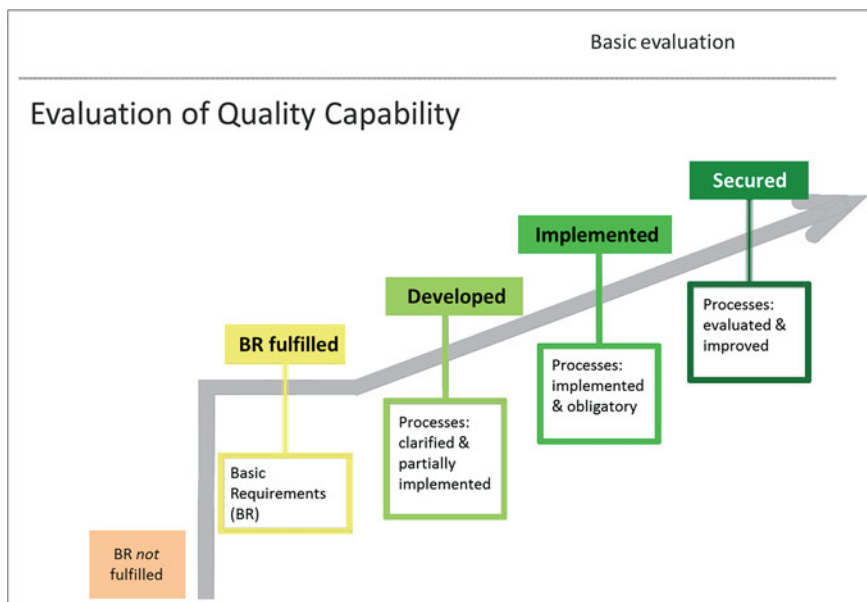
Fig. 2.1 Process stages (after Hoffmeister et al. 2013, p. 39; see also NLQ 2015, p. 12)

may be selected by the schools themselves. This means that only a subset of core tasks is ever considered.

The document "Core Task Model with Instructions and Examples" represents all 21 core tasks (see NLQ 2014b; see for an English summary NLQ 2014e). Each of the core tasks is briefly described and its associated requirements explained, while "Instructions and Examples on the Implementation of Core Tasks" are also provided. There are numerous cross references to other texts. Moreover, interactions between the individual core tasks are indicated. Additionally, the core tasks relate back to each of the relevant sub-criteria from the first inspection procedure. It also contains references to relevant sections of legislation and decrees as well as the qualitative areas of the "School Quality in Lower Saxony Orientation Framework". These linkages allow the text to be positioned and integrated within a network of current and former regulations and commentary.

In the core task model for the new school inspection procedure there are explicit "References to Regulations and Additional Comments" (NLQ 2014b). The quality assurance and development tasks that are specified there are supplemented with references to School Law.

Dialogue Orientation Based upon Self-evaluation

One new key feature of the procedure is that schools themselves are given much greater scope to describe how they perceive their own quality, and to compare this self-evaluation with the evaluation from the inspection—that is, the external perception, the external assessment. In official documents the term *dialogue* has become a new key concept intended to characterise the new approach (see NLQ 2014d). "Quality Assessment by the School" has been introduced as a new instrument. This is a standardised instrument with which schools are meant to assess the quality with which they fulfil core tasks and the quality of their process of further development. Here they are able to choose between various process levels (not meeting basic requirements; capable of processes; developed; established or introduced; secured and reliable) (see NLQ 2015, p. 12). Consequently, the instruments for feeding back results—particularly the written inspection report—have been redesigned. The procedure for external evaluation of schools now comprises the following steps:

- Assessment of the quality of scholastic processes by the school (self-evaluation),
- Discussions/interviews with school administrators as well as teaching faculty, with the involvement of school staff, parents, pupils,
- Assessment of the quality of scholastic processes by the inspection team/lesson observations (external evaluation),
- Comparison of the assessment of quality of scholastic processes with the school administration,

- Dialogue about the evaluation of processes and lessons with the teaching faculty/school board.

Alignment with Changed Principles of Lesson Observation

A further change in the procedure can be observed in its alignment with the changed principles of lesson observation. Overall, this reorientation of lesson observation has led to a reconceptualisation of the lesson observation form as a key instrument. The two major changes include a greater focus on observable lesson practice along with the descriptive categories used for this purpose (see NLQ 2014c). Moreover, the aggregation of individual items in the lesson observation form is no longer included. This was justified by stating that such a procedure was considered not to be sufficiently scientific (see NLQ 2014a). Additionally, a dichotomous rating scale (yes/no) is now used (see NLQ 2014c), replacing the three-step scale from the lesson observation sheet in the first inspection cycle.

In the presentation of the new principles of lesson observation, reference is made to their sound scientific foundation (see NLQ 2014a). Here scientific authorities (e.g., John Hattie, Andreas Helmke, Rainer Lersch, Hilbert Meyer) are named as direct or indirect sources of knowledge that led to and justified the revision of the observation form. The use of lesson observation sheets as an instrument across different types of school is justified on the basis that the factors that distinguish a good lesson do not depend on the type of school in question.

Additional Questions and the Possibility of Ongoing Modifications to Procedure

The revised schedule enables external evaluation on the basis of a core task model which is obligatory for all schools. This can be expanded with *additional questions* which representatives of the Ministry of Education or the NLQ can instigate as required and which are addressed and answered as part of the school inspection (NLQ 2015, p. 11). These additional questions have been introduced as a new instrument. The objective is to promptly provide the Ministry of Education with relevant strategic knowledge to aid oversight and steering of the school system. Furthermore, schools had previously complained "that key areas of their development work lay in areas which were not evaluated and therefore not appreciated" (NLQ 2012, p. 116). Current developments in school policy and practice can now be taken into consideration in the ongoing school inspection cycle upon request by the Ministry of Education. The new procedure consists of a combination of basic procedure and its expansion.

Abolition of Minimum Standards and Removal of Follow-up Inspections

Finally, "the Ministry of Education decided that failing and follow-up inspections were not compatible with the system which was developed after the first round" (NLQ 2015, p. 10). Therefore, the minimum standards that triggered follow-up inspections were abolished (see NLQ 2012, p. 114).

The Actions of School Inspectors

We now look at the extent to which school inspectors have taken action in the run-up to procedural changes, a facet which allows the transformation of school inspection to be understood as an adaptation to internal institutional processes.

As mentioned earlier, this issue was not explicitly addressed in the interview schedule whose data is referenced here. Therefore, not all interview partners mentioned the issue. Nonetheless, in our interview material there are numerous statements which describe changes to inspection practices over time. These refer predominantly to the procedural changes regarding *process orientation* and *dialogue orientation* (see earlier sections). As references we use abbreviations for our interviewees, i.e. B05 which represents interviewee number 5.

Process Orientation

As previously mentioned, in the first round the inspection procedure was distinguished by an orientation towards the products of school work. The precondition for the positive evaluation of relevant sub-criteria was that the school was able to present certain documents (such as the school's own work plans).

However, in our interviews there are numerous indications that the school inspectors increasingly diverged from this focus on products over time (B05, B06, B11, B18, B25, B27, among others), as this inspector points out:

> And I also noticed that the judgement of the inspectors in the last few years tended to change so that they noticed those things as well…And at the beginning some of them really went at them and said: 'They do it, but they don't have it in writing, they don't have a concept: Minus[2]'. And since then I have also inspected with people who…thought that way. And who now say: 'No, they have so many different components, all they need to do is write them down, and so we can't give them a minus.' (B05)

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[2]The inspectors used a scale consisting of four evaluative categories: (double plus (++) = very positive, plus (+) = positive, minus (−) = negative and zero (0) not possible to evaluate).

Another inspector also highlighted the change in the inspectors' work practices:

> Over time it became more relaxed, so that actual processes became the focus more and more…that's what I meant before, that you then have to look and see 'how does this look?' 'Is this a formality at this point and is it…implemented all the same?' (B27)

The idea expressed here of the "implemented concept" is echoed in statements from the majority of interview partners. This indicates that it is supported by most school inspectors. When good practice occurs, even without supporting documentation, this seems to suggest in the eyes of numerous inspectors that the respective documents are—at least under certain conditions—dispensable. Therefore, there is no automatic downgrading on the basis of concepts not being provided, because the corresponding concepts are seen more of an aid to and less as an essential precondition for successful school practice.

However, the decision not to downgrade is linked to certain indicators which point to the existence of a concept. The existence of a concept can be regarded as certain, if,

> it can be proved that it repeatedly occurs and that it is also recognisable in protocols, for instance, that there is an understanding, so that much evidence has to be there, at least. (B11)

In justifying actions which deviate from procedural guidelines, inspectors mainly point to their intention to do better by, and to value, schools and their work (B05, B18):

> So this thought has, I believe, come more and more into focus in the last few years, of acknowledging what they're doing. And not just [using] the red pen and [saying]: ten errors —gotcha. (B05)

In particular, small (primary) schools with small teaching faculties were often unable to carry out the extensive work required to record the (implemented) concepts in writing (B11, B18).

The interviewees also linked the increased process orientation in inspectors' procedures to changing expectations of school inspection with respect to schools: Whereas at the beginning of the inspection round it was sufficient that a school had begun to create its own work plans, by end of the first round they pointed to a less positive view of the matter; there is greater attention to the implementation (B05). Ultimately, the inspectors had increasingly broached this emphasis on process, and so this also became a focus of the revised inspection procedures:

> We pointed to it over and over. Precisely: 'What, how is it introduced? How is it implemented?' Those types of questions. (B06)

Dialogue Orientation

The inspection procedure from the first round contained some clear guidelines on the role of inspectors in the context of feedback of results. There was an emphasis

placed on distance between inspectors and schools. There was no room for advisory elements, they were to be "avoided at all costs" (B02).

Numerous inspectors clearly stated that either they or their colleagues had deviated from this procedural guideline in recent years (B02, B03, B04, B05, B06, B07, B08, B10, B12, B13, B21).

In their statements they differentiated between interviews which were carried out in the course of the school visit with school groups, and the feedback events at the end of the school visit. With regard to the *interviews*, the interviewees stated that the inspectors increasingly opened up to school actors if the latter wanted to (B02, B04). In the last two years, particularly, there had been a shift toward discussion on both sides. In these discussions they entered a dialogue "in the sense of: Inquiry is allowed, evaluations won't be changed." (B04). They proceeded on the premise that "every interview is essentially a bit of feedback" (B06). The "wagging pedagogical finger [has] significantly reduced" (B02, B08) and consultation "greatly increased" (B05).

In difficult cases the school administrators were asked for their assessment in interviews, and about further work they had planned in problem areas. The aim was to gain an idea of the evaluation which would help them in their standing in the school or their ongoing work. This was then recorded in the report (B13). Where there was ambivalent data, interviewees were confronted with these inconsistencies and asked to explain the situation from their point of view (B26).

In reference to the *feedback events*, too, the interview partners reported a change to their working practices—moving away from a pure "announcement" of evaluation results in the presence of school actors, toward a "dialogue" with school actors, particularly school administrators, on the evaluation results (including the way they were generated and their possible application). The extent to which this represents an exchange of information or a consultation is assessed differently by various inspectors. As one inspector explains:

> But…in the last four years perhaps it has increasingly become, an exchange of information. So we have presented our view from outside. We made it clear to the headteachers how we, which perception led us to which results. In this relaxed situation, as relaxed as possible, the headteachers had an opportunity to inquire at any time, to add their own perceptions or evaluations. So it was more of a dialogic process. (B24)

Another inspector, on the other hand, describes how inspectors would take a position at the end of the school visit in the feedback discussion with the school administrators:

> Yes 'message' is perhaps going a little far…but there was an outlook to quality development, how, from our point of view, this…school could develop. So, there [is] definitely an element of advice in there. (B08).

A third interviewee describes his flexible interpretation of the procedural guidelines:

> You enter into another discussion, into a, I wouldn't always say, into an advisory discussion, rather into a discussion, like, 'If you haven't really understood me, then ask me

and I'll explain it to you.' And if you understand it the right way; that is…hear the advice, then you can make it out, but I haven't given it away. I didn't say to the school, something like 'you must do this and this, school, then it will work', rather 'there is this route, and this one, and this one, and possibilities and you have to see if you've already considered them all and weighed them up. You have to, you should look and perhaps also consider, at which point does it make sense to begin,' in the sense of what I was saying before, everything is so connected that when you start working at the right point, other things come about automatically and that is an aspect you can take away with you. (B04)

On the one hand, interviewees cite the demands of the school as a reason for their dialogue-oriented procedure: They often receive requests or even (sometimes vehement) demands for recommendations for ongoing work, and with them knowledge about follow-up actions (B08, B10, B27). In some cases, this principle of give-and-take becomes explicit: There have been schools,

who said: 'great, but we…want something out of it is as well', almost 'now we can really talk freely' or 'tell us, you have the experience'. The wanted to share in our experience. (B02)

In many cases the inspectors had the impression that the schools had a major interest in cooperation and that there was a significant willingness for change among the headteachers (B04).

On the other hand, in their reasoning interviewees mention their own demands, which consist in a desire to actually have an impact on schools. Here the prescribed method of feedback was not particularly helpful:

And when we were at the schools and we said: 'So, your methodological concepts are no good',…'why not?' 'Well, we can't tell you.' Great. What good does that do them? None at all. (B05)

Because teaching faculties are left to their own devices once the school inspection is over—as long as their school is not defined as a school below standard and thus falls short of the minimum requirements—the inspectors see it as their obligation to give them at least a minimum of support.

Consequently, they rate the change in their behaviour positively; both the schools and the school inspectors were able to draw benefit from the discussions (B02). The inspectors also talk of an increased acceptance of the procedure from the school side. By responding to the schools' requests, or demands, for advice, they receive a kind of appreciation in return (B08).

Numerous statements indicate that inspectors are aware that they are not complying with the regulations (B02, B05, B06, B08, B16, B26): *"Really we weren't supposed to do it. That was never part of our duties."* (B16). However, they accepted this.

The inspectors state that the change in the school inspection procedure with regard to dialogue orientation does not represent a "real breach" (B03) in the inspectors' actions:

We have already started moving in that direction. I can't remember a single time in the last one and a half years when we just gave feedback, or we were just there with 'knowledge of results', instead it was already heading towards discussion (B03)

It becomes clear that the procedural change reflects a practice which is already occurring, ultimately formalising it as a procedural standard (B03).

Further Factors

For two of the five procedural changes—process orientation and dialogue orientation—it was possible to identify previous practices of school inspectors that pointed towards those changes. For other modifications—orientation toward changed lesson observation principles, the additional questions and ongoing procedural modifications, the abolition of minimum standards and the removal of follow-up inspections—no such reported practices could be identified. In these cases, there were other factors at work which eventually led to a revision of the inspection procedure. For the sake of completeness, this section will briefly mention the reasons interviewees gave for the procedural changes. These point toward changes in the institutional environment of school inspections to which school inspections have evidently adapted with their procedural changes. In their reasoning, the interviewees begin with the perception of the instrument's relatively low effectiveness in the area of school development. Empirical educational research studies on school inspection in Germany that have since become available, prove, as do their own observations, that it is particularly in the *middle-range*, those schools whose results were neither particularly good nor particularly bad, that school development activities were less likely to take place (see e.g., Wurster and Gärtner 2013). Furthermore, interviewees addressed unintended effects of school inspection by referring to 'window dressing' and the schools' negative reaction to minimum standards and the associated risk of follow-up inspections. The latter, according to statements from our interviewees, had been brought up by teachers' interest groups who were calling for an abolition of this element of the procedure. Interviewees also point to the poor evaluation of a handful of qualitative areas among the majority of schools in the course of the first inspection round, a fact which they believe justifies a more focussed view of school quality in precisely these areas of deficiency instead of the broader view which previously prevailed, encompassing all quality areas regarded as key.

With a view to the reconceptualisation of the lesson observation form, our data indicates that there was previously a perception of an insufficient scientific foundation for the instrument.

The formulation of additional questions is presented as the school inspectors' reaction to criticism from schools that the specific focal points of their work were not being sufficiently considered. Here, however, aspects of education policy play a part. In Lower Saxony, education policy makers had considered introducing incident-related school inspection. While this never went ahead, the instrument of additional questions could well be considered to have evolved out these discussions.

The procedural changes presented are intended as a response to the stated shortcomings of the first inspection procedure. The interviewees specify that a shift in the primary function attributed to the procedure is intended to help school actors perceive school inspection as an instrument for development rather than one of control. Thereby, it was aimed at securing greater acceptance for the procedure from school staff (see also NLQ 2015, p. 12).

Conclusion and Outlook

This paper pursued the overarching question of the extent to which a link can be determined between the concrete actions of school inspectors as professionals within the institution of school inspection, and the changes undertaken within that institution. We investigated, (1) which changes can be identified in the formal structure of school inspection procedures between the first and second inspection cycles, and (2) the extent to which certain actions were practised by inspectors in the run-up to procedural changes which point to those changes.

With reference to question 1, five key procedural changes were identified: Process orientation on the basis of core tasks, dialogue orientation on the basis of self-evaluation, alignment with changed principles of lesson observation, the introduction of so-called additional questions and ongoing procedural modifications as well as the abolition of minimum standards and removal of follow-up inspections.

For question 2, practices which point to the resulting changes were identified for two of the procedural changes. With reference to process orientation and dialogue orientation, the inspectors transcended the procedural mandate: a mandate which called for product orientation as well as the neutral communication of inspection results, devoid of advisory character—particularly in the latter years of the first round of school inspection. Their actions were distinguished by an increasing consideration of process and a stronger element of exchange in interview and feedback situations. This provides proof for the opening assumption that the specific actions of professionals within the institution of school inspection can exercise influence on its transformation. The transformation of the school inspection procedure can therefore be understood, in part, as an adaptation to internal institutional processes.

However, from the documentary analysis and evaluation of interviews, we were also able to generate extensive evidence that a number of changes had taken place in the institutional environment of school inspection, to which school inspection had apparently adapted via a series of procedural changes. In this respect, the transformation of school inspection can be regarded as an adaptation of the institution whose aim is to secure its legitimacy. Some of these adaptation trends are addressed next (for more detail, see Sowada and Dedering 2016):

Trend of alignment with developments in the school landscape: Process orientation is presented as an adaptation to schools' more extensive experience in the

area of quality development. The option of choosing two of the core tasks to be reviewed indicates that the school's local circumstances are being taken into consideration. Finally, the orientation of the new procedure toward dialogue can also be understood as alignment with developments in the school environment; the sometimes negative perception of school inspectors is inconsistent with their own ethos as pedagogues. Doubtless the intention is also to improve the image of school inspection overall.

Trend of making procedural elements more flexible: With the new option of choosing some evaluation areas, there is also evidence of more varied practice among school inspectors. The introduction of additional questions also points in this direction.

Trend of responding to research: The response to findings in empirical educational research on the effectiveness of school inspections with respect to their development function may have contributed to the abolition of the minimum standard. The increased alignment of the procedure toward dialogue with schools could also be indirectly interpreted as a reaction to empirical knowledge of the limited, or negative, effect of school inspections.

Trend of convergence with scientific standards: In the case of reorientation of lesson observation form, there has been an increase in the alignment with science as a point of reference. At the same time interpretation of findings from the observed lesson has opened to school staff. Overall, we consider the revision of lesson observation form to be an example of *scientification* understood as the modelling of the instruments in alignment with recognised scientific standards such as objectification through standardisation. With regards to legitimacy, adopting scientific standards may confer legitimacy rooted in a faith for science to school inspection as an institution.

Overall, the transformation of school inspection in Lower Saxony presented here can be interpreted as a blend of adaptation of the procedure to changes in the institutional environment, and institutional processes that are *internal* to school inspection itself.

Against the backdrop of Mahoney and Thelen's (2010) theory on gradual transformation of institutions and the different types of transformation they define—*displacement*, *layering*, *drift* and *conversion*—the change processes in Lower Saxony can be characterised as *displacement*: through the changes undertaken, previously applicable regulations were revoked and replaced with new regulations. Additionally, the change processes can be understood as *drift*: as the schools' increasing desire for advice indicates, the institutional rules may remain the same formally, but their impact has transformed due to a change in external conditions.

The findings presented from our two interview studies indicate that—particularly in the case of dialogue orientation—this *displacement* was preceded by a phase of *conversion*, in which initially the existing regulations formally remained the same, but were interpreted and implemented differently by the school inspectors. Even before the procedural revision came into effect, school inspectors did not always present results to schools in an impersonal and neutral way—despite procedural regulations to the contrary—rather they opted for a more dialogue-oriented

approach which incorporated elements of indirect advice (see Dedering and Sowada 2013). The transformation processes of the type *conversion*, it can be argued, have led to minor *displacements*; here, the institution of school inspection may have changed, but its essential form remained the same.

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Chapter 3
Different Systems, Different Identities: The Work of Inspectors in Sweden and England

Jacqueline Baxter and **Agneta Hult**

Abstract School inspection has formed part of both English and Swedish approaches to governing education for some time now. But latterly due to the neo liberal drive for educational excellence, both countries have remodelled their inspector workforce. Using Jacobsson's theory of governance as a regulative, meditative and inquisitive activity, this chapter investigates the effects that these shifts have had on the operational work of inspectors. Drawing upon interview data with inspectors and head teachers from both systems combined with documentary analysis we examine how the remodelling of the workforce in both countries has impacted on the ways in which inspectors carry out their work. The chapter concludes that inspection operating within a neo liberal framework of regulation must constantly shift and evolve in order to remain credible. It also points out that these shifts in themselves create tensions around the role and operational work of inspectors in both countries.

Keywords Inspection · Policy implementation · Schools · Education policy · Neoliberalism

Introduction

School inspection has formed part of both English and Swedish approaches to governing education for some time now, forming a central tenet within the governing projects of both countries (Maclure 2000; Segerholm 2009). But as a result of political imperatives emerging as a result of international comparisons such as

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PISA (The Programme of International Student Assessment) (see for example Bieber and Martens 2011), in combination with a neo-liberal agenda which places a increasing emphasis on regulation of education (Power 1997), both inspectorates have made recent changes to their mode of inspections, one of which has involved the re-modelling of the inspection workforce.

In Sweden, the inception of a new inspectorate aligned more closely to The 2008 Education Act and other steering documents in 2008 marked a new period for educational inspection (Rönnberg 2012; Hult and Segerholm 2014). A period during which government focus on inspection intensified, becoming central to its policies of economic regeneration. As a result of this its inspection process was transformed from its former far softer and advisory approach, to a far more punitive regime involving strict penalties for failure to comply. The new regime has, in common with the new regulatory framework in England, engendered a re-modelling of the inspector workforce with a move away from the recruitment of those with a background in education to the recruitment of individuals from the fields of law or academic investigation.

In England the inception of the Coalition administration in 2010 continued the drive that began under the previous New Labour administration. Designed to promote an education system based on neoliberal ideals, the new system has resulted in far greater numbers of free schools and academies (schools independent from Local authority and district financial and curricular control). A trait which has intensified under the Conservative administration which came to power in 2015 (Baxter 2016). In common with other areas of the public service undergoing similar disaggregation; new levels of school autonomy have demanded new systems of inspection and inspection frameworks that are able to monitor and control newly autonomous institutions, whilst also retaining credibility with government and public. The new inspection regime must combine regulatory rigour with perceptible links between it and school improvement. This relationship is far from proven in spite of a great deal of research in this area (see for example: Ehren and Visscher 2008; MacBeath 2006).

The inception of such a framework early in 2012 (Ofsted 2012a, b), was aimed at the creation of an inspectorate that was, 'Much closer to the ground and much nearer to schools.' (Parliament 2013a, b: Q66) and one aimed at promoting school improvement through a more concerted focus on school improvement. This change in framework was combined with a drive to re-model the inspectorate workforce in aiming to recruit in-service school leaders as part time inspectors (see for further discussion, Baxter and Clarke 2013).

Both countries in attempting to raise standards and in response to pressures—both national and international—have made substantial changes to the ways that they inspect. At face value these changes appear to pull in entirely different directions; in England they are characterised by a move by the inspectorate to effect more developmental work, with an emphasis on inspector professional teaching knowledge, in Sweden, the inspectorate appears to be moving away from any possibility of inspector capture, or too close a relationship between inspected and inspectors. This chapter explores what appears to be paradoxical shifts on the part

of both countries in order to explore the different pressures that these policies have had on front line practices of inspectors.

The inception of new systems and ways of working can be imagined to have effected considerable impact on the daily work of inspectors. In order to conceptualise this impact and evaluate the work of both Swedish and English inspectorates we draw Jacobsson's framework of governing; the rationale for so doing is discussed in the following sections of the chapter.

Inspection in Neo Liberal Times

> Education and school inspection are unavoidably situated in the constant tension between competing logics-sometimes summarised as those of the market and those of democratic politics…the classical liberal dream of a totally unregulated market was-and in this resurgent, neo-liberal re-formation continues to be based on the belief that people's needs and demands will be satisfied through individual choices of the products and services offered by private companies in competition with each other. (Ozga and Segerholm 2014, p. 44)

As John Clarke reports, the forms and registers of neoliberalism can be applied to numerous, 'Sites, situations, practices and processes.' (Clarke 2008a, p. 144), and suggests that the term has been applied so indiscriminately that it is no longer fit for purpose as an analytical tool. Nevertheless, it is useful to describe the ideological wave that has engulfed education systems such as England and Sweden and which has become,

> Synonymous with the market-oriented philosophy of the, "Washington consensus" agencies, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a usually pejorative signifier for a distinctly American form of "free-market". (Peck 2010, p. 1)

The economic crisis in Europe, beginning in 2008 reinforced the need for countries to find, '*the right levers*' (Ozga and Segerholm 2014), to increase economic productivity. Education is central to this and as a result has been placed under increasingly rigorous monitoring, regulatory and evaluation systems. The move to remodel the workforce in both cases is conceptualised in this chapter as part of the neo-liberal drive to drive up education standards in order to promote economic performance. Both the Swedish Inspectorate (SSI) and Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education, Children Schools and families), in common with other European Inspectorates operate as key elements in the governing of education, acting not only as a regulatory body but also as a key element within the 'assemblages of apparatuses, processes and practices 'that constitute new forms of governance' (Newman and Clarke 2009, p. 33). In this respect the inspectorates acts not solely as an inspection regime but also as the producer and distributor of discourses that influence the way in which standards in English education are understood and conceptualised (see for further discussion Baxter 2013; Baxter and Clarke 2013).

In England the incremental marketisation of public services which began in the 1980s (see Ozga 2009), has gained pace since the creation of the Coalition Government in 2010. Increasing numbers of schools have opted for financial and curricular autonomy by achieving academy status (Parliament 2010; Ball and Junemann 2012). But in common with other public service organisations, increasing autonomy has concomitantly been accompanied by increasing regulatory control. This paradoxical situation is well articulated by Clarke who identifies it as one of four 'performance paradoxes' that emerge as regulatory bodies strive to represent the public interest in increasingly complex and dispersed systems of public provision (Clarke 2008b, p. 125). In his analysis, it is what he terms to be 'the paradox of independence' that is particularly relevant in order to secure both the authority and credibility of evaluative agencies such as inspectorates.

One of the critical dimensions of successful public service regulation is the need for regulatory agencies to be independent, not open to influence by the agendas of stakeholders, government or service users. This idea gained currency during what Power terms 'the audit explosion of the early 80s' (Power 1997, p. 3) and became established as one of the core elements of evaluating with validity (House 1980). One of the most important elements of a successful inspectorate is the credibly of its inspectors (see for example Boyne et al. 2002), but maintaining credulity alongside impartiality is a difficult balance to achieve. Inspectors are expected to have an in depth knowledge of their field, whilst equally being able to maintain some sort of distance between they and the profession being inspected (see Baxter 2013).

This chapter uses Jacobsson's theory of governance to examine the work of inspectors as a regulative, meditative and inquisitive activity and investigates how changes in the inspector workforce have been perceived by both the inspectors themselves and head teachers in both countries (Jacobsson 2006, 2009).

Governing by Inspection

Jacobsson's theory was chosen to frame this particular study due to its specificity in determining the ways in which inspection is used as a governing tool. Research into educational evaluation and accountability is centered largely upon the role and efficacy of inspection, rather than the role and efficacy of the inspector. Evaluation of theoretical lenses used to frame these investigations are useful in order to appreciate the impact of inspection to effect school improvement but offer little in terms of policy implementation frameworks (see for example Ehren and Visscher 2008; Sammons 2006, 2007). As this study essentially focuses on policy implementation in relation to educational governance Jacobsson's model was thought to be most useful in encompassing the governance element at policy level, whilst also being flexible enough to examine this in terms of implementation; an important element not present in many studies of policy and its implementation (see for further information: Hill and Ham 1997; Matthews and Smith 1995; Spillane et al. 2002).

We feel that it is a useful lens to examine perceptions of credibility as his model breaks down governing activity into three principal types of governing activity. Relating them to the work of inspectors enables this study to see the extent to which head teacher and inspector perceptions of the role conflate with the requirements of each activity or the converse.

The first area identified within the model focuses on **regulative activities**: the extent to which inspection activities rely upon formal laws and directives with penalties for their violation. The second set of activities, termed **inquisitive activities**; concentrates upon making those who are to be inspected 'show and tell', to open up for control—for example, inspectors access into schools' inner life-observing classes and interviewing school leaders, teachers, students and governors in order to find out what is really happening in schools. This overlaps with the third genre of activity: the **meditative activity** which centres upon discussion, professional dialogue and negotiations around what constitutes best practice in that particular context. Taking these three forms of governing activity this chapter investigates:

– **How the remodelling of the inspection workforce in both countries has impacted on inspector work?**
– **What are the implications of current perceptions of inspectors work for the legitimacy of inspectorates in England and Sweden?**

The research draws upon data gained through semi structured qualitative interviews with inspectors, inspector trainers, school leaders, and heads of inspection services in both Sweden and England (60 in all). Using an ideographic case study approach the research uses discourse analytic techniques to draw out elements relating to inspector identities and the challenges facing them within each system-this is explained at greater length in the methodological section of the chapter.

The chapter concludes with a discussion on how the changes made by inspectorates in order to enhance both legitimacy and credibility of the inspection process are perceived by inspectors and head teachers and what this may imply for inspection in both countries.

A Tale of Two Inspectorates: Differing Inspectorates, Differing Policy Contexts

This section of the chapter offers a brief background and flavour of context in which both inspectorates are located. This is in order to give a sense of the rapid changes that they have undergone in recent years, and to highlight the ways in which they are currently placed in the educational, cultural political contexts in which they operate.

Sweden

As discussed earlier the neo-liberal agenda that gained pace in England during the 1980s also affected Sweden but failed to gain substantial ground until the period following the economic crisis of the 1990s. School inspection in Sweden was reintroduced in 2003, 'following a period of soft evaluation in the form of,

> Development dialogues' and self-evaluation. At that time inspection was carried out by The National Agency of Education (NAE) (Lindgren 2015, p. 58).

This more developmental approach to inspection was blamed for what the Swedish government saw to be failing standards—a term characteristic of the neo-liberal drive for excellence and drawn from increasingly corporate approach to schools (Peters and Waterman 1982).

Since the inception of the new inspection agency, The SSI (Swedish Schools Inspectorate), in 2008, both the model and the scale and nature of the work of inspection have undergone substantial change and have been influenced by more stringent regulatory regimes in other countries for example England (Rönnberg et al. 2012). The current model is based on, 'control, results and formal or judicial aspects of education,' (Lindgren 2012, p. 5), and was launched as part of an,

> Ambitious attempt by the right wing coalition to reform the Swedish Education system which had been and is still described as inefficient and underachieving, (ibid, p. 6).

These changes also heralded the beginning of a far more systematic approach to inspection in which schools would be inspected with increasing regularity:

> In 2011 the Inspectorate assessed 2400 comprehensive schools, 550 secondary schools and 660 other publicly funded educational enterprises. In their annual report to the government they stress the increase in productivity of around 1000 visits compared to the previous year, (or a 41% increase in productivity, our calculation) (Skolinspektionen n.d., p. 8 in Hult and Segerholm 2012, p. 2)

The shift from the NAE inspection more aimed at developing deficiencies at schools to the new inspectorate represented a shift to an inspection more firmly based on legal compliance. Earlier reports and decisions could, from an educational/pedagogical perspective point to areas that could be improved, but:

> [t]he new and current way to write the reports and decisions is explicitly based on pointing out failures to comply with the Education Act and Ordinance and other statutes, and references to the particular legal paragraphs are always present. (Hult and Segerholm 2014, p. 5)

This change in policy engendered a re-modelling of the inspection workforce. This was partly due to accusations that inspectors emanating from the teaching profession had grown 'too cosy' with those they were tasked to inspect (Segerholm 2012). This according to Boyne and colleagues (Boyne 2006, p. 122), is the phenomenon of 'inspector capture,' and recognised within the field of public service inspection as a serious problem in terms of the public credibility and recognition of legitimacy of an inspectorate.

As a result of this the agency decreed that inspectors who were formerly recruited almost exclusively from the ranks of former teachers and head teachers should now also emanate from the field of law and investigation: that they should be legal scholars schooled in the ways of the law or professionally trained investigative researchers with an academic degree. The goal was one third of each background, teacher, field of law and investigative. This, it was hoped would put paid to accusations of partiality that had been levelled at ex teaching professionals.

The Inspectorate has a considerable mandate and is formally commissioned by the government to:

(a) Carry out regular supervision of all schools and principal organizers (municipalities and operators of independent schools).
(b) Perform regular quality audits where a sample of schools are audited thematically, e.g. one school subject, or a particular area of interest, for example assessment in the lower attainment.
(c) Act on complaints from individuals (e.g. concerning bullying).
(d) Authorise licences for independent schools.

All activities are based upon the agency's interpretation of the Education Act and Ordinance (2010:800), and a range of other national formal documents which mandate compliance. The quality audits, carried out at regular intervals also include analysis of educational research and longitudinal studies of practice.

The new system, characterised by laws, regulations and penalties for non-compliance is far more punitive than its former iteration (Skolinspektionen n.d.). Current inspections, in common with England, are high stakes- schools who fail to comply with a follow up development from July 2011 have been subject to a number of penalties (Education Act 2010:800). These have ranged from the imposition fines or for independent schools, in the worst case scenario, a withdrawal of school operating licences.

> The Swedish Schools Inspectorate may make use of penalties and apply pressure so that a principal organizer rectifies its activities. If the principal organizer does not take action or seriously disregards its obligations, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate may decide to impose a conditional fine or measures at the principal organizer's expense. In the case of an independent school, its license to operate may be revoked. (http://www.skolinspektionen.se/, 2013)

A primary focus for the new agency has been replacing many of those with an education background that worked as inspectors during earlier period when the inspections were part of the National Agency for Education 2003–2008 (Hult and Segerholm 2014). This aimed to counter accusations of inspector capture, whilst also ensuring that the new inspectorate was not hampered in its efforts by those educationalists who felt that the new inspectorate had little to offer in educational terms. Another motive for the legally trained inspectors was the Inspectorate's possibility to put injunctions that might have to hold in court.

England

Although the English inspectorate Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) has been in existence far longer than its Swedish counterpart it has, since its inception in 1992 undergone many iterations (Maclure 2000). Formed at a time when public and political confidence in the English Education system was low and the right wing neo liberal agenda which had begun over a decade earlier and gained pace under Prime Ministers James Callaghan and Margaret Thatcher, was cemented by John Major, who echoed earlier speeches by both premiers that, 'the state must step into schools,' (Chitty 2004, p. 43). Ofsted was designed to both regulate education and ensure that progressive left wing methods of teaching popularised during the 60s were not permitted to 'compromise standards,' as well as opening up the secret garden of education by informing parental choice of schools via, '*impartial advice and information*', offered by means of inspection reports (Ozga et al. 2013). The new agency required a new breed of inspector: one very far removed from those employed by the previous agency: Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI): inspectors that were expected to leave behind the more advisory relationship enjoyed by their predecessors in which:

'Regular inspection visits formed the basis of their professional expertise, their knowledge of schools, their understanding of the tasks teachers were confronting, their experience of good practice in different circumstances, their ability to report on what they saw without imposing their own or someone else's orthodoxy. This is what HMI stood for in schools.' (Maclure 2000: 322) and employ far more regulatory approach which subsequently came to be characterised (and caricatured), as punitive and rather than developmental.

Since then the education landscape has altered a great deal. The 1988 Education Reform Act formalised the expansion of marketised forms of education (Parliament 1988), this was followed by a number of Acts all designed to offer schools so called freedom from Local Authority control, and greater autonomy over curriculum and teacher employment (Parliament 2010). But these changes have also placed increasing political pressure on Ofsted to drive school improvement. This has been compounded by a number of influential international reports such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), which have shown English education to be under-performing compared to its European counterparts (Grek et al. 2009; OECD 2010).

These pressures have called Ofsted's role into question and resulted in a number of parliamentary inquiries into the role and purpose of Ofsted, and asking why, after so many years of inspection, England still appears to trail its OECD counterparts in number of ways (Parliament 2004, 2011). These inquiries, combined with an increasingly negative media focus on the inspectorate, resulted in recommendations that Ofsted should take a far greater role in supporting schools to improve. In order to do this it would also have to make considerable efforts to re-build its relationship with the teaching profession: a relationship which had moved from bare tolerance to outright aggression, culminating in 2013 with the National Association of Head Teachers formation of an alternative inspectorate (INSTEAD) at their annual conference in 2013 (Elmes 2013; Marquand 2013; Paton 2013).

In order to effect these changes and to answer to its critics Ofsted introduced a New Inspection Framework in January 2012, refining it in autumn of the same year (Ofsted 2012d, e). The new Framework and its accompanying handbook reduced the number of judgements from the previous twenty nine to just four. Not only did the new framework make the role of school improvement a core element of the inspection process, but also heightened the emphasis on inspector professional judgement, doing away with the tick box approach with its 29 criteria that had been subject to sustained criticism in the previous version (for further discussion see Baxter and Clarke 2013; Burchill 1995; Maw 1995).

As in the case of the SSI, These innovations were accompanied by efforts to re-model the inspector workforce: a workforce that had been accused by profession, press and Parliament of being out of touch with current issues in education. In order to counter these accusations Inspection providers, in the form of three agencies; CfBT, Tribal and Serco (Ofsted 2009c), were given a Key performance indicator of recruiting in-service school leaders as part time inspectors. This, it was hoped would enable to more readily effect school improvement by their ability to *speak the same language* as those being inspected whilst the fact that they are practising school leaders from good or outstanding schools would concomitantly enhance the credibility of their judgements.

As a result of these changes which in the process of,

> Reflecting the neo-liberal faith in information as enabling competition and choice, while neo-liberalism's adherence to the principle of diversity in provision (so that choice and competition can operate) produces an increasingly varied set of activities and institutional arrangements which require-coordination, (Ozga and Segerholm 2014, p. 14).

Inspection as both a driver for school improvement, a governing tool and a key element of the neo-liberal project has, as we have discussed affected both countries to varying degrees. The changes and adaptations that have occurred as a result of these pressures have created tensions within the inspection processes. Often these tensions have arisen due to attempts to mitigate against issues that arose as a result of the previous inspection regime. In the case of England, the need to more closely link school improvement to inspection has resulted in considerable re-evaluation of both the inspection framework and the inspection workforce. In Sweden, responses to similar pressures have been interpreted in very different ways. In the next section of this chapter we consider how those changes can be explored in light of the work carried out by inspectors.

Theoretical Approach

Public sector inspection involves a number of elements which are described as fundamental to a successful inspection (see Boyne 2006), in order to render it both effective and credible. In the case of this research we understand effective inspection as a tool by which to govern education (Ozga et al. 2013). But the

process of inspection is a complex one leading in many cases to the type of 'performance paradoxes' outlined by Clarke (2008a, b) and described in the case of educational inspection in earlier work (Brimblecombe et al. 1995; Baxter 2013a). These paradoxes emerge as regulatory bodies that strive to represent the public interest in an increasingly complex system (Clarke 2008a, b, p. 125). One such paradox he refers to as, 'the paradox of independence', is indicative of the extent to which the regulatory body can be said to be impartial, as Ofsted describes it, 'to inspect without fear or favor.' (Ofsted 2012d). Clarke argues that in striving to fulfill their regulatory function whilst concomitantly retaining credibility in an constantly changing environment (and often in the face of considerable criticism by press and public), inspectorates inadvertently produce paradoxical inspection effects; these effects often creating new problems in terms of their legitimacy and credibility, not to mention the stressful effects it has on school staff (see for further discussion Baxter 2013b; Clapham 2014).

A body of research into school inspection agrees that inspectorates are to a great extent judged by public, profession and government in terms of the quality and credibility of their inspectors (Ferguson et al. 2000; Perryman 2007), and that this is particularly so within regimes that emphasise the relationship between inspection and school improvement (Matthews and Sammons 2004; Sammons 1999). In order to investigate the work of the inspector we draw on the work of Bengt Jacobsson who, in his work on global trends of state transformation describes three dimensions of governance activities (Jacobsson 2006): these are illustrated in Fig. 3.1.
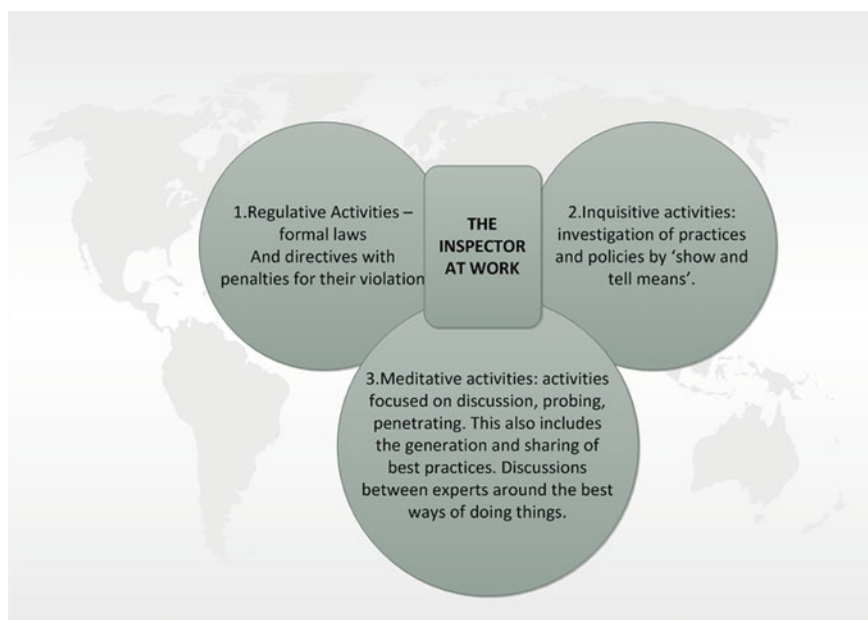
Fig. 3.1 Activities of inspection adapted from Jacobsson (2006)

Research into inspection and the qualities of inspectors (Baxter 2013b; Hult and Segerholm 2012; Segerholm 2011) has shown that training falls into two principal categories: induction training and ongoing continual professional development. The induction phase focuses primarily upon inspection values and addressing preconceptions that may be possessed by the nascent inspector. The challenges inherent within the initial training period are then carried forward into the next stage of inspector development: the continuous professional development in which the inspector learns 'on the job', and develops in experience and knowledge moving from a peripheral role in terms of their experience (see Lave 2009) to one in which they may be considered to have 'expert inspector status'. In this chapter we understand this learning to take place within the constructivist premise in which inspectors learn as much from one another as from their trainers; that they bring knowledge to the process as well as learning from it and that their professional standing as inspectors is one in which their professional identity is negotiated in relation to the relationship and standing they acquire with their inspectees (Dewey 1916; Piaget 1954). We employ this understanding of inspector development to investigate the ways in which inspector development, preparation and work is affecting the inspection process under the new systems in both countries, and consider the challenges, tensions and opportunities inherent within the processes.

Data Collection and Analysis: Methodology

This chapter is part of the project: Governing by Inspection- School Inspection and Education Governance in Sweden, Scotland and England (res-2009-5770).[1] The research project on which this chapter is based examines inspection as a means of governing education and investigates the governing work that inspection regimes do in three national education systems: Sweden, England and Scotland. The project investigates tensions between increased regulation through technical means such as performance data and the rules followed by inspectors in their school assessments, and their expert knowledge, professional judgement and use of support, development and persuasion in encouraging self-regulation in the teaching profession.

Within this chapter we draw from transcripts from sixty qualitative semi-structured interviews from both the English and Swedish case studies. Each interview lasting between 45 min and an hour, were analysed using key themes arising from the analytic framework for this research (Fig. 3.2). The key themes

employed emerged by translating Jacobsson's classification of governance activities into inspector's work and include: laws, regulation, penalization, practices, teacher observation, interviews, feedback, policies, action planning, discussion, professional dialogue.

In order to ensure anonymity individual positions of inspectors and location of head teacher respondents is not included in this chapter. Throughout the research the data was held on secure servers within both countries and protected with encryption logins.

Analysis was then further broken down according to each genre of inspection activity and is outlined in diagrammatic form in Fig. 3.2.

The discourse was analysed using conversation analysis techniques employed by Harvey Sacks (Silverman 1998). Sacks' work has been found to be useful in examining perceptions and the normative assumptions which underlie these perceptions (Wodack and Kryżanowski 2008). It was chosen above other methods in order to evaluate how head teachers and inspectors position themselves in relation to the work of inspection. This type of analysis also involves a phenomenological approach to data in which the focus of the study is confined to the experiences of individuals (for further discussion see Husserl and Gibson 1962). This approach is not without its critics (see Willig 2001), who often see the interpretative role of the researcher in negative terms. Nonetheless it is valuable in establishing what frames of understanding are being employed by individuals as they go about their work. Perceptions of inspection and the processes by which inspectors make their judgements are key to the legitimacy and credibility of any inspectorate and in exploring the work of inspectors—particularly at a time of such great change in both countries, is an important element in understanding the complex mechanisms that operate at a number of levels within the inspection process.

The themes developed in Fig. 3.2 emerged as a result of the coding process, the segmentation of activities was undertaken in relation to work carried out by inspectors. The researchers then evaluated to which of elements of Jacobsson's theory the themes were most strongly linked.

The frames of understanding in this study are linked to the work of Goffman (1974) in terms of the implications of statements to link to particular beliefs. This is not unlike Sacks' member categorisation analysis in which, 'common sense knowledge' is employed in order to make sense of situations (Silverman 1998, p. 75). In analysing the normative meanings attached to conversations it is possible to explore the implications of these frames for acceptance or rejection of the status quo. The technique is used both in media analysis and cultural studies to investigate identities and cultural norms which underpin particular discourses (Carey 2008; Franklin 1999). In this study activities carried out during inspection were categorised according to the ways in which the inspectors framed them during their discourse. For example, thoughts on professional dialogue were understood within inspector narratives, to link strongly with Jacobsson's activity three-meditative activities. This followed from analysis of metaphors and anecdotes that emerged from the interviews and that helped to clarify inspector understandings of the various activities they undertake during the course of their work. In locating these
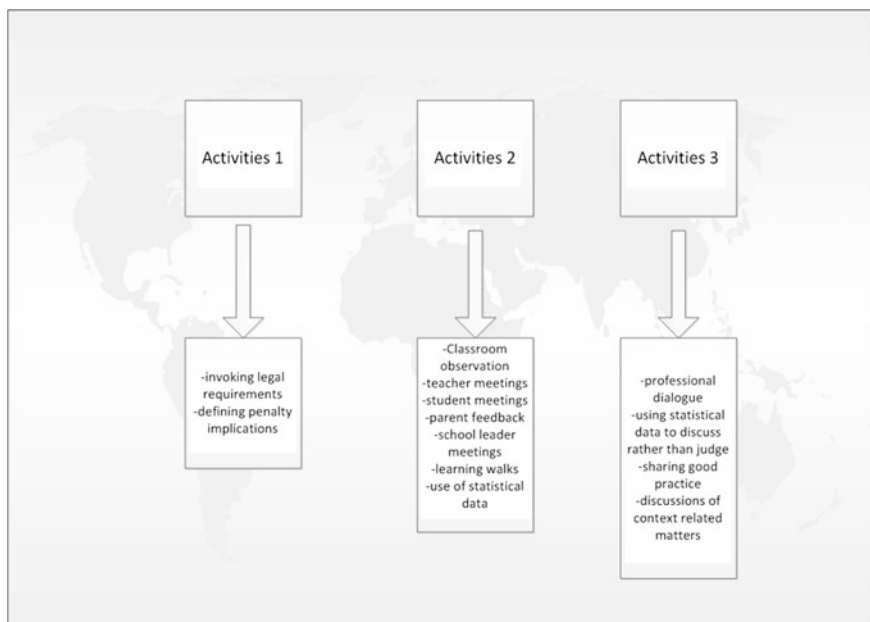
Fig. 3.2 Interview analytic coding framework

meanings within frames of understanding that are narrativised by metaphors, intertextual links (links to inspection documentation and aims), it was possible to then possible to categorise descriptions of these activities within the framework provided by Jacobsson. Goffman's frames of reference have been used successfully in other work on qualitative framing of narrative in relation to public and private discourses (see Goffman 1959, 1981, 2008, 2009).

Findings

In this section of the chapter we discuss our findings in relation to the three areas of activity outlined in figure one: we begin by a discussion of the role of regulative activities within the two systems.

Regulative Activities

Although the SSI system of inspection is heavily weighted around issues of compliance there is a small element of discretion to the inspection process. This is reflected in the three main competencies that the agency focuses upon in their

inspector training programme which involves elements of a juridical, pedagogical and investigative nature.

Although highly prescriptive, the process is dependent upon inspector knowledge and expertise and as this may vary from inspector to inspector, judgements may differ accordingly. The training programme takes place over six months and includes twelve centrally organised days of face to face input, accompanied by submission of written assignments that build into a portfolio of experience. To make sure that the departments have inspectors with the right competences, a competence tool has been developed by the inspectorate. This examines inspector abilities across 107 different competencies. The list was compiled according to the results of a number of qualitative interviews carried out across the different departments; the aim being to create a tool which accurately reflects the skills, knowledge and personal attributes required of jobbing inspectors. All inspectors are asked to self-report on each competency. This is then discussed with a full time department manager who will compare the self-evaluation with their own view of the inspector's fitness to practice. For the SSI the new system has a number of strengths as a Swedish Inspector Competence developer recounts:

> You can look at the individual level, unit level, department level, authority level and relate it to the three different professional backgrounds. (Swedish Inspector Competence Developer 2012)

The new competency framework was also premised on the fact that a number of inspectors had moved from the previous regime (The National Agency for Education) and were found to be lacking in some of the skills needed for the new system as well as some of the newly employed. The need for training and different competences is understood by this inspector who frames it in terms of a belief that it will aid development of a robust and effective inspection system:

> You have to be aware that you represent the state. You have to try to be impartial somehow. I suppose it's a good mix with both lawyers and teachers, but I think, since we look a lot to law obedience and less to quality in our supervision…It has been a discussion here [at the inspectorate], some teachers think that they alone can master, or they think that it [inspecting] requires teacher background, but I think that you also need the investigative background when looking at the present model. (Inspector with a law background)

This inspector frames the inspectorate's work in terms of the government and strongly identifies with an understanding of the role as an agent of government. Being this agent, it seems important that the inspectors are prepared with different competences and knowledge for their mission. As indicated in the quote, there has been a debate within the inspectorate in Sweden concerning which the valuable competences and perspectives are. However they all seemed to perceive themselves as agents of the government with a mission of controlling for and protecting individual children's right according to the Education Act. To the inspectors with a teacher background it also was important to interpret the law to protect pedagogical values since they identify to a far greater extent with the education professionals they are inspecting. In contrast to the Swedish inspectors English inspectors articulated their role constantly alluding to their separation and distance from government.

The present head of Ofsted-Sir Michael Wilshaw[2]—took up his role in January 2012. Unlike many previous Her Majesty's Chief Inspectors, he was a practising head teacher before taking up the role. Because of this (alongside other factors), he was feted in the media as head of the highly successful Mossbourne Academy, a school in an area of high socioeconomic deprivation whose standards had been greatly enhanced by his work (Baxter 2013b). As one of the new innovations that took place in the inspectorate in the period following his appointment, it was decided that not only should inspection adopt an approach that was (at least superficially) far simpler but should also make a concerted attempt to frame its work in terms of the development of teaching and learning. In order to do this the agency reduced the number of judgements from twenty nine to just four whilst also placing a great deal more emphasis on the professional judgement of its inspectors. Inspectors recruited before 2012 were from very varied backgrounds-for example some were retired teaching professionals, others had held senior positions within local authority education departments. Few were practising teachers and many had been out of school for a considerable time. The innovation to recruit in service head teachers from outstanding schools was designed to provide enhanced inspector credibility with teachers and school leaders whilst also attempting to frame the inspector as a professional-highly skilled in the art of teaching and learning. The drawback of this was an increased risk of 'inspector capture' (referred to earlier), and an understanding of teaching and learning that emanated almost entirely from the context in which the head was placed (discussed more fully in previous work, see Baxter 2013a). A lead inspector describes the challenges of this change:

> We do interviews and assessment and part of that interview and it's quite a crucial part is to try and look at the nature of the person: we are looking for people who can apply the criteria fairly and err, leave behind their baggage. That is actual quite difficult; it's one of the issues that we face above anything else; even throughout the training, we often encounter people that say, 'that's not the way I would do it 'and the emphasis is not only what they would do but what a school or other institution is doing and whether it works. (Lead inspector, England)

It is interesting that this inspector should frame what is essentially professional knowledge as 'baggage' particularly given the emphasis placed upon it in the current English system. This context related knowledge was criticised by a number of head teachers that were interviewed as part of this study. The reason for many of the criticisms was often due to the fact that those working in outstanding schools were very often placed in areas of low deprivation, yet were tasked with inspection of schools who were placed very differently in socio-economic terms. The perception among these heads was often that it was impossible for these inspector heads to appreciate the particular demands of working in challenging schools. This, to a certain extent, undermined the credibility of these outstanding heads.

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[2]At the time of publication a new Head of Ofsted-Amanda Spielman is due to take over from Sir Michael Wilshaw at the end of 2016. Spielman was instrumental in establishing the multi-academy schools chain, Ark.

The contrasting claims to credibility employed by inspectors from each system within these regulatory activities demonstrates the different frames of understanding employed by each *in terms of their role*: the Swedish inspector as an agent of government and the English inspector as knowledgeable teaching professional. These are explored further in terms of the inquisitive activates engendered through the role of inspector.

Inquisitive Activities

The regulative activities of both the SSI and Ofsted are supported by evidence. To a large extent it is through these inquisitive activities (numbered two in figure one), that this evidence is brought into play.

The role of what constitutes knowledge and evidence in inspection has changed and evolved according to political and policy changes (Chitty 2004; Lindgren 2012; Ozga 2009). Lindgren points out how this plays out in the case of Sweden:

> Judgements tend to be located within an on-going struggle between two parallel professional cultures: a pedagogical and a juridical. (Lindgren 2012: 1)

In England the tensions tend to be between the use of statistical and numerical data weighed against the extent to which qualitative, context specific data is used to inform judgements (Ozga et al. 2011). In both systems the inquisitive activities of the inspectors manifested by the ways in which they investigate practices, policies and data not only equip them with an evidence base upon which to work, but equally offer individual schools the opportunity to show their work in the best light. In the English system the current inspection framework was designed to eradicate (as far as possible), any opportunity for schools to 'play the system', as one head teacher outlined:

> You know, you just know that the guy down the road has shipped all of the bad kids out to the seaside for the day. (Head teacher, England)

Shorter lead in times (schools only have one day's notice), more teacher observation, inspections which only last two days and a system which places an emphasis upon teaching over time as opposed to the classroom *performance* of the teacher, all combine with the aim of making inspections: *shorter and sharper*. But the short sharp inspections are creating tensions of their own as one school leader told us:

> They [Ofsted] come in and they see around 50 observations, but say my best staff work Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and they come Thursday Friday? (Head teacher, England)

The shorter nature of inspection has brought challenges of its own to the process, raising questions about the scale and nature of the inquisitive process and the extent to which qualitative data is are weighed against student attainment data. In some

cases this has led to increasing levels of cynicism amongst heads who feel that the present scale and nature of inspector duties render it impossible for them to go by anything other than statistical data based evidence:

> Do you really get a feel for what a school is like over 2 days? … I actually think that they [Ofsted] should have that first conversation with the SIP (School improvement Officer), […] tell me about the leadership and management of the school, where do you see the grades over the next 3 years under this management? Then we will go and inspect it. Otherwise, stay in London and look at RAISEONLINE[3]. (Head teacher, England)

This perception does not seem to have contributed to positive perceptions of inspector competence particularly in view of the very short time that inspectors have in school, as one head teacher remarked,

> When you see what they have to do in two days, it's a great deal. (Head teacher, England)

Recent changes to the inspection system in Sweden have also placed additional demands on their inspectors in terms of their inquisitive activities. In contrast to their English counterpart, Swedish inspectors do not inspect teaching. Instead their inquisitive activities centre upon checking individual schools compliance to the Education Act and other steering documents. Are they doing the right thing concerning development plans, documentation and data pertaining to student achievement? Some inspectors express some doubts about if these are the most important aspects to inspect:

> [I]t is much easier to get stuck in questions about details, because they are easy to identify. But are these questions really the most important ones? The most important questions, those about the process–about how much [the school] works–are the difficult questions. And you don't touch upon them as much, because they are more difficult to judge. (Inspector quote in Lindgren 2015: 71)

Swedish school leaders complain about the time consuming nature of the task of collating the required levels of documentary evidence (Novak 2013), and they, like their English counterparts view the changes as specious; voicing concerns that the short time spent in school, combined to the quantity of written, statistical and legal compliance documentation means that many inspectors have judged a school before they even embark on the inspection visit:

> The time they met students and teachers were really short […] so I think it's a short time for them to really see. (Head teacher, Sweden)

The short timescales for inspection combined with the sheer quantity of evidence for analysis, places considerable pressure upon inspector's abilities to synthesise and analyse a range of evidence. In Sweden this has led to the recruitment of individuals with academic degrees in the art and science of investigation. In England the employment of in service head teachers has meant that this skill has

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[3]Data management system for school attainment and achievement data in English secondary and primary education.

had to be honed within the context of initial and on-going training. One inspector explained the challenges that this poses to lead inspectors in the English system:

> It's a very, very difficult role; because you've got all of that responsibility at the start of inspection: to prepare; you've got to build a relationship with the head teacher and the senior team and I think that's a crucial part of a successful inspection: if they feel they've been listened to and you've gone to look at the stuff they suggested: lesson plans etc. One of the criticisms made [recently] about our evidence forms was that they weren't clinical enough, judgmental enough or explicit enough. (Inspector trainer and lead inspector, England)

Striking a balance between building a relationship with school leaders-listening to their story of their school and the evidence that they are keen to present yet remaining impartial and drawing on evidence that may well place them in a poor light—is a difficult one to achieve. It overlaps a great deal with the meditative activities outlined in section three of figure one, yet it is in essence quite a different activity. The tensions between the inquisitive practices and the meditative activities are elucidated by this English lead inspector and inspector trainer who talks about his own perceptions of the inspector role when working as a head but learning to be an inspector:

> I used to drive away from the training [to be an inspector] thinking, you know any of my staff could do this, whether it is the most high flying senior teacher that you've got or the newly qualified teaching assistant with no experience. Cos surely it's a case of applying a set of criteria to a given situation? In my naivety I underestimated the interpersonal element and as I inspected more it came very vividly to me that actually it's 98% interpersonal. (Lead Headteacher Inspector, England)

The interpersonal element of inspection is intrinsically linked to both the meditative and regulative activities: a facet that is recognised and articulated within the new English system in which teaching inspectors are thought to add credibility to the process and, it is hoped, will encourage school leaders to more readily enter into professional dialogue with inspectors, and concomitantly be more ready to accept judgements (for further discussion see Baxter and Clarke 2013).

In the Swedish system not only the lack of a teaching background but the particular approach taken by those from a legal background has created problems which then overlap into the meditative activities of the inspectorate, as two Swedish school leaders told us:

> We felt it [inspection] as a medieval inquisition more than as an inspection. (Head teacher, Sweden)

> [They] could not think outside of the box: 'this is what the law says' […] 'this is our directive'…so he was a real jobs worth. (Head teacher, Sweden)

It became clear from a number of head teacher accounts, that the very formal way in which inspectors from a legal background attempted to communicate with school staff seemed very alien. At times this not only impeded communication but appeared particularly inimical to the whole idea of accepting judgements from people with no educational background. Also some inspectors with educational

background meant that lacking this background and knowledge might cause judgements that are not equivalent (although schools are performing equal) due to these inspectors not knowing when and how to ask supplementary questions (Lindgren 2015: 70).

Meditative Activities

The comments above demonstrate the perceptual problems engendered by having individuals without an educational background working as inspectors. The new English system in contrast with its drive to introduce a perceptual proximity between inspectors and inspectees, has done so at the risk of inspector capture, as discussed earlier; with its accompanying occluded discourse of partiality (Boyne 2006). The notion of professional inspectors who can effect positive change within schools has proven deeply seductive to the English inspectorate who, influenced by evidence given at a Parliamentary inquiry into the work of Ofsted in 2011 which commended the manner of inspections carried out in the independent inspectorate:

> Within our system, the team inspectors are themselves current serving practitioners. We deploy around a thousand of these a year to go into and inspect other schools. The exchange of information and the opportunity to see the most effective practice and to take it back into their particular institutions is phenomenal. The inspectors themselves frequently comment that it is the best professional development that they get, as well as the benefit to the sector as a whole. (Parliament 2011)

Since then there has been some criticism of an alleged lack of rigour on the part of the independent inspectorate, with allegations appearing in the media which criticised the inspectorate for inspector capture (Paton 2014b).

But the type of meditative activities alluded to by Jacobsson—the generation and sharing of best practices and the idea of inspection as a discussion between professional experts-is popular with some head teachers as this individual reported,

> It felt much more collaborative: like we were doing inspection with them rather than having it done to us. (Head teacher, England)

In the new inspection Framework the word professional appears 40% more frequently than in the previous 2009 version (Ofsted 2009a, b, 2012a, b) and the Handbook for Inspection and its accompanying Framework makes the link between inspection and school improvement much more specific than it has been in the past, stating that the agency aims to:

> 2. Provide information to the Secretary of State for Education and to Parliament about the work of schools and the extent to which an acceptable standard of education is being provided. This provides assurance that minimum standards are being met provides confidence in the use of public money and assists accountability, as well as indicating where improvements are needed. (Ofsted 2012a)

The Swedish Inspectorate have since the new model 2008 tried to 'recover' some of the developmental view of inspection, but this is effected in a slightly different way to the new English system. In the Swedish regular supervision there are very few teaching observations and no individual feedback sessions with teachers, only with heads. However in the newly introduced feedback seminars, after the report is published the inspectors meet with the representatives for the municipality and the head teachers in order to effect a constructive dialogue which centres upon points for development and how to take these forward. This kind of meditative activity is highly appreciated by those attending, as this Chairman of the Municipal Board of Education reports:

> When it comes to the feedback seminar I'm actually impressed, they [the inspectorate] have organised the process so that they both have written the reports and also helpfully arranged group work with school leaders to work through their reports. So far they have topped my expectations. (Chairman, Municipal Board of Education, Sweden)

Viewed in light of Jacobsson's three areas of activity it is evident that whilst both systems use inquisitive activities to reach their judgements; whilst the English system appears to choose superficially meditative activities to govern; its Swedish counterpart relies very firmly on the regulative activates as outlined in area one (Fig. 3.1). Our final discussion explores these aspects in light of Jacobssons' original theory and examines the challenges and tensions for the new inspection regimes in each country.

Concluding Discussion

This chapter set out to examine how the remodelling of the inspection workforce in both countries has impacted on inspector credibility and the implications of current perceptions of inspector credibility for the legitimacy of inspectorates in England and Sweden. As the chapter has illustrated, these changes have been substantial-each designed to counteract public and political criticism and to enhance the credibility of the inspectorate. In theory, these changes look to be positive, but when they are viewed at an operational level, the data indicates that there are substantial challenges to be overcome.

Sweden's employment of individuals who operate, 'at arms-length' from those they inspect (Clarke 2008a, b: 65), whilst minimising the risk of accusations of partiality, concomitantly creates a bureaucratic discourse which appears to run counter to many of the meditative activities that are fundamental to the inspection process. This in turn is failing to convince some teaching professionals that inspection is indeed a useful and developmental activity for their school (Hult and Segerholm 2012: 3; Segerholm and Hult 2013: 15). The Swedish inspection, since 2008 closely tied to the Education Act and the decisions based on deviations from law paragraphs, implicate that formal observations of teaching during inspection are not performed since the law says nothing about how to teach. However, this lack of

observation has recently provoked questions around how a school can possibly be judged on the basis of regulatory compliance alone. In addition to this, the personal skills of those from backgrounds other than teaching, are often blamed for a seeming lack of comprehension of the particular pressures that schools and teachers are under. Leading to a lack of faith in the credibility of inspectors and the inspectorate.

In contrast, the heightened focus on regulation via meditative activities described in the English system is creating different challenges for both inspected and inspectors. As the study has illustrated, decisions on what data to include and what data constitutes the most powerful evidence when faced with a choice of both externally generated and school generated data can cause tensions for inspectors. As well as in the Swedish case these decisions can also be problematic for schools, who often question why inspectors bother coming into school if their evaluations seem to be based largely on data made available to them prior to inspection. The reduction in criteria with its focus on the professional skills and judgements of inspectors, whilst welcomed by some, has also caused problems for some head teachers, who accuse in service inspectors of judging schools according to the standards and context in which they are placed. This appears to be particularly problematic in schools within areas of high socioeconomic deprivation which have been inspected by inspectors who have worked in more economically buoyant areas. This has been illustrated by the marked increase in the number of complaints made about the system since its inception in 2012—in the first five months of the new Framework 262 schools—one in 12 of those inspected made a formal complaint afterwards (Garner 2012a, b).

Since then the inspectorate has come under additional criticisms in terms of its proximity to government. Accusations that the inspectorate is merely carrying out party political agendas reached their apotheosis just before the Secretary of State for Education stood down after The Trojan Horse affair—a scandal in which a number of schools in Birmingham, England were investigated following allegations that certain individuals were imposing hard-line Muslim agendas on the curriculum (Baxter 2014a, b). These accusations led to David Cameron suggesting that the inspectorate be tasked with ensuring that schools were advocating strictly 'British Values' (Paton 2014), and signalling yet another duty for the inspectorate to embrace. In the wake of the affair the inspectorate's (and inspectors) credibility has been seriously called into question when it was revealed that some of the schools involved had been judged outstanding only a year before the crisis broke.

As we have pointed out, the role of the inspector is key within the inspection process. The recent changes within the inspectorates of both countries, changes that have largely been provoked due to the neo liberal drive for excellence in education, whilst apparently responding to criticism, have in themselves caused considerable challenge for inspectors. These challenges are affecting the perceptions of inspector credibility and in the longer term will need to be addressed in order to assure the continued legitimacy of the inspectorates within both countries.

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Chapter 4
Inspectors and the Process of Self-Evaluation in Ireland

Martin Brown, Gerry McNamara, Joe O'Hara and Shivaun O'Brien

Abstract The relationship between school inspection and school self-evaluation in Ireland has shifted from a largely theoretical one to that of a regulatory requirement where schools are mandated to engage with an externally devised process of self-evaluation. The conduct of self-evaluation in schools is quality assured by the inspectorate. It is not clear where this shift will lead in terms of the relationship between schools and inspectors but it seems certain to change the role of the latter to a marked degree. Although laudable in theory, the practical realities and perceptions relating to this new relationship need to be considered. This chapter provides a documentary analysis of the changing landscape of school self-evaluation policy and practice from 2012 onwards and also draws on interview data and a national survey of school principals who have been charged with the implementation of these initiatives.

Keywords Accountability · Governance · School self-evaluation · School inspection

Introduction

In response to a decline in literacy and numeracy standards, from 2012 all schools in Ireland are required to engage with school self-evaluation (SSE) using a Department of Education and Skills (DES) inspectorate devised school

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self-evaluation framework (DES 2012a) and to 'produce three-year improvement plans for numeracy, literacy and one aspect of teaching and learning across all subjects and programmes' (DES, Ireland 2012b, p. 2). The purpose of SSE is described by the Chief Inspector of Ireland who states: 'our ultimate goal is for schools to conduct their own evaluations transparently and accurately and for inspectors to visit these schools to evaluate the school's own self-evaluation' (Seomra Ranga 2012). This policy direction represents a major departure from the primacy of external inspection which was the cornerstone of school evaluation in Ireland before 2012. However, far from being a radical initiative confined to Ireland, it is in fact closely aligned to broader international trends in school evaluation policy.

The chapter begins by briefly placing this policy shift in its wider context and then focuses on its implementation to date in the Irish school system. The chapter provides a documentary analysis of the changing landscape of school inspection and SSE policy and practice in Ireland from 1998 to the present. Then drawing on interview data and a national survey of post-primary school principals in Ireland, the main section will explore attitudes towards the creation of what has now become a mandatory culture of SSE.

The Changing Relationship Between School Inspection and SSE

In an evaluation paradigm shift, schools in many countries where inspection exists are being given greater autonomy to put in place local mechanisms to improve the quality of education offered. However, 'in return for this autonomy, schools are being required to evaluate their own educational quality and to come up with their own plans for improvement' (Vanhoof and Van Petegem 2007, p. 102). Theoretically this policy shift is justified, at least in part, by a related and increasingly widely accepted notion (see Ehren et al. 2013; Gray 2014) that inspection models are adapted when education accountability systems mature. Schools and their stakeholders develop self-evaluation literacy and innovation capacity to improve education on their own and thus have a diminished need for top-down inspections and reform initiatives.

With the widespread introduction of SSE and the interrelated drive for data-driven school self-regulation, it would be reasonable to suggest that inspectorates of education are facing a changed landscape. Grek et al. (2013) point out that while inspection is not new 'the contexts in which it currently operates greatly extend the demands upon it, and require attention to how it bridges the regulation/self-evaluation "gap" in different national and local settings' (p. 488).

One solution to bridging this 'regulation/self-evaluation' is through the development of inspectorate-devised SSE frameworks that try to accomplish the following: (1) counterbalance the increased autonomy afforded to schools; (2) ensure

the validity and reliability of the schools internal evaluations; (3) enable central government to have a comparative picture of the quality of education in a country and to ascertain whether a particular policy is working or not; and (4) ensure that the improvement initiatives of each school are in line with the collective educational reform initiatives of a country or region. The overarching logic for this mode of evaluation co-existence is described by Donaldson (2013, p. 11) who states:

> The powerful relationship between external and internal evaluation is central to stimulating improvement. Each can make a particular contribution, but the synergies arising from the combination of the two can bring particular benefits. Inspectorates are increasingly emphasising the importance of effective self-evaluation as a driver of improvement. But self-evaluation can become self-delusion or worse and must operate within a framework of accountability which both encourages its rigor and validates its authenticity.

It is in this broader international policy context that recent developments in Ireland must be understood.

The Re-birth of School Inspection in Ireland

Since the Education Act of 1998 (Government of Ireland 1998) Ireland has experienced profound changes in its school evaluation arrangements. Despite a history dating back into the early 19th century, school inspection at post-primary level had almost ceased to exist. However, in the Education Act, school inspection was for the first time in the history of the state, put on a legislative footing. 'The functions of an Inspector shall be: to support and advise recognised schools, centres for education and teachers on matters relating to the provision of education…' (Government of Ireland, Education Act 1998, section 13 (3))'.

With what might be described as a nearly blank canvas, the inspectorate set itself ambitious targets around the recruitment of inspectors who were charged with the development and implementation of multi-mode inspection frameworks and SSE instruments. The inspectorate was also tasked with ensuring that school inspection would once again become an accepted part of the system as the process had become a largely unfamiliar concept to the majority of post-primary school principals and teachers in Ireland. In this regard the revival of inspection has been achieved. It has become once more a regular feature of school life and according to the DES (2013), 'between 2011 and 2012 inspections of some type occurred in 93% of second-level schools' (p. 22).

Although from 1998 to 2012 the immediate evaluation priority for the Irish education system was external inspection, SSE was none the less recognised by the inspectorate as a complementary and essential component of school improvement.

> Ireland, along with other European countries, is adopting a model of quality assurance that emphasises school development planning through internal school review and self-evaluation with the support of external evaluation carried out by the Inspectorate. (Department of Education 2003, p. viii)

As a result, the inspectorate developed, *Looking at our schools—an aid to self-evaluation in second-level schools* (*LAOS*) (DES 2003). Paralleling the external inspection framework LAOS set out five self-evaluation themes: school management, school planning, curriculum provision, learning and teaching in subjects and support for students. It was expected that a school would choose a theme on which to focus and using available evidence would grade the chosen theme along a four-point continuum from significant strengths to weaknesses outweigh strengths. Although there was no requirement for schools to engage with LAOS, and little evidence to suggest that schools had the skill set required to gather and analyse data to any significant degree (see McNamara and O'Hara 2005, 2012), LAOS did serve one significant purpose, namely a closer alignment between internal and external concepts of quality. According to Brown (2011), 'LAOS is used in some schools for the purpose of gathering evidence in preparation for school inspection'.

However in practice, inspectors did not require schools to provide evidence that self-evaluation formed a significant part of the school development planning process. This is confirmed by the DES who stated that, 'recognising that the more impact-focused, school improvement-focused approach of SSE was one with which many schools were not yet familiar, inspectors did not generally apply SSE expectations to the planning processes of schools during the inspections they undertook' (2013, p. 40). In 2012 however, SSE evolved quite suddenly from being a largely rhetorical concept to a very real imposition on schools and teachers. SSE moves centre stage

In 2012 the inspectorate produced a comprehensive set of guidelines for SSE (DES 2012a, b, c, d), the purpose of which was described by the then Minister for Education as follows:

> The School Self-Evaluation Guidelines will support schools to evaluate their own work and to set targets to improve teaching and learning. This will help to achieve the targets set out in the Programme for Government and in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, launched by the Minister last year. (Quinn Nov 19, 2012)

The reasons for this rapid change of policy can only really be guessed at. The Inspectorate would point out that self-evaluation had been part of school evaluation since 2003 and while more honoured in the breach than the observance was always likely to be stepped up at some stage. Also as mentioned above the increased role accorded to SSE in Ireland was in line with similar developments elsewhere and it is very evident in recent years that inspectorates are now working more closely together and are heavily influenced by new policies and practices in other countries. Finally, the theory and practice of inspection becoming more indirect in the sense of being concerned primarily with overseeing SSE as opposed to conducting hands-on inspections is no doubt welcome in the context of limited resources and falling numbers of inspectors.

It now became a requirement for all schools in Ireland to engage with SSE in the manner prescribed in the self-evaluation framework. Moreover the framework was quite prescriptive both in the areas to be evaluated and the methodology to be used. The latter included the statistical analysis of the results of state examinations, scores

from standardised tests which are now compulsory, attendance and early leaving data and surveys of both parental and student opinion. The framework also urged the use of management and peer review of teaching, a very controversial procedure in Ireland. All this data was to be used to develop a short but specific improvement action plan, including clear targets, in the area under evaluation, for example literacy standards.

To ensure that all schools would engage with the self-evaluation process, DES Circular Nos. 0040/2012 (DOE 2012a) and 0039/2012 (DOE 2012b) required all schools to conduct self-evaluations starting in the academic year 2012/2013. Moreover, the process of self-evaluation must be in accordance with the inspectorate-devised school self-evaluation guidelines (DOE 2012b, c). Furthermore, for a number of reasons, such as Ireland's 'Pisa shock' in 2010, Circular Nos. 0040/2012 and 0039/2012 also required school self-evaluations to focus on literacy, numeracy, or an aspect of teaching and learning, and 'in subsequent years, schools should select again from the above options so that, within the four-year period, a School Self-Evaluation report and a three-year school improvement plan (SIP) for literacy, for numeracy and for one aspect of teaching and learning across all subjects will be completed' (2012a, p. 3). Figure 4.1 provides a sample time-line for SSE during this period.
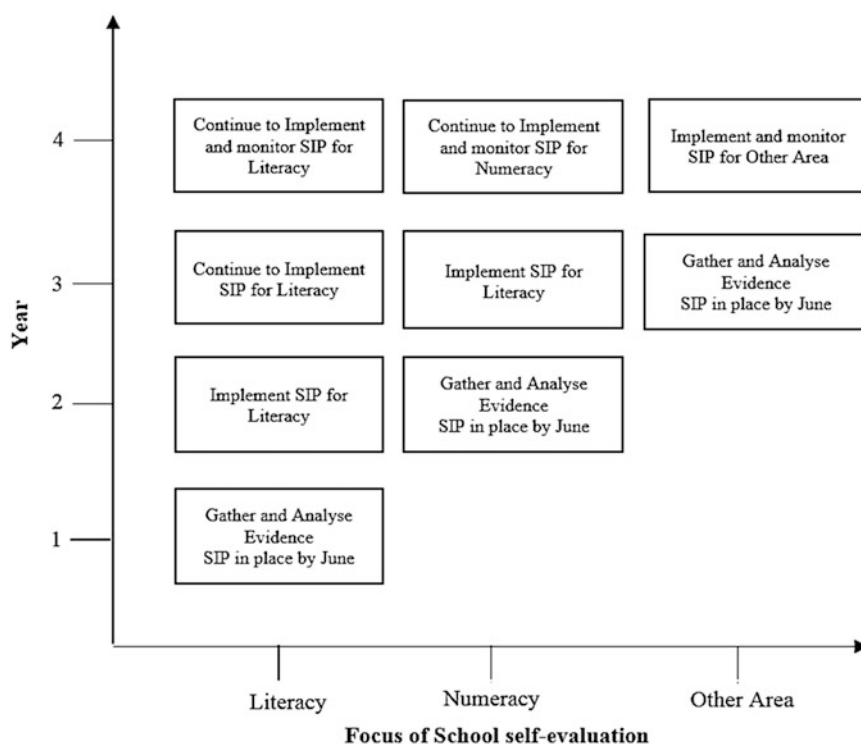
Fig. 4.1 Sample time line for school self-evaluation (2012–2016)

Not surprisingly the suddenly increased emphasis on SSE came as a considerable shock to schools which had been used to rhetoric but no real requirement to self-evaluate. This development came in the middle of a deep economic downturn which had seen resources cut sharply including the non- replacement of senior and middle management staff. Moreover, although schools had always had data available, its use in any systematic way was very limited, as were research skills and experience. To give context to the responses of schools reported later, the next section looks briefly at some of the challenges faced in implementing the new SSE regime from 2012 onwards.

Issues Concerning School Self-Evaluation Implementation

According to Cheng (2010, p. 985), when establishing mechanisms for school development evaluation, consideration should be given to 'teachers understanding of planning and how to collect the evaluation data and its supporting sets, otherwise, the failure possibility will be increased'. Criticisms relating to lack of internal evaluator capacity have been highlighted by McNamara and O'Hara (2008, p. 175) among others. They point out [when referring to Elliot's (1995) research on self-evaluation] that the self-evaluation movement that was popular in the late 1970s and early 1980s declined because 'neither training, experience or professional culture had allowed teachers to develop the discursive consciousness necessary to become reflexive, self-aware and thus able to self-evaluate'. Although it is perhaps arguable that inspectorates, as full-time professional evaluators, have been trained adequately and have the necessary skills to systematically collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative data, it is unwise to assume that this is the case with school personnel.

Indeed, school personnel's lack of capacity to carry out meaningful and worthwhile evaluations mirrors the assertion of Vanhoof et al. (2010, p. 2) that internal evaluators, such as school principals, 'are usually not trained in carrying out research, collecting data, data management or data interpretation'. The resulting absence of information-rich environments and inadequate evaluation skills inevitably leads to valuable information either being neglected or mistreated, culminating in what Blok et al. (2008, p. 387) refer to as, 'an armchair analysis without any empirical evidence'. Furthermore, school evaluation has been conceived out of an experts-based professional model, which 'creates tensions for these novice, school-based evaluators who meet their teaching responsibilities while being expected to attain at least some professional evaluator skills and knowledge—often with minimum support' (Ryan et al. 2007, p. 208).

Research also suggests that the absence of post evaluation support has a debilitating effect on schools' motivation to become engaged in an active discourse

for improvement (see Macbeath 1999; McNamara and O'Hara 2005; Vanhoof and Van Petegem 2007). It, therefore, appears that continuous support is required for schools to move from complying with rudimentary evaluation tasks to utilising a more practitioner research-based approach to improvement.

In addition, the required level of support clearly depends on the complexity of the proposed improvement actions. For example, it appears that the actions needed to improve areas, such as literacy levels, school attendance, behaviour and parental engagement, are extraordinarily more complex in schools where there is a high proportion of social deprivation. MacBeath (1999, p. 152) asserts that 'there is a continuum of support that is needed, with very little or none at one end to strong and sustained support and intervention at the other'.

The Inspectorate in Ireland have recognised these issues, and tried to enable SSE capacity building and support as an essential component for the creation of a dual culture of evaluation. For example, all Principals are now provided with in-service training on the rudiments of the process including training on data analysis. Support also comes in the form of very detailed guidelines and a dedicated website (www. school-selfevalution.ie). As an inspector put it, 'so, we need a lot of systems in place, and we need up-skilling of staff in schools in order to ensure that internal evaluation will work to everybody's benefit' (Brown 2013, p. 129).

Nonetheless concerns remain. For example, one might question, whether, even with the increasing availability and use of quantitative data, how valuable in practice data of this type will be in forming evaluation judgements. For example, referring to value-added assessments used in Tennessee schools in North America, Amrein-Beardsley (2008) in reference to Morgan (2002) states, 'confusing data reports and a lack of training for teachers and administrators in how to understand the data reports were preventing schools and teachers from using value-added data to improve student learning and achievement' (p. 67). Similarly, Heritage and Yeagley (2005, p. 333) are also of the view that 'misinterpreting data or relying on a single, often unreliable, data point to make crucial decisions may be even more detrimental to a school and its students than having no data at all'.

As a result, lack of internal evaluator capacity can negatively affect levels of trust between inspectorates and schools where issues relating to the reliability and validity of self-evaluation reports are concerned. As Terhart (2013) states, 'without an adequate support and training system the managerial, data-driven approaches to raise the quality of teaching will have no effect and will therefore not work where it is most needed' (p. 494).

As indicted above the new centrality accorded to SSE in school evaluation policy and practice only dates back to 2012. The research reported below is the first systematic attempt to ascertain the responses of schools to this initiative and to identify the mechanisms needed to be put in place to ensure that SSE potential is achieved.

Research Design

This study used a multi-phase convergence research design consisting of three distinct phases. Each phase of the research consisted of concurrent levels that were sequentially aligned to provide an overall interpretation of the study.

Phase one—Document Analysis

This phase of the research consisted of a documentary analysis of SSE policy and practice in Ireland from 1998 to the present.

Phase two—Development of Questionnaire and Interview schedule

This phase of the research consisted of the development of a questionnaire and interview schedule using a modified version of Bushnell's (1990) conceptual framework for evaluating training (Fig. 4.2).

Phase three—Data Collection and Analysis

An online questionnaire and cover letter explaining the ethical considerations and purpose of the research was emailed to all principals in Ireland (n = 732). The questionnaire response rate was 351, representing 48% of the total population of post-primary principals in Ireland. All questions, although interrelated, were classified according to their location in the input/process/output/outcomes system model (Fig. 4.2). From this, descriptive statistics were used to provide a broad interpretation of principals' perceptions towards mandatory SSE in Ireland.

The next stage consisted of carrying out a series of semi-structured interviews with a sample of principals (n = 24) to gain a greater understanding of the
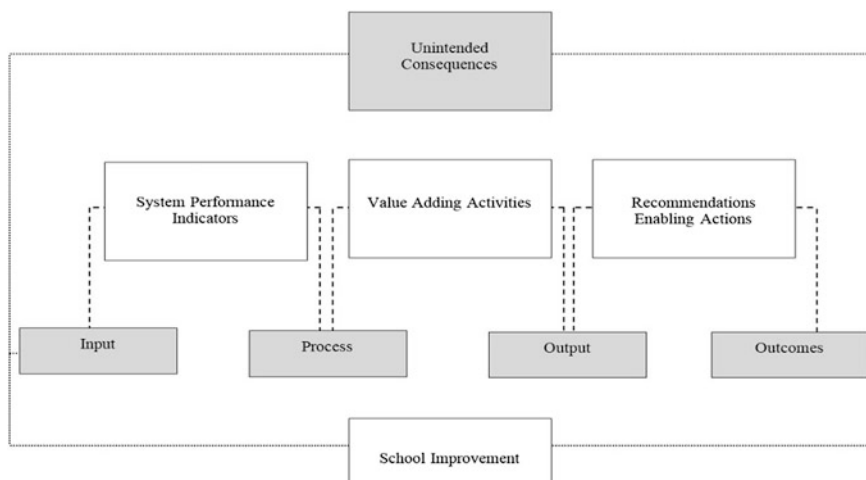
Fig. 4.2 Net worth and sustainable commitment to evaluation activities (*source* Brown et al. 2013, Fig. 3)

questionnaire responses. As was the case in this study, Patton states, 'the purpose of a stratified purposeful sample is to capture major variations rather than to identify a common core, although the latter may also emerge in the analysis' (Patton 2002, p. 240). Selection of participants was based on a stratified purposeful sampling strategy based on an equal distribution of principals from the various school types that exist in Ireland.

Finally, Creswell's (2008) data analysis process and Miles and Huberman's (1994) 'Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model' were used for interview coding and analysis. It was then possible to converge interview data with the other phases of the study to provide an overall interpretation of the research.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Input

This section presents the input phase of the evaluation cycle. The first subsection describes principals' perceptions of available and future resources required for SSE. Leading on from this, the second subsection ascertains participants' perspectives on the extent to which members of the school community have the capacity to carry out SSE effectively.

Resources

As is illustrated in Table 4.1, more than 60% of principals in Ireland believe that existing resources provided by the DES are useful for SSE with one principal stating that 'the departments SSE website [www.school-evaluation.ie] has been good to see what other schools are doing' and another principal stating that 'the templates to analyse Leaving Cert results have been excellent to see how we compare to other schools'. On the other hand, although DES resources are seen as being useful for SSE, more than 85% of principals are of the view that there is still a need for more resources which is also in line with the view of the DES SSE advisory group who also state 'The resources required to engage with SSE must be provided—otherwise there is a danger that it becomes a box ticking exercise' (DES 2015a, b, p. 3).

From an analysis of qualitative data and given SSE infancy in Ireland, there appears to be a need for more SSE case studies from schools coupled with resources on how to use assessment data for target setting. Moreover, almost all principals are of the opinion that there is an overwhelming need to provide the necessary human resources to expedite fully the potential for SSE.

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics: SSE resources

Question		Disagree strongly	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Agree strongly
The existing resources provided by the DES are useful for SSE	Count	10	50	65	179	8
	%	3.2	16.0	20.8	57.4	2.6
More resources are required from the DES on how to conduct SSE	Count	1	17	24	134	135
	%	0.3	5.5	7.7	43.1	43.4
Rather than each school spending time and resources developing their own internal evaluation procedures, schools should be provided with a generic set of tools to assist with the implementation of SSE	Count	8	37	32	144	91
	%	2.6	11.9	10.3	46.2	29.2

According to one principal: 'They don't have to be perfect, but it would be good to see real case studies where a school shows what they did right and what they did wrong with some literacy or numeracy strategy and then we would know what's needed'. It appears therefore that the benefits of more case studies available to schools would also be a closer alignment between internally presumed and externally assumed notions of SSE, which would inevitably lead to self-organisation in schools. 'Self-organizing is the process by which people mutually adjust their behaviours in ways needed to cope with changing internal and external environmental demands' (Cilliers 1998 cited in Anderson et al. 2005, p. 673).

Issues surrounding the lack of assessment resources were also of particular concern to most principals. A recurring theme that was evident in all of the qualitative data was the lack of assessment tools and resources for key SSE areas such as Literacy and Numeracy. According to one participant, 'we need more resources and funding for WRAT and CAT (standardised tests) and how to analyse the data. Another principal stated, 'more resources and simple-to-use instruments would be helpful. A bank of measures of numeracy and literacy across the board for all schools would be useful'. Another principal also stated, 'statistical analysis and SMART Target Setting are not adequately embedded'.

Regarding a generic set of tools being available to schools, although 75% of principals were favourable to these resources; they were also of the belief that the tools provided should be adaptable to the school context, particularly when issues of assessment relating to various socio-economic groups are concerned. As one principal states, 'not all schools have the same resources, the same type of student cohort'. However, according to the Chief Inspector, 'adjusting test results for socioeconomic factors is a disputed science and in any case, it is a most expensive process—one we could certainly not afford readily at present' (Hislop 2012, p. 22). None the less, for those who are proponents of the use of contextual data, it appears that for the moment, many post-primary schools are left with no alternative but to

provide a context-free account of how they compare with every other school in Ireland regardless of the various antecedent variables such as socio-economic status that affect student test scores.

However, by way of contrast, Gorard (2010) questions the emphasis placed on value-added measures of quality when referring to the school effectiveness model in the United Kingdom. The author states that if policy makers had a greater understanding of the limitations of value-added measures they might begin to question the usefulness of the ever-increasing dominance of school effectiveness models more generally and look towards more valuable processes than interpretations of test scores.

Finally, the human resources required to conduct SSE activities was identified by almost all principals as a significant barrier to embedding a culture of SSE in schools. According to one principal, 'when you consider that Literacy, Numeracy, SSE were all rolled out at the same time with very few resources provided it caused a lot of stress, frustration and annoyance'. Another principal also stated, 'I believe that SSE is very worthwhile, and the SIP is focussed on the needs of the individual school. However due to lack of resources, time, available personnel, most principals and their key staff are spending long hours after school on this work to the point of exhaustion'.

Capacity

Table 4.2 illustrates that 55% of principals believe that their staff have the necessary skills required to conduct SSE. However, although 70% of principals believe that staff at their school have the capacity to analyse quantitative data, and almost 60% of their staff have the capacity to analyse qualitative data, a significant majority of principals are also of the view that principals, deputy principals and teachers require more training to carry out SSE. Only a minority of principals are of the opinion that staff at their school have the necessary training needed to conduct peer reviews.

Analysis of quantitative data suggests that the majority of principals are of the view that staff at their school can analyse quantitative data and that the results from externally devised tests should be used as part of the SSE process (Table 4.3).

On the other hand, it is striking that there appears to be an underlying need for training in various aspects of assessment, in particular for the purposes of target setting and questionnaire development. According to one principal, 'most schools have someone on their staff who can plug in the numbers and press the button. I think you can do this quite easily but to do it properly you need quite a bit of expertise'. As one principal states, 'we are better at analysing data rather than devising questionnaires'. Indeed, according to another principal, 'more training is needed for the full staff on how to find relevant information and set realistic targets. Reviewing targets is very time-consuming. The process needs to be constantly developed in schools with workshops etc. available to all staff'.

Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics: SSE capacity

Question		Disagree strongly	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Agree strongly
Staff at this school have the necessary skills required to carry out SSE	Count	6	71	55	144	24
	%	1.95	23.05	17.86	46.75	8.5
Principals and Deputy Principals need more training on how to conduct internal evaluations	Count	3	41	38	140	95
	%	0.9	12.9	12.0	44.2	30.0
Teachers need more training on how to conduct internal evaluations	Count	3	25	19	142	124
	%	1.0	8.0	6.1	45.4	39.6
Staff at this school have the capacity to analyse quantitative data	Count	6	51	32	184	37
	%	2.3	18.8	8.7	58.3	12.0
Staff at this school have the capacity to analyse qualitative data	Count	7	65	55	153	32
	%	2.2	20.8	17.6	49.0	10.3
The Principal and Deputy Principal of this school have the necessary training required to carry out peer review (teacher observation)	Count	46	131	29	86	18
	%	14.8	42.3	9.4	27.7	5.8
Teachers of this school have the necessary training required to carry out peer review (teacher observation)	Count	69	156	36	44	6
	%	22.2	50.2	11.6	14.1	1.9
The Board of Management of this school have the necessary skills required to carry out evaluation and planning duties required of Board of Managements	Count	51	127	34	94	8
	%	16.2	40.4	10.8	29.9	2.5

The issue of staff being able to use qualitative data for SSE was an area of training that also required attention. 'Training needs to be provided to ensure that staff feel confident to do this'. However, another principal also questions the practicalities and trustworthiness of, for example, the use of focus group data. 'Focus group! More nonsense. When would I get time for focus groups? Real world. Give me the staff and we will have focus groups. Anyway, picking the right focus group will get the result you want. What other area of politics or public service listens to focus groups?' This perspective resonates with another principal who stated, 'The Inspectorate appear not to be in favour of Qualitative Data as per a recent advisory visit'.

The use of peer review for SSE also appears to be at an embryonic phase. A small minority of principals are of the view that staff at their school have the

Table 4.3 Descriptive statistics: the use of external data for SSE

Question		Disagrees strongly	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Agree strongly
Results from externally devised standardised tests (e.g. literacy and numeracy tests) should be used as part of the self-evaluation process of schools	Count	9	15	16	206	66
	%	2.9	4.8	5.1	66.0	21.2
Results from externally devised examinations (e.g. Leaving Certificate, Junior Certificate results) should be used as part of the self-evaluation process of schools	Count	19	28	57	152	49
	%	6.2	9.2	18.7	49.8	16.1

Table 4.4 Descriptive statistics: the use of peer review for SSE

Question		Yes	No
Peer review is used as part of the self-evaluation process in this school	Count	51	261
	%	16.3	83.7

necessary skills required to adequately conduct peer review (Table 4.2). As stated by one principal, 'I would like more support in this regard and a whole school approach and a systemic approach so that all staff are getting the same input'. Indeed, in schools where peer review does take place, another principal stated, 'I have done it, but I know it would be a more effective exercise with training'.

It is not surprising therefore that only a small minority of schools use peer review as part of their SSE process (Table 4.4) which is also in line with DES (2015b) figures that also suggests that only 28% of post-primary schools use team teaching or peer review as a source of evidence for SSE.

Apart from lack of training in this area, there were other reasons given as to why peer review is not used as part of the SSE process. Peer review is perceived by many teachers as a form of internal accountability as opposed to a set of inspirational means within the SSE process. As one principal bluntly put it, 'there would be a revolution I fear'. Indeed, the following principal statement in many ways provides a summary analysis of factors relating to the infrequent use of peer review in the SSE process, 'more training needs to be provided. This is an area of contention with some teachers feeling under threat by peer review by a Principal or Deputy Principal. A system by which teachers review each other might be more acceptable and productive with teachers learning best practice from their colleagues'. As one principal whose school has engaged in the process states, 'I have looked at models used abroad and tailored them for our own school and ethos. This exercise must begin gently with a bit of carrot to get it over the line'.

Process

This section presents the process phase of the evaluation cycle. The first subsection describes principals' perceptions of SSE standards. The second subsection ascertains participants' perspectives on the extent to which SSE processes and guidelines are understood.

Standards

Tables 4.5 illustrates that almost 60% of principals are of the view that schools should use the same methods and procedures to carry out SSE and 63% of principals are of the opinion that schools should use the same SSE processes. However, analysis of qualitative data also reveals that many principals are reticent that schools should use the same SSE methods and processes.

Almost all principals that were interviewed were of the opinion that schools should decide what methods and procedures to use for SSE. Indeed, while principals believe that there should be a minimum quality threshold for SSE, the majority are also of the view that, when frameworks of quality indicators are provided externally, they should also be adaptable to the context and culture of the school. A common view in reference to the DES guidelines for SSE (DES 2012a, b, c, d) was that 'the aim of DES policies and initiatives must reflect the needs of individual schools, particularly in relation to the school context. Appropriate self-evaluation should, therefore, be employed to meet individual schools needs and there should be flexibility for schools in relation to the methods and procedures used in order to allow for the diversity of school types/sizes/settings/staff profile/pupil profile, where the pupils are from, etc.'

Finally, Table 4.6 illustrates that 73% of schools have a set of procedures for carrying out SSE and almost 30% of schools have an SSE policy.

Table 4.5 Descriptive statistics: SSE standards

Question		Disagree strongly	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Agree strongly
To ensure that SSE is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same methods and procedures to carry out SSE	Count	10	79	39	146	34
	%	3.2	25.6	12.7	47.4	11.0
To ensure that SSE is of an acceptable standard, schools should use the same process to carry out SSE	Count	7	70	38	165	32
	%	2.24	22.44	12.18	52.88	10.26

Table 4.6 Descriptive statistics: SSE policies and procedures

Question		Yes	No
Does your school have a set of procedures for carrying out SSE?	Count	227	83
	%	73.2	26.8
Does your school have a SSE policy?	Count	88	225
	%	28.1	71.9

On the one hand, some principals stated that they were in the early stages of developing an SSE policy ('we followed the SSE guidelines to date. Now we have ownership of these and will create our own school policy and procedures'). On the other hand, reasons were given by principals as to why their schools do not have an SSE policy at all. Some Principals were of the view that it was too early in the SSE cycle to formulate an official SSE policy where according to one principal, 'being a relatively new process, and given that getting to the stage we are at now has taken considerable time, there hasn't yet been an opportunity to develop a formal school policy on the matter'. Some other principals questioned the value of school policies more generally. According to one principal, 'I am not sure we want to have to write and develop yet another policy'. Another principal agrees, 'policies constrain creativity and inventiveness and are used too much to tick boxes. Policies are only useful if they are being used and agreed by all stakeholder's'.

Although very few schools in Ireland have SSE policies, what is striking however is the number of schools that now have a systematic set of procedures to carry out SSE? Prior to the introduction of DES SSE guidelines, a national survey by Brown (2013) found that only 26% of schools in Ireland had a set of SSE procedures. However, this value has now quite extraordinarily increased to 73% in this short period. Indeed, almost all principals that were interviewed stated that they now used SSE procedures contained in the DES guidelines, albeit with varying degrees of success. As stated by one participant 'we have followed the SSE guidelines'. Another principal also states that the procedures used in his school are 'advised through Department documentation and in-service training'.

Accessibility

Table 4.7 shows that almost 53% of principals are of the view that the process of SSE is easy to understand. Moreover, almost 46% of principals believe that the SSE guidelines developed by the inspectorate are easy to understand.

Regarding clarity of SSE processes, one principal states, 'it is a document that is a snapshot of our school at a particular time and so is easy to follow and to understand'. Another principal suggests, 'it's not rocket science!' Indeed, having engaged in the process since SSE introduction in 2012, many other principals are of

Table 4.7 Descriptive statistics: accessibility

Question		Disagree strongly	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Agree strongly
The process of SSE is easy to understand	Count	13	103	33	151	18
	%	4.1	32.4	10.4	47.5	5.7
The SSE guidelines (SSE of teaching and learning) developed by the inspectorate is easy to understand	Count	18	116	39	131	15
	%	5.6	36.4	12.2	41.1	4.7

the view that SSE processes have become more coherent. One principal states that: 'any type of change is never easy to understand at first. As the time has gone on and we have had more experience of this whole process our understanding has improved'. Another principal is also of the view that, 'as we move along the process it is clearer and easier to understand. I suppose it is becoming an integral part of how we operate'.

On the other hand, a considerable minority of principals have struggled with the SSE process where according to one principal, 'it is over complicated and difficult to understand'. Another principal concurs, 'I feel that the Six Step model being used by the DES is overly complicated, and the same results could be achieved through action research'.

Principals' perceptions of the SSE guidelines ranged from the lack of time available to engage with guidelines ('the guidelines are fairly easy to understand but too long. Time is of the essence in an extremely busy environment') to the fact that the guidelines were difficult to comprehend in the initial stages of SSE. As one principal puts it:

> The 88-page book was (is) too long… It took us a long time to pare it down to its essential components and identify in a simple format the process as it should emerge from beginning to end (i.e. 'developing a school self-evaluation report and working towards a school improvement plan).

On the other hand, many participants are of the view that the SSE guidelines are a valuable asset to embedding a culture of evaluation in their schools having engaged in the process, and having spent time reading the guidelines. For example, one principal states, 'the Guidelines take getting used to. After leafing through it regularly, the sections and the language become familiar. It is logical and systematic in how it's laid out but like anything, I guess, it takes time to figure out how it works'. Another respondent summarised it thus,

> In my experience, I felt I did not have a good understanding of SSE until I set aside a significant amount of time to read, reflect on and discuss the guidelines with staff. This involved reading the DES book, using the website, meeting with staff regularly to discuss and view other schools work.

Output

This section presents findings relating to the output phase of the evaluation cycle. The first subsection describes the extent to which various members of the school community are engaged in the SSE process. The second subsection describes participants' perspectives on the public availability of SSE reports.

Participation

Table 4.8 illustrates that principals in Ireland are of the view that the majority of principals, deputy principals and teachers conduct SSE on a regular basis in their schools, and SSE involves all staff.

According to one principal, 'we have been doing SSE in different ways for many years. The new structure makes it better'. On the other hand, although quantitative data suggests that schools in Ireland carry out SSE on a regular basis, it is apparent that the practice of self-evaluation in the majority of cases is through informal individual evaluations, 'teachers do it every day but not with all the gathering of evidence, and paperwork involved in the Department process'. One critic added, 'we mainly do it because we have to, not because we currently see that it is very effective in improving teaching, learning and management in our school'.

Moreover, it also appears that in some cases, SSE seems to be a once off annual event as opposed to a continuous, systematic whole school process. One principal describes the regularity of SSE in the school as follows, 'in our heads, we are evaluating every day. On official documents—once a year'.

Apart from the issue of time the most significant challenge for SSE is to encourage staff to evaluate from a SSE as opposed to an individual evaluation perspective. 'Teachers always aim to improve their practice and regularly reorganise and change in order to meet the needs of the varying pupils they meet. However, the challenge is to get teachers to think from a whole school perspective. This is much more challenging and difficult for teachers'.

Table 4.8 Descriptive statistics: frequency of SSE

Question		Disagree strongly	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Agree strongly
The Principal and Deputy Principal conduct SSE on a regular basis in this school	Count	0	25	18	204	71
	%	0.0	7.9	5.7	64.2	22.3
Teachers conduct SSE on a regular basis in this school	Count	3	40	37	193	43
	%	0.9	12.7	11.7	61.1	13.6
SSE involves all staff (by region)	Count	0	41	19	153	105
	%	0.0	12.9	6.0	48.1	33.0

Transparency

Regarding the transparent aspect of SSE, Table 4.9 shows that a minority of principals (37%) agree or agree strongly that SSE reports should be published on the Internet. However, this figure is higher than DES (2015a, b) figures that suggest that 22% of schools published the SSE report on their website. None the less, this figure is also in line with DES (2015a, b) figures that also suggests that, at post-primary level, 37% of schools provided a summary SSE report and 39% of schools provided an SSE improvement plan to their community.

Some principals stated that they had already begun to publish SSE reports, 'we make them available to parents, but I often wonder who reads them'. Another principal also states: 'ours is there. I am not sure who reads them!' In contrast a principal suggests that the publication of SSE reports has the potential to highlight successes and move away from league tables, 'this is great. An opportunity to highlight successes and to show a plan in progress. We have to move away from state examination based validation only. It has a place, but we have to become confident in our own choices, explain them, show our method of self-examination and show how we will move forward'.

On the other hand, the vast majority of principals were not in favour of SSE reports being publically available. Reasons given for not making SSE plans or reports available were many and ranged widely:

– Having a disproportionate effect on non-selective schools where according to one principal: 'This will suit schools that cherry pick students and whose results reflect that'.
– The trustworthiness of reports where reports could be altered to mask areas for improvement in the school. 'Each school would be pressurised to put up outstanding work rather than honest work to impress future students'.
– The belief that SSE reports should be internal to the school. As stated by one principal: 'SSE should be just that, for internal use and reflection only. DES inspections are and should be published'.
– The value place on inspection reports in comparison to SSE reports. According to one principal: 'parents value external evaluation, self-evaluation is discredited by them and lacks value. Self-evaluation is a process we all undergo in every walk of life, but it is an assessment that is subjective and open to abuse'.

Table 4.9 Descriptive statistics: accessibility

Question		Disagree strongly	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Agree strongly
SSE reports should be published on the Internet	Count	30	84	85	101	15
	%	9.5	26.7	27.0	32.1	4.8

It appears, therefore, that the requirement for SSE reports to be publically available is seen as a negative step in the SSE process and in many ways is in line with Perryman (2009) who highlights the dilemma facing most evaluation systems that require schools to publish SSE reports for accountability purposes.

> The problem with self-evaluation documents produced for evaluation is that an honest warts-and-all approach is simply not possible. Over-emphasise strengths, and a school could be criticised for complacency with a management team unable to plan for progress, but identify too many weaknesses, and there is a risk of giving a skewed picture which may influence the judgement of the inspectors negatively. (2009, p. 621)

Outcomes

This section presents findings related to the perceived impact of SSE on management, teaching and learning. Table 4.10 shows that a significant majority of principals are of the view that SSE results in better teaching, learning and management.

Although many principals had positive dispositions towards the SSE process, some principals were also of the view that to concur with DES (2015a, b), 'SSE is currently viewed as a chore—something that has to be done'. In particular, some principals were of the opinion that, while recognising the benefits of SSE, the process was too formulaic. As stated by one principal: 'It results in paperwork, lots of time and box-ticking. The theory is great, but actually, this is taking from the spontaneous good work being done in good schools and restricting us to a formula for ever-increasing obligations. The result: Much box-ticking'. Another principal is of the opinion that, 'Self-evaluation definitely leads to better everything but creating a further paper trail just adds more to an already burgeoning workload and instead of being a welcome addition to school life it becomes another chore that has to be done to satisfy somebody else'.

On the other hand, some principals were also of the view that SSE results in better management, teaching and learning. One principal is of the opinion that the requirements of SSE have led to staff members becoming more reflective of their practice, 'it has helped in reflective practice in a busy school environment in looking at what's working well in our school and what needs to improve or develop further'.

Table 4.10   Descriptive statistics: outcome of SSE

Question		Disagree strongly	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Agree strongly
Self-evaluation results in better management	Count	3	11	30	196	82
	%	0.9	3.4	9.3	60.9	25.5
Self-evaluation results in better teaching and learning	Count	1	10	25	192	94
	%	0.3	3.1	7.8	59.6	29.2

Similar statements were also used to describe how SSE has improved certain quality aspects of education in interview participants' schools, analysis of exam results is open and transparent, and now it is not regarded as personal criticism of teachers if areas for improvement are highlighted' and another noted, 'this current phase works as we have seen improvements in Literacy and Numeracy as a consequence of SSE implementation' In a similar vein it was suggested that, 'there is a lot more discussion on teaching and learning techniques at all subject levels' and again 'the focus on numeracy and literacy has prompted teachers to share good practice and to reflect on their own methodologies'.

Based on these statements, it appears that as a result of the SSE process there has been an increase in collaboration, reflective practice and dialogue evaluation. As one principal states, 'If teachers work through the process and own the SIP it will inevitably lead to better teaching and improved outcomes for pupils'.

Given that SSE has only become a mandatory requirement since 2012 (DES 2012a, b, c, d), some principals were of the view that it is too early to say if the SSE process has resulted in improved outcomes. As stated by one principal, 'again I think that it is too early to say just yet'. Another principal agrees, 'it is too early to say whether this process results in better teaching and learning but by using strong evidence in our work is a support to staff in reviewing areas of teaching and learning'.

Unintended Consequences

Table 4.11 illustrates that a majority of principals are of the view that there are no unintended consequences as a result of their schools engaging in SSE. Furthermore, Table 4.12 also reveals that there were positive and negative indirect effects as a result of SSE engagement.

Analysis of qualitative data reveals that a number of principals are of the view that there has been a considerable increase in stress as a result of their schools engagement with SSE for a variety of reasons such as the increased workload required of SSE; the feeling that mandatory SSE was untimely; the lack of available resources required of SSE and the perceived need to formalise all SSE activities.

For most principals, as a result of new SSE guidelines, there has been a considerable increase in workload for schools, 'from a principal's point of view it takes up a huge amount of time, planning for self-evaluation, researching, drawing up plans, getting consensus to implement them and follow up'. Another principal also

Table 4.11 Descriptive statistics: unintended consequences of SSE

Question		Yes	No
Has there been any unintended consequences as a result of your schools engagement in SSE?	Count	89	218
	%	29.0	71.0

Table 4.12 Descriptive statistics: indirect effects of SSE

Question		Disagree strongly	Disagree	Indifferent	Agree	Agree strongly
SSE places a lot of stress on staff	Count	6	67	56	154	29
	%	1.9	21.5	17.9	49.4	9.3
SSE increases staff morale	Count	7	59	75	151	23
	%	2.2	18.7	23.8	47.9	7.3
SSE takes up a lot of time	Count	1	25	20	166	111
	%	0.3	7.7	6.2	51.4	34.4
SSE is popular with the majority of staff in this school	Count	35	126	62	92	7
	%	10.9	39.1	19.3	28.6	2.2

states, 'it is an extra workload. I do not know if it would stand up well to a time-benefit analysis'.

Many principals also feel that the introduction of mandatory SSE was untimely given the decimation of school resources and the parallel introduction of other initiatives resulting in what one principal refers to as 'initiative overload. As noted by one principal:

> Pressures from recently introduced and then changing initiatives, reduction of middle management positions and reduced salaries are resulting in a teaching cadre that is much more cautious about tackling further change. Most worryingly I would include my motivators in this category, despite wonderful work continuing in this area.

Principals were also of the view that there were many positive unintended consequences culminating from their schools engagement with SSE such as:

– An increase in professional dialogue among staff. According to one principal, 'SSE has resulted in a more professional dialogue between staff'. Another principal similarly suggests, 'there has actually been some time spent at staff meetings talking about teaching and learning rather than about the usual "discipline" issues'.
– Increased collaboration across sectors. As stated by one principal, 'SSE has resulted in increased collaboration between Primary and Secondary Schools during the Transfer process with perhaps a greater awareness among Second Level Staff of testing at Primary Level'.
– An increased understanding of what is required for inspection. According to one principal, 'if you read the quality statements in the SSE guidelines you can be pretty sure what they are looking for during an inspection. Before we were doing a lot of guess work on what they were looking for'. Another principal added, 'I can now support my staff more easily by telling them what to focus on for the inspection'.
– A greater sense of collegiality among staff. According to one Principal, 'there is far more collaboration between staff and that no one will do it for us'. Another principal concurs, 'there are now more subject discussions, more confidence in teachers' self-belief and less isolation of a teacher in a classroom with no backup'.

Many principals were also of the view that SSE engagement had indirectly resulted in leadership being less hierarchical in their schools. One principal states, 'I think it has brought us together as a staff. It has also allowed leaders emerge from the staff group based on ability rather than age. It is really interesting to see young teachers taking a lead and helping older teachers engage with ideas'. Another principal puts it this way, 'funnily enough it has allowed individual staff to shine in ways that they have not up to now. Those with Masters and those who know about research have come to the fore'.

Finally, principals were also of the view that another indirect effect of SSE engagement is that there has been a significant increase in distributed leadership. According to principal, 'there is great staff engagement now. Subcommittees have started up. Distribution of leadership is now very evident'. Another principal also states, 'now that staff has bought into the process it has helped to forge a strong team effort in the school'. Indeed, having engaged in the process, one principal summarises:

> At the initial stages, it probably caused a bit of unease as we were trying to come to terms with it. What it has helped is in getting the whole staff to work together. Ownership has been appreciated by the teachers involved. What we need to do now is to take it step by step and work at our own pace.

Discussion

In 2012 evaluation of schools in Ireland underwent a significant change. SSE moved to the center of the process and external inspection, which had been the dominant mode until that time, was recast as being largely about inspectors assuring the quality of schools self-evaluation activities. A detailed framework for SSE was promulgated. This required schools to make use of a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data to develop improvement plans including specific targets. This greater emphasis on SSE was in alignment with developing policy in several other countries.

For the vast majority of schools this was a new and demanding requirement, involving data collection and analysis, planning and target setting of a more specific and detailed type. Previous research had indicated that few schools had the resources or expertise to undertake this type of work and there was some trepidation about the new departure in inspection policy. The Inspectorate did provide a degree of training and support for schools commencing with SSE in the format now required.

The research reported in this chapter represents the first large-scale attempt to investigate how SSE has worked out in practice in the schools since 2012. The research involved a survey of all of the principals of second level schools in Ireland, followed by interviews with 24 of them.

The outcome of this research is by and large positive and encouraging. Although, as might be expected, most schools report the need for greater resources

and support, the majority believe that the SSE framework and the training and support provided by the Inspectorate has been helpful. A surprisingly high proportion of school leaders believe that staff have the necessary skills to conduct evaluation, although a number of areas, in particular peer review of teaching and target setting in areas such as literacy and numeracy, require additional development. The framework and guidelines produced by the Inspectorate are widely used and around three quarters of the schools surveyed report engaging in active SSE.

A minority of principals did raise some negatives including the overly prescriptive nature of the framework leading to a lack of freedom for individual schools to follow differing needs. A more troubling criticism made by some respondents was that other stakeholders, particularly parents, tended to regard SSE as being unlikely to be critical and suggested that external inspection reports would be taken more seriously. Some respondents also suggested that the process tended to be perceived as an annual event to be completed rather than an ongoing aspect of school life.

These criticisms were relatively minor in comparison to positive outcomes pointed to by informants in this research. While some principals suggested that it was too early to evaluate the effectiveness or otherwise of SSE others listed a significant array of progress and improvement resulting from the process. Among these were the focus on specific areas such as literacy and numeracy leading to clear targets and measurable improvements in achievement, more open discussion around the outcomes of public examinations and what these results say about the performance of schools, more collaborative work among teachers and signs of genuine distributed leadership in schools.

However, there was a common view that these gains were at the expense of a considerable increase in both stress and workload, together with a degree of initiative fatigue, which led some respondents to argue that while SSE seems to be worthwhile it was difficult to envisage that schools could continue to put so much effort into it without specific resources being made available.

Finally, the impact of these changes on the role and functioning of the Inspectorate has been considerable. SSE before 2012 had largely been a rhetorical requirement and the focus of school evaluation was on the traditional inspection of individual teachers and the newer concept of whole school evaluation involving teams of inspectors. However, it had become clear, even before the economic collapse that this form of inspection would result, due to limited resources, in unacceptably long gaps between inspection treatments. Moreover, it was emerging internationally that most inspectorates were moving towards more focused, risk-based forms of inspection and away from cyclical visitations. Part of this process, internationally, was the growing emphasis on SSE, transferring responsibility for improvement in standards and monitoring of performance away from centralised inspection and onto the schools. The shift in policy in Ireland in 2012 mirrored these trends.

In effect, therefore the role of the Inspectorate in this new era becomes more indirect. The task now is to set parameters, standards and methodologies for schools to take responsibility for quality control while the Inspectorate quality assures the

resulting processes. However, it is still probably too early to say whether or not, in the longer term, schools can find the capacity and willingness to self-evaluate in a systematic and robust manner and whether, even if they do so, this approach can deliver a satisfactory level of accountability and the public confidence that external inspection has managed to attain.

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Chapter 5
Feedback by Dutch Inspectors to Schools

M.J. Dobbelaer, D. Godfrey and H.M.B. Franssen

Abstract Due to national and international policy drivers The Dutch Inspectorate of Education is reforming its supervision with a mission to promote school improvement in all Dutch schools. One of the chosen mechanisms to achieve this is the provision of feedback by inspectors to school leaders, special educational needs coordinators, and teachers following the inspection process. In this chapter we take a closer look at feedback by inspectors and the factors that can influence the effect of this feedback. We begin by reviewing the literature on the effects of inspection feedback, factors mediating the impact of inspection feedback and responses to inspection feedback. Following on from this we discuss the results of two pilot studies by the Dutch Inspectorate on provision of feedback by inspectors. These provide more information about the quality of the feedback, the training of inspectors and the perception of the recipients. Whilst both pilots suggest that school leaders, teachers and special educational needs coordinators are positive about inspection feedback, the challenges of providing this on an individual basis are outside of the inspector remit. For this reason the Dutch inspectorate has chosen not to provide suggestions on how to improve during the feedback conversation, but rather focus on discussion as to how a school aims to develop from the current performance to the desired one.

Keywords Feedback · Inspection · Inspectors · Quality improvement

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Introduction

According to the Dutch Inspectorate of Education, inspection should connect to educational practice and meet the expectations of parents, students and society (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2016a). In light of this the inspectorate is introducing a new mission: *improving education in all Dutch schools* (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2016a). The new inspection framework is designed to promote further improvements to school quality overall, not only the weak schools, in order to improve education more broadly.[1] Given that the Dutch educational system and society are changing, the inspectorate is changing its policies and practices in response. Current inspection aims to maintain quality in all schools, and has a particular focus on the improvement of (very) weak schools. Although number of weak and very weak schools has declined in recent years, most Dutch schools meet basic quality standards (98% in primary education and 94% in secondary education; (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2016b),' there is still room for improvement. Most schools with basic quality, may also possess any number of shortcomings that quality initiatives so far have failed to improve (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2013). Therefore the inspectorate is introducing a new mission to: *improve education in all Dutch schools* (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2016a). The new inspection framework is designed to promote further improvements to school quality, not only in weak schools, but in order to improve education more broadly.

In order to realize this new mission, the Dutch inspectorate outlines three categories of inspection activities: (1) monitoring basic quality of schools, (2) stimulating school improvement, and (3) thematic and problem-oriented inspection (Ehren and Janssens 2014). The first two activities are part of a form of differentiated supervision: In schools in which basic quality has not been established, the focus is on correction, whilst in schools that meet the criteria for basic quality, the inspectorate acts more as a critical friend: the focus is not on evaluation but on further improvement. In order to effect this, a new framework for inspection has been developed, one which allows inspectors to differentiate between schools and provide feedback on a more broad range of quality criteria. The third supervision activity, thematic and problem-oriented inspection, implies contributing to the identification and answering of research questions at the system level by thematic and problem-oriented research. All three inspection activities are designed to stimulate all schools to, (further), improve (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2013). Inspection activities are directed towards making a greater contribution to the development of a culture of improvement within schools and school boards.

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[1]The information on innovations at the Dutch Inspectorate of Education is based on publications up to 2015. During 2015, the innovations were still in development. The information in this chapter should therefore not be seen as a definite description of the Dutch inspection method.

This renewal of the inspection methodology includes four elements/components:

1. A renewed evaluation framework

The new evaluation framework has several new properties compared to the current one. Firstly, it has a similar structure for all educational sectors. In addition, it has to provide more space for input by schools, school boards, and the inspectors. This permits school boards and schools to provide insight into the education context of the schools, but also allows the inspector to make decisions that are suited to the specific situation of the school. The framework should also provide better opportunities for a professional dialogue.[2]

2. A stronger focus on quality care by schools and school boards

The second aspect of the new inspection system relates to the focus on the quality of care in the school. The inspection will, based on the quality of information made available by the school and schoolboards, in order to make choices on the design of the inspection at the school (e.g. more or fewer classroom observations). Besides that, the caliber of information from the school is also an important source for the assessment of school quality. In particular, self-assessments will be relied upon to a far greater extent. Such self-assessment includes a questionnaire which schools use to assess themselves according to the standards that will also be used for inspections. The school principal also fills completes the questionnaire prior to inspection.

The school boards are responsible for the quality that their individual schools deliver. Each has its own process to ensure the quality of education and development.[3] In addition, they possess a great deal of knowledge and information about their schools. The Inspectorate looks to connect more closely with this information in order to make better use of it. And as time goes by and schoolboards and schools possess better processes of control and more sophisticated information systems, the inspection will undoubtedly benefit.

3. Differentiated school quality judgements

The third element of the renewed supervision is that it is designed to work with differentiated judgments (ratings). Until now it was customary to express the overall quality of a school in a so-called 'supervision arrangement'. The Inspectorate

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[2]The evaluation framework for the schools inspection regime is based the 2002 Education Regulation Act (Wet op het onderwijstoezicht, WOT) and education acts. The WOT is due to be amended substantially with effect from 1 July 2017. For the Inspectorate, one of the main changes is that a distinction will now be drawn between statutory requirements and quality factors defined by schools themselves or their governing bodies (schoolboards).

[3]A school's governing body (schoolboard) is responsible for the quality and continuity of the education it provides. Every such body has its own process for maintaining and improving that provision, which we take as our starting point in regulating it. Once every four years the Inspectorate conducts an inspection of the governing body to examine its quality assurance and financial management.

currently distinguishes between three criteria: "basic quality" (basic criteria satisfied.), "weak school", and "very weak school". In the renewed supervision framework, for schools with basic quality, a distinction will be made between "satisfactory" and "good". This will be done not only in terms of the overall conclusion on the quality of the school, but also for the different quality areas (and the underlying standards) of the new developed evaluation framework.

4. Inspection should promote quality improvement to a greater extent

Finally, an essential part of the new system is the intended effect of inspection to drive quality improvement. This will be achieved by involving other groups in the school in the inspection activities. Besides the usual interlocutors, students and parents are also invited to input. This should provide more variation in the feedback to the schools by the inspector. This is an important aspect of the new inspection methodology, and meant to strengthen the quality promotion effect of inspections.

It was already normal practice to have a meeting with the management (head) and school board at the end of the school inspection; a meeting in which the inspector explained the findings and conclusions. As part of the new approach inspectors have a feedback meeting with a representative of the school board, the management, the special needs coordinator, and teachers. The main purpose of this feedback session is to stimulate staff to improve the quality of education at their school. The inspector will discusses the opportunities for improvement of the school. This feedback will be provided orally to all visited schools, no matter what their quality may be. In addition to this, written feedback will be provided in a report including a quality profile which informs on student achievement, teaching quality, finance, and administrative agency of the school board that matter most for school quality.

It is assumed that in providing (better) feedback, and by publishing school profiles, schools will be encouraged to work on school improvement. The underlying assumption is premised on the belief that this feedback by inspectors will help schools to improve.

A meta-analysis carried out by Kluger and DeNisi (1996) showed that feedback in general can indeed improve performance, however it also showed large variability in feedback effects and in over one third of all cases it even reduced performance. For this reason, in this chapter we will take a closer look to the assumption that inspection feedback can help a school to improve. Firstly, we will look at what we know about the effectiveness of inspection feedback by using a review of the literature on this topic. In the second section of this chapter we will describe two pilot studies by the Dutch inspectorate which provide insight into the quality of feedback by Dutch inspectors and the perception of the recipients. Whilst in the final discussion we will bring this information together and evaluate the role of feedback by Dutch inspectors in order to improve education.

Effectiveness of Feedback According to Feedback Literature

The Dutch inspectorate is developing the feedback in the new inspection with the assumption that, among other interventions, it will help schools to improve. This section refers in part to research summarised in a previous literature review (Nelson and Ehren 2014).

The Effects of Inspection Feedback

All information provided by inspectors during or after an inspection can be considered to be feedback. Inspections can provide a rich source of feedback to schools, including for example: information about pupil attainment and progress; feedback to teachers given after lesson observations, feedback on a school's own internal documents, policies and procedures. This feedback may take the form of oral feedback to school staff given during a school inspection visit and through the publication of a report sent to the school and/or made available to the public. Overall, feedback from inspections can work:

(i) By impacting on school improvement initiatives. This could involve actions or decisions taken by all or any members of staff but is likely to be strongly influenced by the commitment of school leaders and also the extent to which the inspectorate follow up or support such efforts.

(ii) Through changing the behaviour of teachers and school leaders. The effect of teacher quality is often cited as the most important influence on overall pupil achievement (Barber and Mourshed 2007), the former may be considered to be particularly important.

(iii) Indirectly through affecting school self-evaluation. Inspection feedback can comment on, validate or suggests ways to improve the school's own self-evaluation processes. This can lead to the school enhancing its own capacity to make improvements.

(Adapted from Nelson and Ehren 2014).

We can distinguish this from the feed-forward effect of preparation by schools for an inspection visit. A number of studies have commented on positive and negative effects of this (Matthews and Smith 1995; Chapman 2002; Gaertner et al. 2014).

Multiple studies show a positive effect of inspection feedback, for example, Chapman's (2002), case study of five schools showed that 20% of teachers reported that inspectors' feedback led to changes in teaching practice. Brimblecombe et al. (1996) found 38% of teachers (in England) intended to make changes shortly after an inspection visit, particularly in relation to the way they teach and organise

classes. The tendency to change increased the higher up the teacher was within the organisation. Studies have also shown that teachers and school leaders welcome feedback from inspectors, that they find it useful and feel disappointed when it is not given (Dean 1995; Brunel University Centre for the Evaluation of Public Policy and Practice and Helix Consulting Group 1999; Kelchtermans 2007). In a report commissioned by Ofsted (2015), post-inspection surveys were sent out to school leaders, staff and governors for their views on a range of issues, including the quality and conduct of the inspection, its likely impact on their school and what changes they intend to make. 22, 800 responses from between 2009 and 2014 were analysed for this section of the report. In 2013–14, Ofsted also surveyed 829 school leaders four months after an inspection had taken place (reported in the 2015 article). The key findings were:

- Almost all respondents said that they would use the inspection recommendations to improve their school (98%).
- Nearly nine out of 10 school leaders (88%) reported that they had made changes to their school as a result of inspection.
- Most leaders (81%) said that inspection helped them to improve by providing an accurate analysis of their strengths and weaknesses.
- A large majority of leaders (79%) had found inspection helpful in confirming that they were taking the right actions.
- Around seven out of 10 school leaders (73%) agreed that the inspection report would help their school to improve.
- Over half of school leaders (56%) identified that ongoing professional dialogue with inspectors was the most useful aspect of the inspection process (pp. 1–2).

Examples of changes implemented provided in the Ofsted report include "improvements to feedback and marking strategies, specific mathematics interventions and enhanced programmes of professional development" (p. 15 in outstanding schools). Where schools needed to improve, most changes were identified in areas of management and teaching and learning, for example, in monitoring and evaluation, use of data and tracking, improving professional development and in behavior management.

However, Klerk (2012) cites a range of research that shows very minor effects for the impact of inspection on student achievement, suggesting that overall the results are inconclusive (see Luginbuhl et al. 2009; Shaw et al. 2003; Rosenthal 2004; Matthews and Sammons 2004).

Factors Mediating the Impact of Inspection Feedback

The quality of feedback given to schools about their performance, as well as their capacity to improve their own work using this feedback, appears to be key to its success (Nusche et al. 2011). Good quality feedback should:

- Contain specific and clear recommendations to refocus leadership and to have an impact after the inspection (Matthews and Sammons 2004).
- Point out the specific weaknesses of school (Ouston et al. 1997).
- Be clear to assess these weak points as unsatisfactory (Ehren and Visscher 2008)
- Involve direct inspector feedback to the teacher (McCrone et al. 2009)
- Contain specific improvement suggestions and agreements on school improvement (Ehren and Visscher 2008).

Responses to inspection feedback can also be determined by how negative the report is. Looking across inspectorates in 17 countries, Penzer and CfBT Education Trust (2011) found that schools are generally disinclined to accept unfavorable inspection conclusions. However, the credence, communication skills and demeanor of the inspectors have an effect on this aspect.

Another important aspect that determines the effect of inspectors' feedback on teachers and school leaders, is the personal communication skills of the inspector and their perceived expertise (Dean 1995; Brunel University Centre for the Evaluation of Public Policy and Practice and Helix Consulting Group 1999; Kelchtermans 2007; Bates 2013). For example, in interviews with 11 headteachers and 37 teachers at 14 schools in England Dean (1995), showed that where pre-visit contact was made and where inspectors were reassuring teachers, that this helped allay some anxiety. Feedback tended not to be received well when inspectors lacked credibility, for example when secondary school teachers were tasked with inspecting primary schools.

Kelchtermans (2007) found that inspectors with an authoritarian attitude triggered reactions of resistance and rejection. Yet that more positive, constructively critical approaches made it more likely that teachers would use advice for improvement. An independent evaluation of extensive evidence on the Ofsted inspections in England (Brunel University Centre for the Evaluation of Public Policy and Practice and Helix Consulting Group 1999) also found that the relationship established by the lead inspector and staff was very important to the process and reaction to it; it helped establish trust and also credibility of the team. While the perception of schools to the feedback provided by inspectors appears very positive, the extent to which these schools improved on objective measures of performance however, remains largely undetermined by these studies.

Jones and Tymms (2014) suggest that there is limited empirical evidence on the link between feedback and improved performance from inspections and that there is also evidence of unintended effects, such as teaching to the test and short termism. Kelchtermans (2007) notes that the audit procedure communicates a particular view of a 'good' education, so that schools react either with compliance or through an awareness that they needed to justify a different approach. Negative inspection reports can also be used to justify controversial decisions about reassignment of staff and to strengthen the personal authority of the school leader (ibid).

A relationship between inspection feedback and a school's own self-evaluation (SSE) has been found to be important in a number of studies. (See also chapter four, this volume). For instance, one study shows that the sensitivity of stakeholders to

inspection reports and the acceptance of feedback changes following inspection. This can then lead to schools improving their capacity for change via improved SSE (Altrichter and Kemethofer 2015; Ehren et al. 2015a, b). Whitby's (2010) analysis of high performing education systems showed that external inspection is most likely to be effective when the content and focus of the review were agreed with the school. The report recommends that the school's own self-evaluation and external evaluation should be complementary, as happens in Scotland. The amount of guidance and support that schools have for SSE and external inspection also appears to affect the impact of inspection systems on school improvement. Similarly, commenting on the inspection system on Kingergartens in Hong Kong, Wong and Li (2010), concluded that effective quality assurance mechanisms should maintain a balance between external and internal evaluations and should work toward school empowerment and improvement. However, there can be a tension between SSE and inspection and a risk that the latter may simply be written to comply with expectations of the inspectorates (Whitby 2010). Supporting this point, Ferguson et al. (2000) found that most head teachers they interviewed (in England) were very good at predicting the issues that would be high on the inspectors' agendas.

The Response to Inspection Feedback

Some authors have shown that schools need time, skills and support in order to respond effectively to the type of performance feedback that external inspectorates often refer to Verhaeghe et al. (2010). This can include training and support to use data to identify and implement improvement actions (Vanhoof and Petegem 2007). However, Vanhoof et al. (2011) found no difference in use of data by principals who had participated in training on interpreting data, they found that the collaborative culture and good professional relationships among staff determined greater use of school performance feedback. In England, Learmonth (2000) and Ouston et al. (1997) found that, in general, younger, less experienced school principals were more likely to implement changes as a consequence of inspection visits than older, experienced school principals.

   The response to feedback has been shown to be mediated by school type. Looking at the German context of school supervision, Wurster and Gaertner (2011) identified four different schools types in terms of responses to inspection feedback. 25% of schools were 'active', getting good inspection results, and were high in activity level and involved in extensive communication and reflection following inspection. 29% were 'unsatisfied schools', who received poor inspection results, engaged in low activity and had a negative perception to the outcome; 26% were '(self-) satisfied schools' who engaged in low activity having received a very good inspection result and 21% were 'reactive schools'—low activity apart from high preparation for the eventually substandard result. However, in a follow up survey one year later, looking at a wide variety of outcome measures, very little change

was found in overall school quality. Hopkins et al. (1997) suggest that "different improvement strategies and types of intervention are needed for schools at different stages of growth." (p. 401). The extent to which the school has its own capacity to change or requires external steering, support and guidance is a key aspect to their framework and this has a strong bearing on whether a school can respond well to inspection feedback.

Some schools may respond poorly to feedback because they deem the inspection framework to be inappropriate to their educational ethos. In one landmark case in England, Ofsted inspected a distinctive private boarding school, Summerhill, (Keeble-Allen 2004). Their report raised a number of issues, including low standards of literacy and numeracy. A later follow up visit by inspectors concluded that there had been very little change to these aspects. The school leaders and parents argued that due to their uniquely personalised and pupil-driven approach the inspectors were not able to capture its strengths. The school made the case that Ofsted was trying to enforce a particular narrow, neo-conservative approach to education and idea of effective teaching. Later on, they won a legal case that exempted them from future action by the inspectorate.

The national context of the school system also mediates the effect of feedback. One aspect is the extent to which inspections operate on high or low stakes systems. High stakes systems make feedback more threatening. Altrichter and Kemethofer (2015) rated countries on a scale from 5 to 0 of high to low accountability as follows: The Netherlands 5, England 5, the Czech Republic 3, Sweden 2, Ireland 2, Austria 0, and Switzerland 0–1. Approximately 2300 principals in 7 European countries were surveyed. The authors found that nearly two thirds of respondents felt pressure to do well on measures of inspection, and this perception of pressure was strongly correlated to the accountability ratings. Those principals who reported feeling pressure agreed that the inspection process set expectations for performance, however they also reported more unintended consequences such as discouraging new teaching methods; narrowing the curriculum and instructional strategies.

One further factor to consider is the 'Maturity' of the national school system and the extent to which it is capable of 'self-improvement' (Hargreaves 2010). Barber and Mourshed (2007) suggests that in a 'matured' system, with a climate of 'informed professionalism', top down improvements are no longer as essential. Hargreaves describes a self-improving system as working in clusters of schools to find local solutions through co-construction, driven by systems leaders (Hargreaves 2010). Ehren et al. (2015a, b) suggest that in mature systems, inspection feedback needs to take into account the school's own SSE and ability to interpret and use data and build its capacity for change. Furthermore, if feedback may need to be directed more at systemic level in a 'self-improving system', to take into account how schools work in partnership to drive improvements (Hargreaves 2012). At systemic level the actors need time to compare feedback directed at school level to local and institutional level and put in context for it to be effective (Coe 2002).

The extent to which the Dutch system has reached the type of maturity described above, has been questioned elsewhere (e.g. Ehren and Honingh 2011). In particular,

the authors refer to annual reports of the Inspectorate of Education and Hooge and Honingh's (2011) report on governance in primary schools.

However, according to the Inspectorate's latest annual report, this situation seems to be improving rapidly. More and more schools and school boards are developing and using a system of quality assurance and they focus on improving the quality of education of their schools. Almost all schools evaluate pupil achievements and the teaching and learning process. Most schools use this information for work directed at improvement (75% in secondary education, 80% in primary education) (Dutch Inspectorate of Education (2016b).

Pilot Study 1: Quality of the Feedback by Dutch Inspectors

As already described in the previous section, the quality of the feedback as well as the personal communication skills of the inspector are important factors in order for the feedback to have impact. In research by the Dutch Inspectorate of Education Dobbelaer et al. (2012) looked to measure the quality of the feedback provided by Dutch inspectors. The aim of the research was to explore whether oral feedback provided by Dutch inspectors to teachers is adequate to support the professional development of teachers in primary education. The study also explored the effect of a training aimed at improving this quality and teachers' perception of the feedback.

Feedback Framework

In order to measure the quality of the feedback provided by inspectors, Dobbelaer et al. (2012) developed a quality framework. Based on a literature review, they developed 19 indicators of a feedback conversation that were expected to contribute to feedback effects. The indicators formed four subscales:

1. The Start of the feedback conversion.

Feedback is mediated by a range of variables including task complexity, time constraints, mode of feedback, timing of feedback, frequency of feedback and whether it is positive or negative (Kluger and DeNisi 1996). Many of these aspects are fixed during an inspection and inspection might therefore not be the most ideal situation to provide feedback. For example, feedback is best provided by someone with a similar status to the recipient (Ilgen et al. 1979) and it is better if feedback is not provided by an assessor (Brinko 1993). These factors are not the case when an inspector provides feedback. Therefore a scale was included which looked at how feedback conversation begins within the context of the framework. In order to start the conversation off in a positive manner, this scale measures if the goal of the conversation is discussed as well as the classroom observation instrument on which

the feedback is based. The indicators on which the feedback is based should be clear to both the feedback provider and the recipient (Hattie and Timperley 2007).

2. The Content of the feedback.

The content scale includes indicators that measure whether the feedback complies with characteristics of the most effective feedback, according to the literature. Feedback is generally ineffective when delivered at the level of the 'self' (Kluger and DeNisi 1996; Hattie and Timperley 2007; Dweck 2008). This type of feedback does not usually lead to improvements in performance because it does not contain sufficient information to guide the recipient towards improved performance. What this means in reality is well demonstrated through the use of praise: While individuals generally find praise re-assuring, this is not generally translated into increased learning or performance (Hattie and Timperley 2007). Often, praise is better seen as a reward or reinforcement rather than specific information on processes or performance. Where praise is directed towards improving a learner's self-regulation or choice of strategy used to achieve a task, this is likely to be more effective (Hattie and Timperley 2007).

If feedback is too specific, this may have the effect of the individual focusing too much attention on a specific short-term goal rather than the strategies used to attain the goal. Hattie and Timperley (2007) suggest that such feedback "can lead to more trial-and-error strategies and less cognitive effort to develop informal hypotheses about the relationships between the instructions, the feedback, and the intended learning" (p. 91). Successful feedback on task performance is thus most effective when it is directed at correcting incorrect hypotheses about cause and effect. Where feedback corrects an individual's faulty conceptions, and especially where the individual has a high confidence in the correctness of their modus operandi, this is when feedback is the most effective (Hattie and Timperley 2007). Therefore inspectors need to be confident and well-informed enough to challenge the false assumptions of teachers and school leaders.

The aim of feedback is to provide insight into the gap between the current situation and the intended learning goals, and what can be done to reach the desired improvement, (Black and William 1998; Hattie and Timperley 2007; Sadler 1989, 2010). Feedback should also be aligned with the professional development of the recipient. When the gap between the desired situation and the current situation is too wide, chances are higher that the feedback will not lead to action (Sadler 1989). It is not useful to focus the feedback on a skill on a higher level if skills on a lower level are not yet acquired (Van de Grift 2001). Therefore, an inspector needs to be able to make a good estimation of the level of the teacher and his professional development based on a single observation. This requires expertise of the inspectors, since teaching and learning processes are often highly complex.

3. The Dialogue during the feedback conversation.

In the dialogue scale, one indicator is focused on the type of dialogue during the conversation. Askew and Lodge (2000) have distinguished three models for exchanging feedback:

– Feedback as a gift, where the expert provides information to the feedback recipient with the primary aim of evaluation. Feedback in this model is often too overwhelming and insufficiently aligned to the recipient's knowledge and skills (Hargreaves et al. 2000).
– Ping-pong model, which refers to the nature of the communication process during a conversation. Performance is described and discussed, while the feedback provider is still in control. This could lead to a lack of alignment between the feedback and the recipient's knowledge, skills and goals.
– Co-construction, in which feedback and reflection are intertwined, connecting the process of learning to a context and to previous experiences.

Askew and Lodge (2000) and Prins et al. (2006) consider this third model the preferred one. This seems also the preferred model when an inspector provides feedback to teachers, in order to make sure that the inspector's feedback aligns with the teacher's knowledge, skills, goals and professional development.

4. The Closing of the feedback conversation.

The literature on feedback (Kluger and DeNisi 1996; Hattie and Timperley 2007) suggests that it is most effective when the recipient of the feedback:

– is committed to achieving the goal
– believes that effort, rather than ability determines success on learning tasks
– has a high degree of self-efficacy
– has sufficient knowledge, skill or understanding on which to build on the feedback provided.

The fourth scale is about closing the feedback conversation. Often, the perception of the feedback recipient and the feedback provider differ (Carless 2006; Gil et al. 1984; Irby 1994). By discussing this perception, possible barriers that can interfere with the effect can be eliminated. Feedback can only lead to action if the recipient understands the feedback (Sadler 2010; Hyatt 2005; Gibbs and Simpson 2004). According to Sadler (2010), feedback is often not understood by the recipient. Therefore an indicator in the framework assesses if it is clear that the teacher understands the feedback or if not, if this is checked by the inspector.

Method

In the research by Dobbelaer et al. (2012), 15 primary school inspectors provided feedback to 40 teachers after a lesson observation during a regular inspection. All feedback conversations were audio-taped and its quality was assessed on the basis of the framework. The reported inter-rater reliability of the framework was 0.73. Cronbach's alpha for the total scale was 0.81, sub-scales ranged between 0.66 and 0.80. In order to explore the effect of a training on the quality of the feedback as

assessed by the framework, nine inspectors were trained before they provided feedback (experimental group) and six inspectors were not trained (control group). In the two-hour training, the feedback framework and the underlying literature were discussed.

Results

The mean quality of the feedback provided by the inspectors was on average sufficient to good (3.23 on a scale from 1 to 4 with a standard deviation of 0.56). More than 50% of the feedback conversations could be characterized as co-construction, however in 25% of the conversations there was not enough time for teachers to give their opinion. Trained inspectors scored significantly higher than untrained inspectors both for the whole framework and for the subscales (except for the dialogue scale) of the feedback by untrained inspectors was also greater, more feedback conversations were considered insufficient than those of trained inspectors.

Dobbelaer et al. (2012) also measured teachers' immediate perception of the feedback with a questionnaire. The questionnaire included scales about the perception of affect (how did the feedback made the teachers feel), cognition (what did the teachers learn from the feedback), behavior (how do teachers intend to change their behavior) and the quality of the feedback (how did the teachers perceive the quality of the feedback). Most teachers experienced the feedback conversation positively. About 66% of the teachers indicated that the feedback gave them insight into their strengths and weaknesses, and 75% indicated that the feedback motivated them to improve. A correlation of 0.53 was found between the quality of the feedback, and teachers' perception of the feedback. Teachers who received feedback from a trained inspector seemed more positive than teachers who received feedback from an untrained inspector, however this difference was statistically only marginally significant.

Pilot 2: Evaluation of the New Inspection Approach

In the next paragraph, we discuss the evaluation of the new inspection approach in which primary schools have been visited in line with the new policy (Dutch inspectorate of education 2015, 2016c). This particularly evaluation provides insight into the perception of school leaders, special educational needs coordinators and teachers of the feedback by the inspectors after the school visit, and is key to understanding how individual inspectors affect the quality of feedback and its impact.

Set-up of the Pilot

In school year 2014–2015 the Dutch Inspectorate of Education began several pilots in the context of the innovations of the inspection approach. Before the pilot visits took place, central school boards and school leaders were informed about the characteristics of the new supervision and the pilot visits. Inspectors had short meetings about the feedback dialogue and practiced providing feedback in short role plays. During pilot inspections, ten standards of the new evaluation framework were used, namely: the standards for cognitive outcomes, curriculum, insight into development of pupils, teaching methodology, support, school climate, safety, evaluation and improvement, quality culture and accountability/dialogue. Besides the new evaluation framework some innovations of the inspection approach have been piloted. In the various conversations with the head, the staff, parents and pupils, mind maps have been used (instead of structured conversation guidelines) to increase the contribution of the interlocutors. The mind maps consists of an overview of the topics that can be discussed. The meeting participants have an influence on the choice of topics.

To build up experience with all the new aspects of the innovations of the inspection system, the inspection used three types of school inspections:

Method 1: The inspectorate and self-assessment.

The starting point is the school self-assessment. Prior to the inspection visit, the director received a questionnaire with which the school had to assess itself on the ten standards that were also assessed during the visit by the inspectors. The literal text of the standards used by the inspectors was made available together with the questionnaire. Based on interviews and classroom observations, inspectors build up a picture of the quality of the education of the school. At the end of the school inspection the inspectors leave behind a list of preliminary judgements. In the feedback session, often on a different day (usually one or two days after this school inspection), the images are shared in a dialogue with the management, (part of) the team and the board. Inspectors also examined what the conclusions could mean for subsequent development in the school.

Method 2: The inspectorate and the school look together.

The starting point is again the self-assessment, to be completed in advance by the school, with now extra emphasis on the way the school evaluates the quality of the teaching learning process in the classes. The classroom observations during the inspection are performed together by the inspectors and members of the school staff. The classroom observation form (checklist) of the school is being used. Furthermore, there is a lot of room for meetings and at the end of the inspection there is a feedback session.

Method 3: The inspectorate looks at how the school looks.

In this method at the beginning of the inspection the school presents its own quality evaluation to inspectors. The portrayal of the school within this document, forms the starting point for the agenda and the meetings during the investigation. Classroom observations are not a standard element of these inspections. Within this process there is a good deal of room for discussions with stakeholders and at the end of the inspection a feedback session is held.

It was not the purpose of these three methods to test the three operating modes as a whole, but rather to try out the new framework and the innovations within the inspection methods, such as; completing a self-assessment; joint classroom observations; a presentation by the school; interviews with the team, parents and students; the feedback session etc.

The (Postponed) Feedback Meeting

This section mainly focuses on the experiences of the feedback meeting in the pilot. The data used as a basis for this part of this chapter stem from the pilots carried out in the period February to October 2015 at 772 schools in primary education (726 primary schools and 46 special schools for primary education). Only schools of basic quality were visited during this pilot study. The three methods were distributed to the schools, taking into account the stability of the student achievements and the picture of the quality care of the school (based on the latest inspection of the school).

During the pilot visits, the inspectors had a feedback meeting with a representative of the school board, the management, the special needs coordinator, and some teachers. The purpose of this feedback session; to encourage the staff to improve the quality of education at their school. The inspector discusses opportunities for improvement alongside the conclusions of the report. An important part of this conversation is formed from the self-assessment by the school. The meeting is mainly held to engage the school in conversations about the possible significance of the judgment for the school development. After the feedback session the inspectors prepare a report on the investigation.

Opinions of the Schools About the Feedback Meeting

After the school inspection, the schools were questioned about the various components that were tried in the pilots, including the feedback meeting. The head, the special needs coordinator and a number of teachers were given a questionnaire to record their responses.
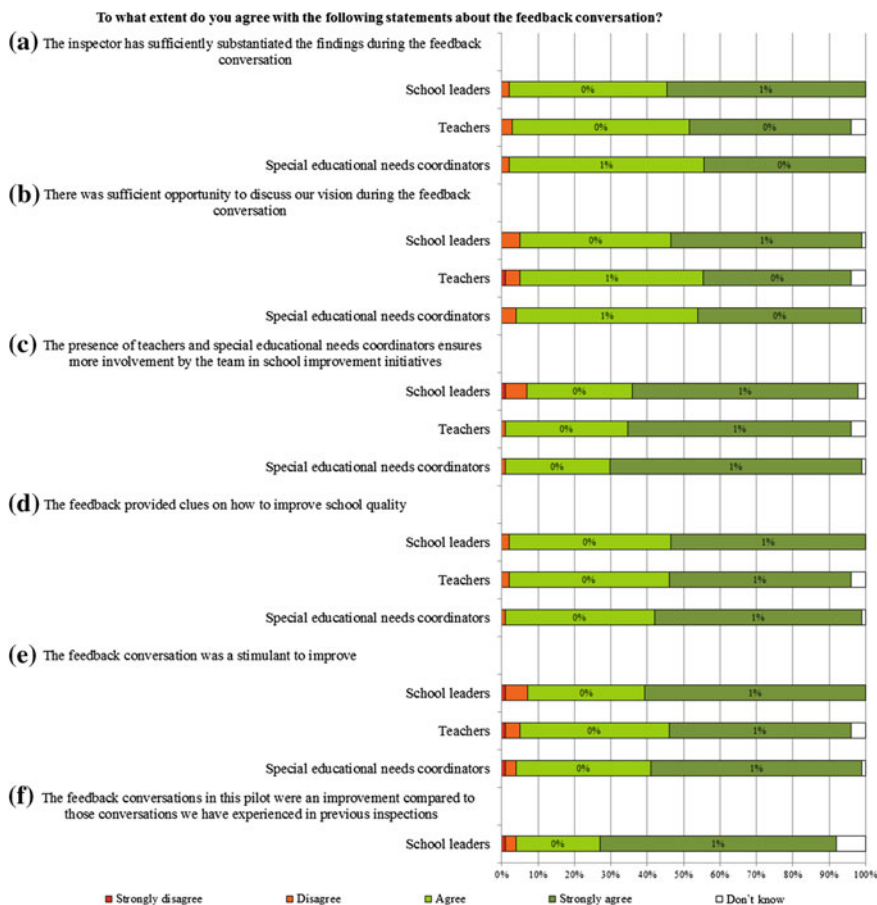
Fig. 5.1 Perception of the feedback conversations by school leaders, teachers and special educational needs coordinators (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2016c)

Figure 5.1 shows that almost all respondents experienced the feedback session (very) positively. Most respondents felt that the feedback provided clues on how to improve school quality (on average 97%) and that the feedback conversation was a stimulant to improve (on average 93%). Most school leaders thought that the feedback meeting was an improvement on previous forms of the meeting (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2016c).

Teachers were new participants in the conversations at the end of inspection. They were largely positive. A quote from a teacher:

A very pleasant way of communication. Bright, clear. With a good 'accountability' both gentlemen succeeded in describing our school. The finger was put on the sore spot, but in a respectful way. Good that we ourselves were made responsible for our upcoming

improvement process. By challenging questions we in turn were challenged to look at our education from helicopter view and to contemplate. This gave us strength and new insights (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2015, p. 34)

Almost all school leaders perceived the self-assessment before inspection as useful. Two quotes from school leaders:

Completing a self-assessment prior to inspection gave us a good overview of how we are doing and forced us to critically review our own quality

We perceived the process of handing in the self-assessment prior to inspection very positively. We appreciated the motto 'tell your own story as a school' (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2015, p. 33)

Some head teachers, special needs coordinators were less positive; they appeared to believe that the inspectors were not capable of sustaining a dialogue with the school. Certainly in schools with a number of failures, and that the inspectors must continue to seek to avoid the conversation is one-way direction in which only the judgements were explained. The inspection will continue to focus on the dialogue with the school during training and collegial consultation (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2015).

There were slight differences in the level of enthusiasm for the feedback session between the three methods. The feedback session in method two scored slightly lower. This could be related to the fact that the visit day in method 2 is very long. The feedback session then begins after 4 pm. In method 1, the feedback meeting is on another day and in method 3 around the sessions started at 3 pm (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2016c).

Inspectors Opinion on the Feedback Meeting

Inspectors completed a questionnaire about the school visits as well. They were generally positive about the feedback discussion, they especially appreciate the presence of the teachers. The current meetings after school inspection always take place without the presence of teachers, with only the school board and the head. Inspectors found that the feedback session at the end of the examination day (in method 2 and 3) generally makes sense. Several inspectors report that the feedback session promotes ownership of issues among both school and the team. They also responded that they find it difficult to support their judgments if the school does not agree with the judgement. In this situation it is not always possible to resume a dialogue.

Inspectors made a few specific suggestions: That the feedback meeting would be less suitable for schools that are not so capable of self-reflection. In these schools they felt that it would not be possible to establish a good enough dialogue to effect improvement. Some inspectors noted that they needed to more effectively communicate the purpose of the meeting before inspections take place in order to clarify what feedback will occur.

Discussion and Conclusions

The Dutch Inspectorate of Education is innovating within their inspection process. Their new mission is to improve education in all Dutch schools (Dutch Inspectorate of Education 2016a). One of the chosen mechanisms to stimulate school improvement is the provision of feedback by inspectors. Feedback will be provided by the inspector orally to a representative of the school board, the school leader, and teachers. After the inspection, a report is produced in which a quality profile of the school is presented. The whole idea behind the inspection feedback is that it is designed to stimulate school improvement. Multiple studies show that teachers and school leaders welcome feedback from inspectors, that they find it useful and feel disappointed when it is not given (Dean 1995; Brunel University, Centre for the Evaluation of Public Policy and Practice 1999; Kelchtermans 2007). The two pilot studies described in this chapter suggest that this also applies to the Dutch context. The two pilots in this chapter also show that school leaders, teachers and special educational needs coordinators are positive about inspection feedback. However, the research synthesis in this chapter showed that the results of research into the effect of inspection feedback are mixed. The effect is, among other things, highly dependent on the inspector, the feedback provider. In the next section, we will focus on this role of the inspector.

Improvement Through a Dialogue by Trained Inspectors

To make sure that the feedback is understood, aligned with the recipient, and correctly perceived; a dialogue during the feedback conversation is absolutely essential. In the revised inspection system, the dialogue between the inspector and the school is allocated a bigger role than in the previous framework. In the present form, inspectors mainly presents their findings to the school leader after their school visit. This will be different in the innovative inspection, where the starting point of the inspection will be the schools' perception of its own quality, which is presented via a self-assessment.

With this new form of inspection, in schools that meet basic quality criteria, the focus is on school improvement rather than accountability. This also means that the role of the inspector is changing and it requires different skills. The literature review and the pilot study by Dobbelaer et al. (2012) both show that the communication skills of inspectors are key to the whole process, as other inspectorates using similar forms of inspection (see for example chapters three and four this volume) have shown. If the attitude of the inspectors is perceived as authoritarian, this could trigger reactions of resistance and rejection by teachers (Kelchtermans 2007). When the inspector is too dominant during the conversation and the recipient does not get enough time during the feedback conversation, the feedback might be overwhelming and may well not align with the development or the context of the school.

Training of inspectors for this new role may be needed. The pilot by Dobbelaer et al. (2012) showed that even minimal training could increase the quality of the feedback. This is supported by other research into the training and development of inspectors (see for example chapters three, four and eight, this volume). Both pilots of the Dutch inspectorate described in this chapter were conducted at schools that meet basic quality criteria. Schools that do not meet basic quality criteria are in greatest need of improvement and good quality feedback is especially important. However, at those schools the inspector cannot only focus on school improvement, but has to hold the school accountable for its shortcomings as well. This creates a high stake situation in which it is even more difficult to provide feedback: one where more factors come into play which might interfere with the effect of the feedback. Research also shows that schools are generally disinclined to accept unfavourable inspection conclusions and that communication skills have an effect on this aspect (Penzer and CfBT Education Trust 2011). Training if inspectors in providing feedback could be extra important for these inspections.

Feedback to Individual Teachers

Multiple studies show a positive effect in terms of inspection feedback. However, many of those studies (e.g. Chapman 2001; Brimblecombe et al. 1996) are about feedback to individual teachers: precisely the one form of inspection feedback that the Dutch inspectorate is not incorporating. Is this a missed opportunity? When feedback is directed towards an institution or a group, other mediating variables also come into place. For instance, Hattie and Timperley (2007 citing Nadler 1979) explain that feedback directed to a group or institution would be diluted. In essence, it could apply to the person reading (or listening to) the feedback, the institution (or group) as a whole, or to other people in the group or institution (excluding themselves). Thus the extent to which it leads to individual changes in behaviour is likely to be mediated by the perception that the feedback is relevant to them. Kelchtermans (2007) found that if teachers were not able to recognise themselves in reports, they were more likely to react superficially rather than by making any real change in classroom practice. Overall this might suggest a limited role for the feedback in inspection reports to drive improvement and the need for inspectors, wherever possible, to give direct feedback to teachers.

If the Dutch Inspectorate provided feedback to individual teachers, the feedback would be based on a single observation. The unusual circumstances of the inspection could influence the teaching quality and the teacher might feel that the lesson is not generalizable to other lessons. This could interfere with the effect of the feedback. In Lithuania, this issue is resolved by observing teachers at least twice by different evaluators during a 3–5 day visit in which 75% of the time is spend on teacher observation. Feedback to teachers is provided straight after the lesson, in which both strengths and areas for improvement are provided (Kamenskienė and Kardelytė 2016).

A key reason for the Dutch Inspectorate to not incorporate feedback to teachers is that teacher evaluation is seen as a task of school boards. Another element is the role of the inspector as both critical friend and assessor. If an inspector makes recommendations to a teacher and the teacher follows up on them, the inspector will need to assess his own recommendations the next time they observe the teacher. This is not only applicable when an inspector provides feedback to an individual teacher, but also when an inspector provides feedback with recommendations to schools. Combining those two roles as an inspector would appear to present a great deal of challenge. For this reason the Dutch inspectorate chose not to provide suggestions on how to improve during the feedback conversation, but rather focus on discussion as to how a school aims to develop from the current performance to the desired one.

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Chapter 6
Making a Difference? The Voices of School Inspectors and Managers in Sweden

Agneta Hult and Christina Segerholm

Abstract A cadre of school inspectors with different backgrounds visit thousands of schools annually in Sweden as is also the case in several other European and other nations. Do these inspectors believe that they 'make a difference'? In this chapter we elaborate on inspection effects as they are perceived by Swedish inspectors and inspection managers at different levels of the Inspectorate, and on the policy problems the creation of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (SI) was intended to solve according to, on the one hand policy documents and on the other hand problems reported in interviews with inspectors and inspection managers. Central to inspection practice are the 'assumptive worlds' of the inspectors and managers at the Inspectorate, i.e. their notions of school inspection. Both groups' notions of the policy problem inspection is to solve, agree with national intentions and motivations the managers stressing the declining school performance, and the inspectors emphasising the lack of equivalence between schools and municipalities. Analysis of interviewees' notions of what problems are indeed solved, points foremost to different types of implementation problems at all levels in a top-down 'chain of governing', also noting problems within the national level.

Keywords Assumptive worlds · Inspection managers · School inspectors · Policy implementation

Introduction

In recent decades all sorts of evaluative activities have increasingly characterised approaches to education governance and policy. Examples are; school inspection, (quality/effect) evaluations, quality assurance and assessment, international tests

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like the PISA, and national testing systems. School inspection has gained ground in this context, and in Europe several nations have developed and installed inspectorates. Inspection policy and practice is communicated and learned through organisations like the Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI) (Grek and Ozga 2012; Segerholm 2012). Some of the Nordic countries have launched school inspection activities, albeit not always formally organised in the form of inspectorates.

In Sweden school inspection was abolished in the beginning of the 1990s in the wake of the radical deregulation taking place at that time. In 2003, partly as a result of pressure from the then political opposition to the Social democratic government, regular school inspection was reinstalled (Segerholm 2009). In official documents, the policy problem to be solved was represented

> …in terms of a need for additional state control and involvement in order to uphold equivalent and high- quality education […] Intensified state involvement was legitimized by arguing that school results and performance, quality improvement and evaluation effort at the municipal and school levels as well as systemativ information from school site visits were lacking or unsatisfactory. (Rönnberg 2012a, p. 78).

At this time the National Agency for Education performed this task in parallel to other assignments from the government such as national tests. In the election in 2006, the conservative, liberal, centre and Christ democrat coalition won, and the then new minister of education promised to sharpen school inspection as a means to improve Swedish schooling. A new national agency was decided upon and started to operate in the autumn 2008: the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (SI). The political motivations for this decision, or policy problems to be solved by it, were the same as before, but with a,

> …more prominent position given to results, performance and pupils' academic achievements. […] the inspections were insufficiently performed, in particular when it comes to monitoring educational performance, which is necessary in order to retain and improve educational quality and equivalence. (Rönnberg 2012b, p. 6).

In the international research project 'Governing by Inspection: education governance in Sweden, England and Scotland', one of the aims was to examine the ways in which Inspection regimes may be understood as governing education in three national education systems—Sweden, England and Scotland' (Segerholm et al. 2009). Part of this project was directed at investigating the role of inspectors: their practices, background, training, what they base their judgements on, and their notions and experiences of inspection (ibid., p. 5).

Inspectors and managers at different levels of the Inspectorate and their 'assumptive worlds' (Marshall et al. 1985) are central to inspection practice, i.e. their notions of the purpose of inspection, of how inspection should be and is carried out, and of the effect/influence of school inspection. What these central actors think and experience is part of how their practice is formed, as are preconditions such as resources, policies, inspector competencies, etc. Inspectors' and managers' assumptive worlds are therefore an important aspect of the governing of education and policy implementation. Here we examine whether they think that the problems

that were presented by the government are resolved through their work, or are there discrepancies in how formal policy problems and motives behind school inspections are formulated compared to their own notions?

Our aim is to explore and illuminate this particular aspect of the governing of education. An aspect that presents as, any differences within the ways that central actors' notions about the policy problems that their work is intended to solve, and their notions about the effects of school inspection. We do this by analysing the assumptive worlds of inspectors and inspection managers.

Questions that direct this analysis are:

– how do the effects reported by inspectors and mangers relate to the policy problems they assume will be solved by school inspection?
– are the assumptive worlds of inspectors and managers one shared world or do they differ?

As part of this study inspectors' and managers' notions of effects of school inspection are also tentatively analysed and interpreted in the sense that they are policy problems that are being solved by inspection. We argue that the result of our analysis offers a sense of how the SI is influencing Swedish schools; that is, governing Swedish schools.

The chapter unfolds as follows: After a short presentation of the Swedish Schools Inspectorate an account of our theoretical understanding and of how we performed the analysis is provided. Following this, the results of the analysis are presented in three sections closely following the logic of the initial analysis. Finally, we compare and discuss the results and point to similarities and discrepancies within the assumptive worlds of the inspectors and inspection managers. We also bring forward similarities and discrepancies in policy problems that these central actors perceive to be solved by their work, and the policy problems inspection was intended to solve when it was reinstated, and later strengthened and reinforced.

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate[1]

Since autumn 2008 when the new inspection agency, the Swedish Schools Inspectorate started to operate, inspection activities have increased dramatically, the SI now is visiting thousands of schools annually (Skolinspektionen n.d. a). The Inspectorate is commissioned by the government to carry out: (a) regular supervision of all schools and governing bodies organizers (municipalities and operators of independent schools), and (b) quality audits where a sample of schools are audited thematically, for example: in terms of one school subject, or a particular area of interest such as assessment in the lower grades. The SI also handles

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[1]The description of the SSI is representing the period when the project was carried out, but both its duties and focus are mainly the same.

(c) complaints from individuals (for example, concerning bullying) and (d) issuing licences for independent schools. The foundation for all activities rest with the agency's interpretations of the Education Act and Ordinance, and other national formal documents that must be adhered to by all schools. These laws, rules and regulations are particularly important in regular supervisions (Regeringen Utbildningsdepertementet 2010, 2011; Skolinspektionen n.d. b). Decisions and reports from regular supervision are made for individual schools and governing bodies[2] focusing lack of compliance with regulations from what is required. From the first of July 2011 the SI may make use of penalties according to the new Education Act. Fines can be imposed, or for independent schools the license to operate may be withdrawn if the governing body organizer does not effect compliance and improvement according to the content of inspection reports.

The Inspectorate is organized into five regional departments and the head management group comprises the Director General, the Director of Inspections, five department head managers, and managers from central functions such as communication, internal support, personnel, and law. Individuals with a background in education (teachers, head teachers and local administrators), individuals with a general competence in investigative skills, and individuals with a background in law have been recruited as inspectors in order to form an inspectorate made up of mixed competences and knowledge (For further information of the Inspectorate and the inspectors background and work, see Chaps. 3 and 8).

SI's grant from the government in 2012 was 351 million SEK and more than half of the financial resources were used for regular supervision (Skolinspektionen n.d. a, p. 43). These very comprehensive activities undertaken by the SI are intended to be part of the governing of Swedish schools, and further on in the chapter we put forward the inspectors' and inspection managers' assumptions or notions about which problems they are supposed to solve, whether they believe that the inspection activities 'make a difference', and if so, in what way.

Methodology

Drawing on the extensive evaluation literature on evaluation use, impact and effects (e.g. Dahler-Larsen 2012; Kirkhart 2000; Power 1997; Sahlin-Andersson 1995; Segerholm and Åström 2007; Vedung and Svärd 2008), and on research on education governance in a global and European context (e.g. Ball 1998; Ozga et al. 2011), a starting point for the project has been that school inspection is part of education governance and of transnational as well as national policy processes in education. When it comes to what actually happens during the inspection process at

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[2]The governing bodies are either municipal school boards or independent school boards or companies (often big concerns and sometimes non-profit organisations based on a specific pedagogical idea, like Montessori).

schools and municipalities, we argue that the inspectors' and inspection managers' views on inspection problems and effects are influential within these processes. Marshall et al. (1985) use Young's (1977) concept of 'assumptive worlds' to elaborate on policy makers' 'subjective understanding of the environment in which they operate' (Young 1977, p. 2). Following Marshall et al. we assume that inspectors are socialized within a certain culture that affects their notions of expected behaviours, judgements and understandings and reflects 'a shared sense of what is appropriate in action, interaction and choice.' (p. 90). Inspector notions are thereby likely to 'limit the range of options and focus debate within certain understood priorities', (p. 110), and in so doing, affect the course of action and how governing is done. The idea of assumptive worlds 'glues together' other elements of policy making such as informal processes and formal structure (p. 113) and 'reflects the taken-for-granted framework within which policy making occurs.' (p. 91). Simply put this means that we believe that the assumptive worlds of inspectors and inspection managers, their notions of school inspection, their work and what it is aiming at and leads to, matters in understanding how inspection policy and practice is constructed and governs education.

Taking Marshall et al.'s advice to use interviews as a means to enter the assumptive worlds of policy makers, ad notam, our empirical material consists of interview statements from 15 school inspectors, four follow-up interviews with inspectors who were project leaders in inspections in four municipalities that we studied, and nine head managers (four at national level and five at departmental level). Interviews with the head management were conducted in autumn 2010, the main part of the interviews with inspectors during spring 2011, and some in the autumn of 2011 when a new Education Act and Ordinance had come into effect. Implementation work in relation to these 'regulative' governing devices, (Jacobsson 2006, 2010) had however started earlier in several municipalities and school. The main interviews ranged from 45 to 90 min and the follow-up interviews about 20 min. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interviews concerned primarily regular supervision, which is one of the main activities at the SI (see description of the SI).

The first activity in organising empirical material was to construct descriptive categories from the interviewees' statements about inspection effects. This was also used in a separate study we carried out at an earlier date (Hult and Segerholm 2012). As a continuation of that study, interview statements concerning what policy problems school inspection is supposed to solve, were used to construct categories representing the inspectors' and managers' notions of the policy problem.

In order to relate the inspection effects to the problems school inspection is intended to solve, we decided to analyse the effects reported by inspectors and managers in a kind of Bacchi (2009) inspired analysis. Bacchi offers a methodology for analysing policy that probes how problems are represented in policies, arguing that it is important that we 'interrogate' how these problems are thought about in order to understand how policy works and how we are governed. We do however

not claim to perform a regular 'what's the problem represented to be' analysis, but Bacchi inspired us to try to infer 'problems' in a reversed analysis of the reported effects. The analysis was carried out in two steps. The first step was to deduce the policy problems from the notions of inspection effects as constructed in our categories. That is, looking at the reported effects at, for example, national level, which problems could they represent a solution to?

The second step of the analysis was to compare interviewees' notions of which genre of policy problem inspection was intended to solve, as related to the deduced policy problems. The point of this type of analysis is to try to capture correspondences and discrepancies between what the actors at the SI believe to be the purpose of their work in terms of school inspection, along with their beliefs, perceptions and experiences of what is actually happening. One way to describe our analysis in a more evaluative theoretical terms is as a type of reversed programme theory analysis (e.g. Chen 1990; Weiss 1997). The idea of such an analysis is to analyse the causal logic of an intervention or an educational programme, reform or activity in order to assess its potential to achieve what is planned.[3] We argue that our rather innovative analysis made it possible to make potentially new insights related to the governing of education that are often ignored, particularly in relation to the parts of governing processes that take place at a national level, i.e. steps in the implementation process at that level.

We also compared the two groups (both inspectors and managers). The problems are discussed according to the possible shared (or not), assumptive world/s of both. Following the methodological argument proposed by Marshall et al. (1985, p. 94) we 'examine how the dominant story emerges in the assumptive worlds' of inspectors and managers. This comparison is designed to reveal tensions and inconsistencies in the assumptive worlds of the inspectors and inspection managers (should there be any), as a way of illuminating a particular aspect of education governance, i.e. influenced by the notions of central actors, and the parts they play in the governance process.

What Is the Policy Problem?

As a part of our study inspectors and inspection managers at department and national level responded to the question 'What are the problems that the Inspectorate is intended to solve? Why was SI created?' Their answers were classified into four different categories, two of them principally articulated by the managers and two principally by the inspectors. The most common problem mentioned by managers related to declining school performance.

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[3]In the case of the Swedish School Inspection model, a program theory analysis was done by Gustafsson and Myrberg (2011).

> We have, during the last [few] years, or even during a rather long time, seen a decline in development, unfortunately, when it comes to students' knowledge. That's what we above all need to work with… […] the Swedish school and the Schools Inspectorate is a tool for this, as I see it. (Department manager 4)

Another issue, one purely expressed by managers, was the problem of implementation of new laws and regulations. In order to make the local school board and head teachers pay attention to new regulations the SI has to pose questions about how they are going to solve a special charter/statute:

> I think we have had an implementing role, because we have posed the questions […] all inspectors have had rather a distinct mission concerning bullying and offending behaviour […] and we think in that direction now too, when it comes to the new Education Act, that there can be some areas that isn't actually the main ones maybe- concerning good effects on education. That is, the quality of education per se, for example the possibility (of parents and students, our clarification) of filing a complaint […] but in an implementation phase maybe we should bring that question with us: How are you administering the processes of making it possible to file a complaint? And how have you informed students and parents of their rights? (Manager 3, national level).

The inspectors expressed and highlighted another angle in terms of the implementation problem: namely lack of awareness of existing laws and regulations among head teachers and municipal officers. The inspectors however often began from a student perspective:

> Students have the right to study their mother tongue and they don't even get information about this, students have a right to do 'students' choice' (a small part of the curriculum that students can choose out of their own interest, our clarification) that instead is used for remedial teaching, they can't choose to study the language, they have a right to. The municipality naturally ought to know which rules that apply here… (Inspector 5).

A central problem for the inspectors was also the differences between schools and municipalities, which means that the educational equivalence for students in different schools and municipalities is a problem that SI is supposed to deal with.[4]

> Well, it's far too big difference between schools, far too big difference between qualities when it comes to leadership, when it comes to quality in education. Quality in education can differ between classrooms in the schools and between the municipalities. (Inspector 13)

Some of the problems expressed by inspectors and inspection managers relate to the national intent and the officially declared agenda for reinstalling and for sharpening the process of school inspection, albeit in different ways. The inspectors draw on the lack of equivalence or equity between schools and municipalities and the managers pointed to a decline in school performances.

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[4]Educational equivalence is one of the key words in an analysis of texts concerning school inspection in Sweden (see Lindgren et al. 2012). There is also an extensive discussion of the concept of educational equivalence in the Swedish context, focusing on its meaning and also its translation. There may be good reasons to translate the concept to equity rather than equivalence in some instances (Englund and Francia 2008; Francia 2011). However, the official Swedish translation is equivalence.

What Are the Effects?

Our chapter continues with inspectors' and inspection managers' notions of inspection effects at different levels (national, municipal and local school level).[5] In our interviews we posed the question 'What are the effects of school inspection at different levels, as far as you know? Please give concrete examples!

The empirical material was organised according to what level in the education system the interviewees' statements about effects pertained to. Accordingly, at the *national* level four categories were constructed:

– changes to education policy
– appointment of national investigations, commissions or quality audits
– interpretation and standardisation of regulations (in national statutes)
– implementation of the Education Act and Ordinance and other regulations.

Compared to inspectors, inspection managers mentioned more examples which pertained to the national level. This is not surprising given their personal contacts with the Ministry of Education. Examples from the four categories concerned changes in the national curriculum as a policy change; the appointment of a national investigation to establish rules for governing bodies of independent schools (corporations); interpretation of what counts as a school library—now a mandatory demand in the Education Act; and implementation of the new Education Act through inspectors questions which make head teachers and local politicians aware of these changes.

At the *municipal* level both inspection managers and inspectors gave examples of perceived inspection effects. Three categories were constructed, within which both groups of interviewees gave examples. These include:

– organizational changes of, or administrated by municipalities' school boards[6]
– municipalities' increased awareness of their responsibility for the schools
– improved work with school development in the public schools.

Organizational changes mentioned by inspection managers included redistribution of resources among schools and an increase in the number of teachers with a teaching degree. Inspectors, on the other hand talked about organizational effects

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[5]This part is based on an earlier paper where we analysed inspectors' and inspection managers' notions of inspection effects (Hult and Segerholm 2012).

[6]A municipality is a geographical as well as a political and administrative entity in Sweden that impose local taxes on the citizens to get public resources in order to provide for public education, elder and social care, culture and leisure as well as local infrastructure. There are local elections and the results lead to a proportionate distribution of members in the local parliament. All policy areas have a board that is accountable for decisions made for that policy area. However, the local parliament is ultimately accountable and responsible for political priorities and distribution of resources to different policy areas.

that could create problems for individuals or schools, for example when a school was heavily criticised by the SI, or the municipality removed the head teacher. Inspection managers as well as inspectors also experienced an increased awareness among politicians and municipal officers concerning their responsibility as laid down in laws and regulations for school transport, required plans and documents, etc. Both inspection managers and inspectors also offered different examples of an improvement in school development initiatives such as creating forums for different school subjects where teachers from different schools could cooperate.

Statements about effects at the *school* level given by the interviewees expressed a commitment for the wellbeing of the individual child or student. This seemed to legitimate and justify much of their work and was particularly dominant among the inspectors. Altogether three categories were constructed to capture effects at this level:

- individual students' rights
- attitudinal change
- increased awareness of laws and regulations among head teachers.

Earlier and better identification systems for students with special needs and better systems for documentation of decisions and progress in these cases were examples given by both managers and inspectors that related to individual students' rights. Inspectors also volunteered stories about students who were harassed, that they could highlight in their reports. The increase in complaints filed by parents and students were also mentioned as a positive effect of school inspection. The inspectors brought forward attitudinal changes like a more receptive attitude from head teachers towards the inspectors and the inspection procedures. Inspection managers related that there is an increased awareness among head teachers and teachers concerning the schools' obligation to teach in such a way that all students pass their grades. Yet another example of changed attitude mentioned was that head teachers now realise that they can use a favourable inspection report as a driver to promote their school in recruiting students in competition with other schools in the area. Finally, both inspectors and inspection managers reported an increased awareness of laws and regulations at school level. One example of this is that required documentation and development plans for all individual students are now in better order, along with plans to prevent bullying and unsociable behaviour. One inspector however expressed a concern that increased demands on documentation may lead to teachers focusing less on teaching and spending more time on paperwork.

The views of inspectors and inspection managers mainly differed when it came to effects at a national level, where managers unsurprisingly did offer more responses. They also reported some effects that were not mentioned at all by the inspectors: The standardisation process of and implementation of parts of the Education Act.

What Are the Policy Problems?

The next part of the chapter deals with our attempt to find out what policy problems interviewees' notions of inspection effects may correspond to. This is a tentative analysis, but we argue that it contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the governing process as a whole.

Looking at the reported effects at the *national* level, what type of policy problems could they represent a solution to? Starting with effects in the category '*changes in education policy*', one element may respond to the government's need for information for political direction and political action. Change in education policy signals political initiative and energy. But in order to take this action information is also required. The policy problem corresponding to policy change is therefore lack of political initiative and/or action, or that a policy is 'wrong' and a new direction is needed. Also the effects in the category '*appointment of national investigations, commissions or quality audits*' are about the same type of policy problem.

In the category '*interpretation and standardisation of regulations* (*in national statutes*)' and '*implementation of the Education Act and Ordinance and other regulations*' The policy problem corresponds to effects relating to implementation problems within national decisions and policies. The implementation problem relates to different aspects of the implementation process. The first relates to the SI's internal work in interpreting and standardising new national requirements, rendering them as comprehensible (and measurable) descriptions (criteria) that make the requirements clearer to local actors. The second aspect is similar, but takes place within the context of direct contact between the SI and the local actors where policy requirements are communicated.

We now turn to the effects at the *municipal* level raised by inspectors and inspection managers, investigating the corresponding policy problems these effects present a solution to? The category of effects which falls under the heading '*organizational changes of, or administrated by municipalities*' *school board*' corresponds to a problem of inadequate local school organisations that fail to live up to the responsibility legally placed on them. In relation to the effect category, '*municipalities' increased awareness of their responsibility for the schools*', *the corresponding policy problem* lies in a lack of knowledge about (new) laws and regulations, and inadequate awareness of local political responsibility among local politicians. Both these inferred problems are related to different core aspects of an implementation process, that is, how national policy is observed, understood/interpreted and handled at the municipal level.

A related problem corresponding to the category '*improved work with school development in the public schools*' also alludes to issues of implementation, such as, how policy is handled at the local level. But this category of perceived effects at the municipal level may also concern a need of political performativity in relation to problems at this level. Conversely lack of tangible action may also symbolise lack of political initiative or too willing an acceptance by government to accept the status quo.

Finally, we turn to the corresponding policy problems pertaining to all categories of effects at *school* level reported by the inspectors and inspection managers. The category '*individual students' rights*' reveals a specific problem located in educational practice: a failure to honour individual students' rights, as laid down in the Education Act and Ordinance and other statutes, The category '*increased awareness of laws and regulations among head teachers*' reveals a more general implementation problem at school level, similar to that we uncovered at municipal level. Once again, our analysis relates policy problems to aspects of the implementation process at school level.

The '*attitudinal change*' category primarily contains effects on head teachers' attitudes towards inspection—which are now more positive. We find the corresponding problem within that category to relate to an earlier lack of responsiveness and openness to inspection among head teachers.

The analysis performed is in essence, hypothetical since it takes inspectors' and inspection managers' assumptions/notions of effects as a starting point. In this sense the policy problems that these effects correspond to, or the problems that inspection solves, only give broad insights into what kind of policy problems this group assume that they help solve or improve. If however the effects they reported are in fact taking place (which our other studies suggest), the major problem school inspection seems to correspond to resides in policy implementation. More precisely, different steps in a chain of top-down policy implementation are made visible and affected in particular ways. One of the most notable ways lies in raising the awareness of actors at all levels of laws, regulations and statutes that are tied to national education policy and decisions. Another area of concern, particularly for inspectors-but equally managers-is the problem of individual students who suffer from harassment and bullying, or do not get the amount of time or the school subject content they are entitled to. This is arguably also an implementation problem, but one directly connected to implementation of laws and regulations in educational practice.

Discussion

Our analysis brings to light one new aspect of governing processes in education. That there are possible gaps between nationally and publicly expressed intentions and purposes in relation to how educational reforms or national governing initiatives (as in government decisions) are designed in order to really respond to the intentions. This also relates to central actors' notions about the purposes with their work and the policy problem they perceive to actually be solved (the deduced problem). This is a problem that lies with implementation within the national level. Our innovative analysis has shown that governing education and implementing education reforms is also about the processes taking place within the national level. In this case it is expressed by the inspectors' and inspection managers' assumptive worlds concerning the purpose with, and effects of their work. Their notions point

to the gap between political decision making at the national level, and the inter-
pretation and standardisation of these decisions into inspection processes including
indicators and criteria. In turn, inspection processes are also part of the overall
governing of education, and as such also a means to implement national decisions.
By and large inspectors' and inspection managers' assumed policy problems agree
with the political intentions and motivations for the establishment of the SI in 2008
(problems with equivalence and performance). But the analysis shows that there are
some interesting discrepancies between their notions of what policy problems their
work is intended to solve and what we have inferred from their notions of effects.
The inferred problems (deduced from the interviewees' notions of inspection
effects), point to policy problems linked to implementation, and more precisely to
problems with top-down governing. Almost all effects they reported concern a
strengthening of this 'chain of governing', or put differently, a policy problem
linked to lack of implementation of reforms. This was not part of the national
intentions or motivations for remodelling and sharpening school inspection. One
question that can be raised in relation to this is whether this affects the legitimacy of
the Swedish Schools Inspectorate in the view of the inspectors and managers? If
indeed, the effects are related to other problems than what they assume political
intentions to be, then what motivates them within their daily work? What in their
assumptive worlds may 'glue together' their inspection policy and practice?

A more common way to study implementation is to study it, or governing
processes in terms of the relationship between political decision making at national
level and the implementation at local levels. But the gap between national policy
and decisions and lack of implementation at local levels is by no means a new
insight, as already illustrated by Pressman and Wildavsky (1984). In that respect
our study adds new insights to implementation processes, and the 'governing
chain', in that it has pinpointed the problems of translating national political
intentions into reform designs and strategies, still within the national level. School
inspection in Sweden was reinstalled to come to terms with declining school results
and deteriorating equivalence between schools and municipalities. The reported
effects point in other directions, namely implementation problems. That kind of
policy problem was however not visible in the motivations for the decision to install
school inspection.

Returning once again to the assumptive world/s of inspectors and inspection
managers and the question of their possible shared world, there appears to be some
problems and effects that they have in common. In the shared assumptive world of
inspectors and inspection mangers the lack of awareness of laws and regulations is a
concerning issue for Swedish schools and here the Inspectorate has been successful
in both implementing new statutes and in making school boards and head teachers
aware of their responsibilities according to the Education Act and other regulations.
Their efforts also have exerted effects on municipal and school organisations; not
the least for individual students with problems of different kind, such as lack of
special education support. Concern for the individual child that is maltreated in any
number of ways appears to be an important part of the shared assumptive world of
inspectors and managers.

However there also appears to be at least some parts of the assumptive world of inspectors' and inspection managers that was not to any great extent shared among the other group. Inspectors appear to be in broad agreement on areas they felt were important issues for the SI to address, such as equity among schools and municipalities, while the problem of declining academic school performances for Swedish students seemed to form a core element in the assumptive world of managers.

The 'dominant story' then appears to be the one of implementing new statutes and monitoring law compliance and thereby governing Swedish municipalities and schools, according to the Education Act and other regulations. However, this also serves as a tool for the inspectorate to protect individual students, and this concern for individual students' rights and welfare, is what ultimately comes out as the strong and vital assumption that motivates and legitimizes their work.

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Chapter 7
Headteachers Who also Inspect: Practitioner Inspectors in England

Henry J. Moreton, Mark Boylan and Tim Simkins

Abstract The relationship between headteachers and inspection is complex, particularly when in service head teachers are employed as inspectors. This study takes the English case of inspection to examine how headteachers interpret their work and agency as inspectors. Employing ideas on 'boundary crossing' it is informed by, and contributes to, the literatures about the policy and practice of the implementation of school inspection. In particular, the chapter reflects on how headteachers who inspect see their role, examining their work across the boundary of school leadership and inspection. In considering how headteacher inspectors manage these dual identities we also examine the challenges of an inspection workforce comprising headteachers and their particular role in a self-improving school system.

Keywords Schools · Ofsted · Inspectors · Headteachers · Practitioners · Education policy

Introduction

This chapter focuses on a recent significant policy change in England with regard to school inspection—the move to substantially change the inspection workforce to mostly comprise practitioner inspectors, almost entirely headteachers. This represents a point of both intersection and tension between two key policy drivers in school policy in England which have been part of an international tendency that has been characterised as neoliberalism in education (Ball 2000, 2009).

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The first policy driver has been, an emphasis on increased scrutiny and accountability used by government as levers to impact on school practice (Perryman 2009; West et al. 2011)—effectively a centralisation of control (Woods and Simkins 2014). The establishment of agencies charged with policing and inspection has become an important element of the regulation of public services (Boyne et al. 2002). The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the schools' inspectorate in England, is one of these.

The second policy driver is a process of marketisation or quasi-marketisation (Ball and Youdell 2008) in education which has involved dismantling the role of local democratic oversight and responsibility for education, diversification of provision and a discourse of greater school autonomy (Woods and Simkins 2014; Stevenson 2011). England stands out in its readiness to adopt choice and competition policies although there is some convergence between the education systems of England, Germany, France and Italy (Mattei 2012). A new discourse and policy of a 'self-improving school system' (Hargreaves 2010, 2011) has emerged with headteachers positioned as 'system leaders' (Higham et al. 2009); extending the influence of school leaders who are deemed to excel is framed as a primary driver of school improvement. Indeed part of the argument for headteachers to be inspectors, discussed below, is that this would lead both to more consistent and accurate judgements.

Originally inspections were carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors, members of the government inspection service, integrated into government. Ofsted was established in 1992 and is a non-ministerial government department with a remit to improve standards of achievement and the quality of education through regular independent inspection, public reporting and informed advice. The process of quasi-marketisation has influenced the relationship between government and Ofsted and how the inspection service is managed. The prevailing rhetoric is one of service delivery, emphasising the public as consumer. In the case of Ofsted, the 'goods' supplied to the public as consumer are the supply of information and grading of schools it produces.

Until recently, there have been few serving headteachers inspecting schools in England. However, since 2014 policy has changed with a further reorganisation of the inspection service and an increasing emphasis on inspection by serving headteachers. This policy needs to be seen in context both of increasing concerns about the quality of the inspection process and in particular the inconsistent practice of inspectors, and of a general policy movement towards the 'self-improving school led system' (Hargreaves 2010, 2011). Headteachers, then, are no longer simply the key 'subjects' of inspection, but are increasingly being encouraged to 'cross the boundary' and become inspectors themselves. This policy change raises a number of important questions including: how headteachers' undertake inspection and their interactions with teachers, other headteachers and other inspectors, and what are the implications of the new policy for the boundary between those inspected and inspectors.

This chapter begins to address these and related questions by reporting the views of a group of headteachers who also inspected prior to the current policy change.

Such people are referred to as 'serving practitioners', currently defined by Ofsted as those who have taught or had direct leadership and management of teaching in a school within the two years immediately prior to carrying out inspections. The reported research took place prior to current policy changes when headteachers were a relatively small proportion of the cadre of inspectors. Nevertheless, the study offers insights that are relevant to those headteachers who have begun to inspect more recently.

Moreover, whilst there is an extant literature on the experience of being inspected (for example, Fielding et al. 2005; Chapman 2005; Waldegrave and Simons 2014), research on the experience of inspectors is much more limited (see Lee et al. 2000; Woods and Jeffrey 1998 for accounts from the time that Ofsted was created). We do not normally hear the voices of inspectors, and even less those of the headteachers amongst them, whose role as inspectors is under-theorised.

The chapter is informed by both inductive and deductive analysis of semi-structured interviews with 12 headteachers who also inspect. The analysis is discussed using concepts drawn from social practice and socio-cultural theory: communities of practice and notions of boundary and boundary crossing. The empirical study was conducted by a practicing and experienced 'professional' inspector and so to an extent constitutes insider research, although none of the authors has experience as a headteacher. Both the affordances and limitations of this insider aspect are discussed below.

The chapter identifies several emergent issues: practitioner inspection as a boundary role involving boundary crossing and brokering; the role of the inspection handbook as a boundary object; and conflicts and challenges in boundary work. Before discussing these themes we offer a brief overview of inspection in England, including recent developments and further details of the methodology of the research.

Inspection in England

In this section we provide contextualising information on inspection in England most pertinent to the study reported in this chapter. We consider the practice and process of inspection, views on the experience of being inspected and recent policy developments.

Inspection Policy

All maintained schools and academies in England are subject to regular inspection. While the primary task of inspectors and the inspection system is to—using a phrase that originated prior to the establishment of Ofsted—report without fear or

favour—on what they evidence, a successful inspection system contributes more than simply delivering inspection judgements on a school by school basis. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's annual report to Parliament on the quality and standards of education in England is based on all the inspections conducted in the previous academic year. This 'state of the nation' report, along with occasional reports on specific phases or subject areas, aims to ensure that inspection drives improvement in policies as well as in individual schools.

Since 1988, all schools have had considerable autonomy over matters of organisation, staffing and finance albeit operating within a framework of oversight provided by local authorities. Since 2010, however, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition and Conservative governments have pursued a policy through which schools have been encouraged or—where they are deemed to be underperforming—required to become 'academies' which are directly responsible to the Secretary of State. Throughout this period, however, 'autonomy' has been strongly circumscribed by a performativity regime which judges schools both on their test and examination outcomes and, since 1992, their performance publicly judged through a national process of inspection (Power 1997; Hood et al. 1999; Simkins 2000; Macnab 2004).

In general terms, inspection enables governance at a distance (Clarke and Ozga 2011) where organisations (schools in this case) are deemed not to be trusted to regulate themselves effectively but must be monitored and held accountable by external agencies (Power 1997; Hood et al. 1999). As noted in the introduction, changes in England are a reflection of an international tendency identified by some as the effects of neo-liberalism in education, (see for example Apple 2006; Ball 2000, 2009; Ball and Youdell 2008), sometimes styled as 'new public management (Hall et al. 2013). Inspection serves as a means to maintain regulatory control and direction by the state within the content of new public management in which the state withdraws in favour of the market and private or semi-private organisations (Ozga 2009). The organisation of inspection had for more than two decades, from 1992 until 2015, been through contracts with non-governmental not-for-profit organisations and commercial educational businesses which employed the majority of inspectors on a part-time daily-paid basis.

Whether these approaches do lead to school improvement—including inspection—is at best contentious. Hood et al. (1999) and Boyne et al. (2002) referred to an evidence vacuum about the marginal effects of increasing or reducing investment in regulation by government. Some studies suggest that the impact of inspection on school performance may be neutral at best or even negative (Chapman 2002; de Wolf and Janssens 2007; Fitz-Gibbon and Tymms 2002; Shaw et al. 2003). While it may be argued that inspection visits have positive effects, few evidence-based conclusions can be drawn as regards the extent and consequences of them. So even though government policy has relied heavily on the idea of school improvement through inspection, there remain doubts as to the extent of the impact of this:

It (Ofsted) has played one of the key roles in national educational reform by increasing schools' accountability for their actions, and systematically monitoring their long-term decision-making and progress. However, the widely used corporate slogan of 'improvement through inspection' is less robust in response to criticism. (Chapman 2002: 257)

The Practice and Process of Inspection

English maintained schools and academies are inspected according to a set of criteria focused on their performance which are regulated by legislation. The inspection framework has been amended frequently, in part to address topical policy concerns. The outcome of inspection is summarised in the grading of schools. Current grades are 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate'. Inspection reports and grades are published; and grades influence the frequency of inspection. From September 2015 schools judged '*good*' receive short one-day inspections every three years, as opposed to a longer visit every three to five years as previously. In contrast, schools that '*require improvement*' (grade 3) are inspected every two years, while schools deemed '*inadequate*' (grade 4) are assessed within three to six months of the judgement. Schools judged '*outstanding*' are exempt from the usual inspection cycle with inspections prompted by changes in performance or other data (Roberts 2015).

School inspection—and in particular the grade awarded—has 'high stakes' implications for schools. Schools judged '*outstanding*' are positioned favourably within the new schooling landscape, for example having the opportunity to sponsor other schools that are performing less well, to engage in teacher training or to access resources to lead professional development initiatives. In contrast, if a school is judged as '*inadequate*' or not to have improved adequately following a grade of '*requires improvement*', the headteacher and governing body may be replaced.

Inspections are conducted by an inspection team led by a lead inspector who has the responsibility for the organisation of the inspection and is primarily accountable for its quality. The size of the team varies depending on the school size but also the school grade. Full inspections, for schools previously judged as '*requiring improvement*', do not normally last longer than two days, with the number of inspectors driven by the number of pupils on roll. Most average size primary schools will have two inspectors, a lead inspector and a team inspector, both on site for two days. Secondary schools may have larger teams.

The *School Inspection Handbook* (Ofsted, January 2016) is the key document, or artefact, used by all inspectors in carrying out their inspection activities. It underpins the process of inspection and is the rubric against which inspectors measure the evidence they gather. It is used on a regular basis by schools through training, as well as by inspectors on inspection.

Prior to inspection taking place, inspectors will undertake analysis of school data. Schools receive notice of their inspection at or after midday on the working day before the start of the inspection. Once on site, inspectors spend most of their time observing lessons and gathering other first-hand evidence to inform their

judgements, focusing on features of learning. Evidence will include discussions with pupils, staff, governors and parents, listening to pupils read and scrutinising their written work. Inspectors also examine the school's records and documentation including that relating to pupils' achievement and their safety. Following the inspection the lead inspector drafts, the report for full inspections or a letter for short inspections. This is quality assured by a reader and sent to the school for a factual accuracy check. Soon thereafter, once any changes are made, the report is sent to the school for distribution to parents and is published on Ofsted's website.

Being Inspected

Historically there has been a distinction between headteachers and inspectors, and this has influenced professional dialogue and relationships. Indeed, it has been argued that there has been a culture of, 'adversarial relationships' (Winch 2001) between the inspectors and the inspected which has created a climate and legacy of mistrust (Macnab 2004). In this view, inspection is seen as time-consuming, expensive, bureaucratised and pressurised (Fielding et al. 2005; Chapman 2005; Clarke and Ozga 2011). Indeed, Inglis (2000) referred to inspection as 'a brutalising regime'. Satisfaction with inspection is unsurprisingly positively influenced by the inspectorate's judgement of a school (Sammons and Matthews 2004).

The primary focus of inspections is on teaching and learning with overall judgements leading to a classification of schools (described above). However, an important element of the basis for this classification derives from a judgement made on the quality of leadership and management of the school, which in the current policy and media discourse in England is associated primarily with the performance of the headteacher. Headteachers invariably carry the responsibility for school failure and so inspection is high stakes (Lerman 2006) and there is no hiding place for headteachers given the public nature of an inspection event together with the published report which stays on the public record (Hayes 2001; Inglis 2000).

A positive grading confers symbolic capital. However, this relationship is precarious as lower grading in future inspections can lead to a loss of prestige, effectively demoting both the school and headteacher (Coldron et al. 2014). Consequently, school failure can be felt as a very personal responsibility (Crawford 2007; Hargreaves 2004). So, the relationship between headteachers and being inspected is one that is marked by anxiety and at best ambivalence, and often some antipathy, for at least some aspects of the inspection regime. The ways in which most headteachers engage with inspection is to forge their day-to-day action and the contemplation of new initiatives in their school with reference to the likely Ofsted reaction (Bottery 2002).

Perryman, studied one school in depth and, argued that teachers fabricated the situation in order to meet Ofsted requirements, but this fabrication led to inspection of the performance:

> Inspectors do not see the real school because of the level of stage-management, game-playing, performance and cynicism engendered by the panoptic regime. (2009: 619)

Clapham (2015) argued that recent moves to shorter notice of inspections has led to '*post-fabrication*', that is, schools are maintained in a continual states of '*inspection readiness*' such that it is not a fabricated version of events but has become the omnipresent reality. In practice, instruments for school self-evaluation and quality assurance often become copies of the instruments of inspectorates and school inspection visits often lead to changes in behaviour among a large majority of school headteachers (Ouston et al. 1997). Arguably therefore, inspection practices and expectations pervade and shape English schooling leadership discourse and practice.

Nevertheless, whatever the ambivalence headteachers may have about the practice of inspection, headteachers in general view that inspection is an acceptable price for relative autonomy (Thomson 2010).

Policy, Practitioners and Inspection

As stated above, since the introduction of the Ofsted inspection regime in 1992 there has been, until very recently, a tendency for a professionalization of the inspection service with most inspectors not being serving headteachers, and especially not other current school practitioners (in other words, those working in schools as teachers, middle or senior managers). However, arguments have been made during this period that there should be a loosening of the distinction between inspectors and teachers (Woodward and Chrisafis 2000; Winch 2001).

If the mechanism of school accountability has such far reaching consequences as inspection does in England, then it is important that schools and the public have confidence in the people that inspect. This point was commented upon by the Audit Commission when it noted that skilled and credible inspectors are the single most important feature of a successful inspection service (Audit Commission 2000). The initial impetus for increasing the number of serving practitioners arose largely out of the findings of the Education Select Committee (House of Commons 2011) which stated that too few inspectors have recent and relevant experience of the settings they inspect. This was linked to concerns about potential inconsistency in judgements. The committee took the view that this had contributed to a loss of faith in the inspection system and proposed an increase in the percentage of inspectors who are senior serving practitioners from the front-line. The argument was that this would increase the credibility and quality of inspection teams since inspectors have to be trusted and recognised as expert if they are to command the respect of the profession they seek to regulate. The intention was to put in place an organisation that was 'closer to the ground' (Baxter 2014; Baxter and Clarke 2013; Baxter and Hult, Chap. 3 this volume).

Although arguments for change were made with reference specifically to inspections and outcomes, they occurred at the same time and were supported by an increased emphasis on school leadership of system improvement, styled as a move to a self-improving system (Hargreaves 2010, 2011). As part of this move, successful headteachers have been designated as 'system leaders' (Higham et al. 2009) and enabled to support other headteachers and schools. In the English context, critical voices have argued that this too is a way of maintaining 'arm's length' central control (Hatcher 2008), although system leadership has also been identified as an international tendency for schools to collaborate and engage in mutual support (Pont and Hopkins 2008).

A new Chief Inspector was appointed in January 2012 from the headteacher ranks, signalling a policy shift towards emphasising school leadership of improvement and accountability. He set out his intention to include in the Ofsted workforce a much larger number of seconded practitioners serving in outstanding schools and to work with the National College for Teaching and Leadership[1] to promote a new Fellowship Programme to recognise those headteachers working with Ofsted to improve schools. Indeed, shortly after his appointment the Chief Inspector argued that headteachers cannot complain about variations in judgements unless they are prepared to bring their expertise to the process and he proposed increasing the number of headteachers involved in inspection. The strategy of Ofsted is to build bridges with schools and demystify the inspection process while addressing complaints of inconsistent grading.

These changes were aligned with bringing all inspection back 'in-house', with Ofsted directly managing the selection, training and quality assurance of the inspection workforce, including the Ofsted inspectors who are not direct employees, such as the headteachers. These changes also aligned with a revised approach to inspection that had the expressed aim of moving away from what was perceived as tick box culture (Baxter and Clarke 2013).

Now serving headteachers comprise around ninety per cent of the contracted inspector workforce. Currently, these headteachers normally need to be leading a successful school and have led their school to an overall inspection outcome of 'good' or 'outstanding'. If not, their suitability to inspect is assessed on a case by case basis. For example, they may have taken over the headship of a school and are demonstrably improving it. They are expected to inspect for a minimum of 16 days per year. Whilst the current study was undertaken when the headteachers who inspect were a growing but still relatively small minority within the inspection workforce, their accounts potentially provide insights into the potential outcomes and issues that may arise from recent changes.

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[1]The National College for Teaching and Leadership is an executive agency of the Department for Education with responsibility for the school workforce including teachers and teacher training.

Henry J. Moreton was a doctoral student at the time of the research.

Methodology

The Study and Data Collection

The chapter is informed by an analysis of semi-structured interviews with 12 headteachers who inspect, each interview lasting approximately an hour. The sample of 12 is not necessarily representative of all such headteachers but working with a relatively small sample made it possible to focus on single cases so that the relationship of a specific behaviour (inspecting) to its context (inspection) might be investigated, as well as the relationship between the individual (practitioner) and the situation (inspection) (Kvale 1996). The headteachers interviewed were selected from the forty or so who were then inspecting for one of the three inspection service providers, contracted by Ofsted until August 2015. They represented headteachers new or relatively new to inspection work as well as those with more experience and from different school settings in terms of their size and denomination. Eight of the 12 interviewees were female, four were male. Ten were primary headteachers, while two were headteachers of secondary schools.

The headteachers worked for up to twenty days a year on inspection, with one exception who worked slightly more. In practice, most inspected for between eight and 12 days a year, which is typical of practitioner inspectors. At the time of their interview their inspection experience as measured in total inspection days ranged from ten to 70. The smallest number of inspections undertaken by any of the headteachers was five. Seven of the interviewees held posts in schools that were judged as '*good*' for overall effectiveness at their last inspection, four were from '*outstanding*' schools and one was from a school '*requiring improvement*'. Two of the interviewees were designated as lead inspectors but had chosen at the time of the interviews not undertake the lead inspector role.

The interviews were conducted by a researcher who was a practicing school inspector as well as being a manager of inspectors. An insider researcher has many advantages—for instance, the knowledge of inspections as an active member of the community of inspectors. However, it also has challenges (Drake 2010) including concerning g ethical issues around power. However, care was taken to ensure that the researcher had no management responsibility for those invited to participate in the research. Institutional ethical approval was gained and informed consent obtained from participants.

The interview questions were purposefully open-ended (Warren and Karner 2005). Most interviews took place in the headteacher's school while some asked to be interviewed at their home. The interviews took place over a six month period. The interviews, with the interviewees' permission, were recorded using a digital recorder. This ensured a verbatim and fully accurate record, facilitating rigorous analysis. It also reduced the potential for interviewer error, recording data incorrectly or logging an answer to a question that was not asked. Transcription of the interview recordings took place within a few days following the interview, and

before the next. The transcriptions were checked against the written transcript. All interviewees were ascribed pseudonyms and these are used in this chapter.

Analysis

The prime interest of the research was in the informational content of the interviews and the meanings attached to the content; the focus was on what was said, rather than how it was said. Verbatim transcripts were used in order to understand the circumstances of the participants in their own words, interpret their meanings and form conclusions that were well-rooted in the data. The aim of the data analysis was to obtain an understanding of the issues arising during the interviews, focussing on the headteachers' views, opinions, perceptions and experiences of inspecting alongside their headship. Coding categories were generated after the interviews had concluded. Initially codes were, where possible, formulated in the same words used by the headteachers and in line with '*in vivo*' coding (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Other codes were constructed through an interpretation of content and meaning (Renard and Bernard 2003).

These codes were developed and refined over time and then the meaningful patterns arising from coding were analysed to form the research categories. It was then possible to determine the common themes that recurred across the different interviews. These themes were the patterns that emerged across the data sets that were considered important to describe the phenomena relating to the original research questions. Like the codes and categories, the themes were refined over time in the move beyond description towards conceptualising from the sample.

Throughout the analysis and interpretation of the data an understanding of the ways in which the perspectives of headteachers who inspect compare to the versions given by others was sought, taking an inductive and contextualised account of the discourse.

Following the initial inductive analysis, further interpretation was undertaken using constructs drawn from social practice and socio-cultural theory: identity as participation (Wenger 1998); boundary crossing, brokering and boundary objects (Wenger 1998; Akkerman and Bakker 2011).

How Headteachers Who Inspect See Their Role

Headteachers who inspect can be viewed as boundary crossers. In this section we draw on the interviews to explore this idea, discussing boundary crossing in terms of brokering, boundary objects, the management of dual identities and the conflicts arising from headteachers working in inspection teams.

Brokering

The headteachers sampled saw crossing the boundary between headship and inspection to be of value (Akkerman and Bakker 2011; Pont and Hopkins 2008; Thomson 2008), reflecting their commitment to inspection as a tool for school improvement, in their own schools and others. They stressed the contribution inspecting makes to their leadership and to the improvement of the school they lead, but also described how they can potentially act as brokers within the school improvement process more widely.

The act of brokering was exemplified when some of the headteachers in the sample cited how they explain the rationale for inspectors' judgements to the school's staff, or, more fundamentally, how they often 'manage' the expectations of the inspected headteachers who often, not unsurprisingly, think a higher inspection grade is merited. They do this at their own initiative and were not tasked to do so. Thus, one of the features of headteachers' engagement in inspection practice is the relationship with the headteachers they inspect, with several of those sampled perceiving the relationship to be markedly different from that between the head-teachers and other inspectors. Examples were given where the inspected head-teachers more readily confided or engaged in conversation with them, rather than other inspectors. As Deborah and Maurice commented,

> There's a lot of looks that go between you…sometimes they confide things in you on inspection because there's that camaraderie…you know what it's like. (Deborah)

> They do confide in me…off the record, head to head, "How do you think I'm doing"? (Maurice)

Rose suggested that other non-headteacher inspectors may be easily duped and commented on the way she brings the experience of headship to inspection,

> There's credibility that you know what they're going through on a day to day basis because you're doing it as well…I wouldn't say, "This is what I've done". What I would say is, "This was hard to implement, how did you go about it"?

The headteachers sampled drew out their unique relationships with teachers in the schools they inspect, especially their headteachers. For instance, Maurice commented,

> There's more,' "How is it going? How am I doing"? They do confide in me, off the record, head to head…that's where I come in and say,"It's all right, you're doing alright, don't worry".

Several interviewees referred to an '*empathy*' with the teachers they inspect and believe that teachers are more relaxed with them than they are with other inspectors. For example, Olive ensures that teachers know that she is a practitioner:

> I always say, "I was in my own school yesterday, I'll be back in my own school again on Friday".

Brenda underlined the importance of understanding the context of current working in schools: '*When heads say to me that they have excluded pupils, I understand completely*'. The implication is that as serving practitioners the headteachers have a clear knowledge and understanding of the significance of such issues in schools, the inference being that it is clearer to them than to others. This influences the view Rose has about how her identity as a headteacher influences her work as inspector:

> The way I inspect comes from the fact that I'm a serving practitioner. As a serving head it makes me go and look in the cracks. I would never walk in a school and presume because it was "nice" they've got it covered.

Nevertheless, the headteachers gave no indication that there is any collusion between themselves and the inspected headteachers, although they do sometimes act in a mediating role during inspections. For example, Olive commented that one discussion with a headteacher, '*moved into a counselling thing*', while Christine gave an example where she suggested she made a real connection with a teacher whose lesson she had observed where pupils' learning was judged to be inadequate. She said,

> I pulled very strongly on my experience as a head. I think there was some sort of acceptance that I was speaking to her as a head rather than an inspector.

So, by drawing on their day to day knowledge the headteachers illustrate how they help to facilitate a connection between people who are on either side of the boundary, in this case teachers or headteachers and inspectors, and they serve to build bridges and connect both sides (Fisher and Atkinson-Grosjean 2002). In doing so, the headteachers exemplify how they help to manage the divergent discourses (Walker and Nocon 2007) across the boundary between the inspected and the inspectors. The headteachers also explain how they contextualise issues for other inspectors on the inspection team and in doing so help to clarify the context of a school's performance.

The headteachers interviewed claim that they add to the inspection event both through their empathy with schools, in support of other inspectors, and the robustness of their judgements. As boundary brokers they are potentially in a position to help transfer best practice and to synthesise practice by being able to identify potentially valuable new beliefs and behaviours. Some of the headteachers interviewed encourage other headteachers to join the inspector ranks and several also mention that they would welcome being inspected by another practitioner.

Boundary Objects

Boundary crossing is assisted by 'boundary objects' of which the *School Inspection Handbook* is a prime example. This artefact represents the interface between the domains of headship (schools) and Ofsted, and serves both as an anchor for

meaning within each domain and as a bridge between them (Nitzgen 2004). Its use is pivotal in generating knowledge across the boundary. It is likely that every headteacher has a copy of the *Handbook* to hand, so, as a boundary object, it provides a common frame of reference for communication. It is also potentially an important means of changing practice in schools, since it is now used by most, possibly all, headteachers to support the evaluation of their school's performance.

The interviewees generally welcomed publicly accessible inspection artefacts such as the *Handbook*, noting that, in addition to governing the inspection process, they help lend objectivity to it. They fall back on the *Handbook* and cite how as boundary brokers they use it to rationalise judgements to the headteachers of inspected schools, most notably when explaining why a higher grade is not given. As Helen commented,

> I don't find a conflict when I'm inspecting but I do understand and empathize with a school that is trying to pitch for a judgement they just can't get. I am able to tell them why they can't get it and why we need to apply the evaluation schedule.

This is something that is typically tackled by the lead inspector, rather than team inspectors such as Helen, but it does reveal something of the different relationship practitioners suggest they have with the headteachers they inspect.

Managing Dual Identities

Headteachers who inspect are held accountable in two worlds, as headteachers in their school and as inspectors within teams, leading to identities that are multiple and complex (Beijaard et al. 2004). In meeting these dual identities headteachers who inspect cross a boundary and the process of boundary crossing has implications for maintaining and accommodating dual identities. The headteachers have moved through the teaching ranks, implying that by the time they become inspectors they may reasonably be regarded as 'experts' in their field. Their expert status underpins their professional identity and as headteachers they are powerful professionals who enjoy relative autonomy over their working practices. They are the professional leaders in their school and currently virtually all headteachers who inspect lead good or outstanding schools.

However, the headteachers sampled do not consider themselves as 'expert' inspectors. This is because their knowledge develops through practice (Sole and Edmondson 2002; Wenger 1998) and is limited compared to non-serving practitioners who may be inspecting on a more regular basis, perhaps even weekly: it is notable that only two of the practitioners had taken a role as lead inspector and none was doing so at the time of the interviews.

As inspectors the headteachers are called upon to judge the performance of schools led by their peers and this is not without pitfalls. The study revealed the extent to which inspection can be a highly emotional activity for inspectors. All the headteachers found inspecting to be a challenging and, often, an anxiety-inducing

process. For example, Maurice, the headteacher of an '*outstanding*' school, said that inspecting is for him,

> an extremely nerve-wracking process and even now I get butterflies going in. I remember sitting outside a school, the first one, about an hour and a half early.

Indeed, there are indications that for the headteachers inspection was more emotionally charged than for 'professional' inspectors. Maurice expressed the view that inspectors, who have been out of school, '*get cold to it*' and do not realise how '*scary*' a process it is.

Half of the headteachers also cited instances of frostiness exhibited towards them by some of the headteachers they inspect. For instance, Brenda felt a sense of hostility from other headteachers with no sense of community: '*Not all headteachers see us as real inspectors. Some worry that we know too much*'. Similarly, Frank said about some of his headteacher peers,

> It is sometimes like drawing teeth. We are in the game and sometimes even the best headteachers are not on the same wavelength…I've tried to use the headship side of things in a positive way. However hard the message the crucial part is that they feel the inspection is being done with them, their context is understood, and that you are dealing right with people.

Several headteachers expressed elements of dissonance with the inspection discourse as they see it practised from within, and several reflected on some of the negative aspects of inspection with some strongly critical views about how some inspectors go about their work. This mirrors their general dissatisfaction with the inspections of their own schools, in spite of inspection outcomes which were mostly positive.

Several comments suggest that the headteachers' involvement in inspection necessitates their suppressing some of the core elements of their professional identity (Baxter and Clarke 2013). Some are frustrated by the inspection rubric as set out in the *School Inspection Handbook*, while several voice concerns that schools which are characterised by low standards and are situated in areas with challenging economic circumstances are disadvantaged by the Ofsted inspection rubric because the *Handbook* does not take into account contextual value added factors. As Robert and Frank commented,

> I've felt the judgements are harsh on one or two occasions. I've thought, "What would I do with these kids? Could I do any better, probably not?" (Robert)

> The main conflict is, what is a realistic expectation for a school to achieve because it is far easier for schools in the leafy suburbs to get outstanding? (Frank)

These comments illustrate the headteachers' non-alignment with some aspects of inspection practice reflecting that professionals may face issues between different perspectives and practices, and that boundaries may be questioned.

One of the other hurdles to be faced by headteachers who also inspect is that their credibility is at risk if their own school's performance is not judged to be '*good*' or '*outstanding*'. Credibility is what distinguishes and differentiates them

from other inspectors. Deborah, for example, cited the additional pressure she felt to be accurate in the assessments of her own school's performance, '*As an inspector I can't face having somebody coming and shoot down my judgements*'. This struck at the core of Deborah's credibility as a headteacher because she acknowledges that her judgements about her own school and its performance need to be accurate and validated as such by inspectors.

Diana made a related point, '*I am more vulnerable because we're just a satisfactory school*'. The use of, '*satisfactory*' (a grade 3, now termed '*requires improvement*') is significant in reflecting Diana's anxiety because, as noted earlier, headteachers who inspect are normally expected to lead a '*good*' or '*outstanding*' school. Otherwise their circumstances are looked into and exceptions may be made on a case by case basis. Staff of the inspected schools may research the inspectors' own schools, which they might look at alongside the inspectors' curricula vitae which they receive the afternoon before the inspectors' visit. Intuitively, one supposes the teachers of the inspected schools would not be impressed if inspectors' leadership was judged as '*requiring improvement*' or '*inadequate*'. Serving practitioners will be only too aware of this.

Adopting a dual identity, as inspector as well as headteacher, enables the headteachers to face the challenge of negotiating and combining ingredients from different contexts. One means to negotiate tensions in identity that arise from participation in multiple communities of practice is through the development of a new and distinct identity. Intuitively one might suppose there would be a sense of sameness (Brubaker and Cooper 2000) among inspectors who are headteachers because they are a defined sub-group within the inspector workforce. The fact that headteachers are part of such a sub-group might be expected to manifest itself in solidarity, shared dispositions or collective action. However, those sampled suggest that where such notions exist it is only in a general sense, typically when the headteachers draw out the advantages they bring to the practice of inspection in comparison to non-practitioners. The headteachers sampled did not emphasise being part of such a sub-group with clear and distinct links or ties. Thus, the participants in this study are best characterised as 'headteachers who inspect' rather than 'headteacher inspectors'.

Managing Conflicting Judgements: Working in a Team

Several of the headteachers sampled are critical about aspects of the conduct of inspections, lending weight to the view that Ofsted inspection is sometimes characterised by dislocation (Clarke and Ozga 2011) while also mirroring the critical views of inspection practice as reflected by many commentators as described earlier. Arguably, and perhaps more significantly, most are concerned about the inconsistent practice they experience while inspecting, especially on the part of some lead inspectors in the way they interpret the inspection rubric. Furthermore, a third of the headteachers sampled commented that some lead inspectors are

dismissive of the evidence presented to them, reflecting their frustrations that their views are not always given credence, and too often dismissed.

Further some of the headteachers said that some lead inspectors fail to follow through on the critical evidence presented to them or use the evidence provided to them selectively, and to the school's advantage. Several examples were given where their otherwise critical and contrary evidence was dismissed by some lead inspectors. For example, an inadequate judgement of teaching had been made by Maurice and the teacher was revisited by the lead inspector who saw improvement. This was a source of some irritation to Maurice who is cynical about what he suggests was the contrived (and better) inspection outcome for the school. Maurice makes the point succinctly,

> An outstanding school and they were going for outstanding again. I saw two requiring improvement lessons and I was pretty much told to lose the evidence. I felt undermined.

Rose also found herself being under pressure to make an overly positive judgement,

> I was very naïve at the time. I was new to it. I thought, "Perhaps he's trying to mentor, coach me and make sure". It wasn't until I'd done another couple that I started to reflect and really took exception to it, and now I'd just say "No".

When the headteachers' judgements do not seem to fit in with what the lead inspector wants their sense of moral purpose is challenged, suggesting there is neither solidarity nor shared dispositions on all inspection teams. This raises the issue about the corporate nature of some inspection judgements. The unease the headteachers experience at first hand highlights conflict and their non-alignment with their identity as inspector. It also lends weight to the view that crossing this boundary calls for personal fortitude since the headteachers' judgements are not always held in as high regard as they had expected, including by some lead inspectors.

Nonetheless, the headteachers appear to be sanguine even when disgruntled. This is because of their novice position as inspectors and the fear of rocking the boat and receiving an evaluation from the lead inspector which they perceive may have negative consequences. Also, despite the concerns expressed above, the headteachers are generally impressed with the inspection skills displayed by most other inspectors with whom they work and aware of their own limitations. Although she has inspected for some time, Helen comments,

> I still feel wet behind the ears in terms of my ability to inspect even though I've done seventy odd schools.

Furthermore, the headteachers sampled mostly enjoy good working relations with other inspectors and welcome the interactions, suggesting that headteachers' participation in events is often motivated by the possibility of meeting and exchanging ideas with their peers. Indeed, the headteachers value being members of an inspection team because headship is quite an isolated position at times and several comment that working as a team inspector contrasts to headship where they are very much the leader of the team.

Prospects for the New Inspection Policy

Earlier in the chapter we discussed the recent policy change to move towards a situation where the majority of inspection is carried out by practitioner inspectors. We now consider the prospects for this policy drawing on perspectives of headteachers who inspect and the analysis of their boundary crossing role. We consider firstly the challenges of policy implementation in terms of the recruitment and deployment of a largely new inspection workforce of practitioners, including the issue of the take up of the leadership role. Secondly, we consider whether the policy will be successful in fulfilling the two aims of the policy pointed to earlier, namely improving the view of and receptivity to inspection by the educational workforce and the accuracy and consistency of judgement. We then consider the long term prospects for the policy and the possibility of the emergence of a new community of practice of practitioner inspectors and the relationship between inspection and the self-improving school system agenda.

The Challenge of Implementation of the New Policy

It is an obvious, but important, point that the new policy of inspection largely by practitioners can only succeed if headteachers are willing to be inspectors. A previous study of primary headteachers, where Robinson (2012) found a considerable animosity to engagement in inspection, noting that '*the judgemental role of Ofsted without consequential school improvement was abhorrent for head-teachers*' (2012: 69). The headteachers we report on here took a more balanced view and by choosing to inspect might be seen to be embracing the culture of compliancy (Ball 2000) thereby taking an active as opposed to a subversive role in the change agenda. Our evidence supports this insofar that all our heads are committed to and see the value of inspection. However, this does not mean that they are uncritical of the inspection process as they experience it, or that they are subject to no anxiety, ambiguity or conflict as they undertake their work.

The ambition of Ofsted to move towards having the majority of inspection undertaken by serving heads from well performing schools is challenging. There are many reasons why heads may not choose to follow the route undertaken by our sample. Some of these will be matters of principle—fundamental objections to aspects of the inspection regime. Others are more pragmatic. The reasons Waldegrave and Simons (2014) set out for headteachers being unwilling to become inspectors included the up-front costs to their schools and the time involved, while some did not want to be part of the Ofsted brand.

More fundamentally, as some of our heads commented, there are risks associated with failing the Ofsted training or if their own school receives a 'requiring improvement' or even worse an 'inadequate' grade at its inspection. Either has the potential to damage their credibility both as headteacher and inspector. Several of

the headteachers in the sample do not publicise the fact that they inspect and keep a low profile in their localities. The impact of headteachers who inspect is also dependent on their schools accepting that the inspection regime uses them in this way. Governing bodies have to be persuaded that the added value for the school is significant enough to agree release, an important consideration for policy makers.

More fundamentally for the long term perhaps is the question of whether headteachers can be persuaded to lead inspections. While our headteachers have a mostly positive view about their inspection work, and two had led inspections previously, tellingly eight of the headteachers express no desire to move on from their role as team inspectors to leading inspections. Financial gain, status and/or 'power' all seem insufficient motivation to overcome what they perceive as the challenges of leading inspections. Those in the sample who once led inspections say they have no intention of doing so again, and certainly not while still a serving headteacher. Factors deterring the headteachers from leading include time management, keeping up to date with the changes to the *School Inspection Handbook* and inspection protocols, writing the inspection report and addressing complaints.

This reluctance to lead inspections has implications for the management of inspections, especially when the composition of the contracted inspector workforce is predominantly comprised of headteachers. Ofsted would have to make adjustments to workloads as well as finances to encourage more practitioners to lead teams.

The Potential for Changing Schools' Relationship to Inspection

The release of headteachers from schools can be difficult. Achieving the right balance in the inspector pool as well as inspector deployment will also require careful management by Ofsted. As well as undertaking fewer inspections than other inspectors, historically headteachers also tend to withdraw more often from inspections at short notice because of unplanned events in their school. These issues may affect the number of inspectors required, the cost of maintaining serving practitioners as 'fit and proper' against their activity levels and the management of their performance. In short, the use of more practitioners may lead to higher maintenance costs and in a larger workforce than would otherwise be needed, thereby increasing the potential for inconsistency, the very issue raised by commentators and headteachers as being one of the perceived problems with current inspection practice. Further, an advantage of the previous arrangement of having a core of 'professional inspectors' was that comparative judgements were made on the basis of experience of inspecting a wide variety of types of schools. There is a risk that the recruitment of 'well-positioned' headteachers (Coldron et al. 2014) from a relatively narrow range of school types may lead to judgement of other schools in relation to inspectors' judgements and beliefs about their own schools. In

this way, the role of the key boundary object, the *Inspection Handbook* would be undermined. The outcome may less consistency rather than more.

Notwithstanding these potential problems, the headteachers in the study reported here believe that they made a specific contribution to the inspection process both through the respect that they are given by other headteachers and the practitioner knowledge they bring to inspections. It is likely that as headteachers form the majority of the cohort of inspectors, relationships between themselves and the headteachers of the inspected schools will change both at the individual as well as the macro level, and presumably, for the better. However, this rapprochement will be undermined if, as is likely if these 12 headteachers are typical, headteachers continue to be reluctant to lead inspections.

The New Inspection Workforce and the Self-improving System Agenda

Headteachers who inspect are learning to adopt and develop perspectives through their inspection practice, and are '*thinking paradoxically*' (Close and Raynor 2010: 217) because they are effectively standing outside the experience of their headship and looking at school improvement from the contrasting standpoint as an inspector. This an important point when considering their potential as system leaders. As Woods and Simkins observe, as new patterns of school structure emerge, '*choices have to be made about the kind of identity and agency that players in the system want to aspire to*' (2014: 336).

The recurring theme among the headteachers in this study is the demonstration of their disposition to enter the work of inspection. Their sense of commitment to the duality of their professional lives, as headteacher and inspector, resonates with the concept of a systemic leadership orientation (Higham et al. 2009; Robinson 2012; Boylan 2010). Significantly, any disenchantment the headteachers in the sample have about inspecting and/or inspection does not appear to impact markedly on their views about the value of an inspection process overall, or their place within it.

Conclusion

Changes to the 2012 English Ofsted Inspection Framework have not only affected the criteria under which schools are inspected but have also resulted in a re-modelling of the inspection workforce and the recruitment of far more in service head teachers as part-time inspectors. In this Chapter we have outlined the policy background to recent changes in inspection policy in England including previous research on the policy and practice of inspection and the experience of being inspected. We have used the concept of boundary crossing as a means to understand

the experience of inspection of headteachers who were inspecting prior to the recent policy change. The study reported gives insight into the potential challenges for those headteachers who are currently taking up the inspection role.

The focus on headteachers as system leaders including as inspectors is not unproblematic from the perspective of proponents of neo-liberalism. Ironically, at the time of writing, the current HMCI, who was recruited directly from a post as a headteacher and has announced his intention to retire at the end of 2016, is proving to be a source of challenge to government plans as a result of his public utterances on a number of politically contentious matters, for example pointing out the shortcomings of multi academy trusts (private but publically funded chains of schools).

Finally, we have argued that the participants in our study are best described as 'headteachers who inspect'. It remains to be seen that the current changes in the inspection workforce will lead to the development of a more distinct professional identity of 'a headteacher inspector', or what the potential consequences are for the blurring of the boundary at scale between those who inspect and those who are inspected.

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Chapter 8
Knowing Inspectors' Knowledge: Forms and Transformations

Joakim Lindgren and Linda Rönnberg

Abstract This chapter focuses on the governing work of Swedish school inspectors with regards to the role and function of knowledge. As professionals, inspectors are situated as relays and brokers of policy standing in contact with both the political arena and practice arenas. School inspectors use and produce knowledge and they rely on, search for, accumulate and communicate different forms of knowledge. In this chapter, we seek to understand knowledge in the inspection context as existing in three phases, namely as embodied, inscribed and enacted (Freeman and Sturdy in Knowledge in policy—embodied, inscribed, enacted, Policy Press, Bristol, pp. 1–17, 2014). The aim is to identify and discuss different phases of knowledge in inspectors' work by asking how the different forms of embodied, inscribed and enacted knowledge are manifested, incorporated and transformed in the course of inspection. The chapter illustrates how different forms of knowledge are intertwined with issues of legitimacy, accountability and control, which is argued to be important for how inspection and the work of inspectors' are perceived and judged in different contexts and settings.

Keywords School inspector · Forms of knowledge · Regular supervision · Sweden

Introduction

> We learn only according to our own understandings and interpretations (…) we must necessarily invent or imagine what we learn, and we import and reconstruct problems as well as policies and their consequences. Problems, policies and solutions remain uncertain, opportunities for interpretation, negotiation and coordination, both separately and together (Freeman 2008, p. 2).

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This chapter focuses on a particular aspect of the governing work of Swedish school inspectors by emphasizing the role and function of knowledge. As professionals, inspectors are situated as relays and brokers of policy standing in contact with both the political arena and practice arenas (Grek and Lindgren 2015). In Sweden, just as in many other countries, they embody a solution to a fundamental problem of governing: "the difficulties of managing fragmented or dispersed forms of public service provision that have emerged from the break-up of integrated bureaucratic systems" (Clarke 2005, p. 212). In doing so they use and produce knowledge: they rely on, search for, accumulate and communicate different forms of knowledge in order to make policy happen. In this way they shape and (re)create policy and thereby, we argue, they are indeed policy makers in their own right.

Inspired by the work of Freeman and Sturdy (2014) we seek to understand knowledge of and within inspection based on the assumption that it exists in three phases, namely as embodied—for example tactic and verbal—through experience; inscribed in different forms of texts and artefacts, and enacted via actions and what is actually done or carried out. Drawing upon their work, we focus particularly on the transformation and movement of knowledge not only between different phases, but also between different arenas and groups of people. The aim of the chapter is to identify and describe the different forms and moves of knowledge in inspectors work, by asking how different forms of embodied, inscribed and enacted knowledge are manifested, incorporated and transformed in the course of inspection.

Next, we will say a few brief words about the projects and collection of data on which this chapter is based, before we provide a brief introduction of the three forms of knowledge. We then take a closer look at Swedish school inspection. We point to some important historical traits, but we primarily discuss more recent aspects of transformations related to the forms and role of knowledge. We proceed by discussing some more general aspects of the governing work of school inspection, in order to facilitate the discussion of forms of knowledge and complexities of inspectors' work. We then empirically highlight different forms of knowledge in school inspection via the use, production, transformation and movement of inspectors' knowledge. Finally we conclude with a brief summary of the chapter.

Notes on Data and Methods

This chapter draws on a rich body of data from three research projects, all focusing on different aspects of school inspection and governing.[1] This material includes

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[1]The projects are: 'Governing by Inspection. School Inspection and Education Governance in Sweden, England and Scotland' (Swedish Research Council, no 2009-5770), 'Swedish national school inspections: Introducing centralised instruments for governing in a decentralised context' (Swedish Research Council, no 2007-3579) and 'Inspecting the 'Market' (Umeå University, no 223-14-09).

participation at regular supervisions,[2] including observations of on-site school visits, documented in field notes, as well as interviews with inspectors, head teachers, teachers, local politicians and officials. The interviews took place shortly after the on-site inspection visit and follow-up interviews were carried out, about six months after inspection. This large body of material includes more than 70 transcribed interviews in total. We were also invited to observe 'quality assurance meetings' taking place at the inspectorate—for example between inspectors and legal staff—on how to formulate/write the inspection report. In addition, different texts were also collected, including the documents sent in by the school, municipality and free school principal organiser before inspection, as well as inspection reports. These are now termed to be 'decisions' rather than the less bureaucratic sounding term 'report'. We also drew on schools' and municipalities' responses to reported corrections.

The data collection followed the ethical recommendations by the Swedish Research Council, including, for instance, participant's informed consent, confidentiality and right to withdraw from the study (c.f. Vetenskapsrådet 2011). The main bulks of data were collected during 2011 and 2012 and the focus was on inspection as both a micro drama and grand drama, including preparations, actions, reactions and relations connected to specific inspections, as well as understandings of, for instance, the problem/s inspection is intended to resolve, etc. The data were analysed by applying qualitative content analysis, a process which involves reading, thematically organising and re-reading (Bergström and Boréus 2005). As the quantum of data is quite large, the first step of the analysis began by screening the main content and selected important passages of text—field notes from observations, transcribed interviews, and documents written by either SSI, schools or responsible authorities, that are particularly illuminating—that in later stages of the process of data analysis were subjected to greater scrutiny.

Observations are particularly appropriate for the study of instantaneous and tacit forms of knowledge that actors perform in actions, but sometimes are unable to verbalise (Polanyi 1966). Observations of inspectors' work as they enter schools and classrooms, conduct interviews and deliberate upon what they have seen and how to understand and produce judgements have made it possible to study knowledge use and production as a social practice. To a certain extent we are inspired by anthropological studies of knowledge production in science (e.g. Latour and Woolgar 1979).

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[2]The Swedish Schools Inspectorates conducts regular supervision of all municipal and independent schools, from pre-school to adult education. Thus, regular inspection is the inspection activity that cyclical involve all Swedish schools.

Three Forms of Knowledge

Freeman and Sturdy's (2014) phenomenology of knowledge in policy encompasses three forms or phases that such knowledge may take. Beginning with embodied knowledge, it refers to "the knowledge held by human actors and employed and expressed by them as they go about their activities in the world" (Freeman and Sturdy 2014, p. 8). It is a practical and often tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1966) embedded in experience. For an inspector, it may refer to a range of knowledges used in the actual work; how to organise and systematize a rich material before an inspection event so that important aspects become visible; how to create productive meetings with head teachers, teachers and pupils in order to retrieve relevant information and/or support, and how to make judgements based on based on a rich repertoire of experience and ingrained knowledge.

Inspectors' judgements can also be linked to some form of criteria. Such criteria are expressions of inscribed knowledge. This is knowledge that has been transformed into text, instruments, rules, goals, tools, pictures and other artefacts. This form of knowledge exists in regulations such as the current school Act and curricula, but also in criteria, manuals and guidelines that serve to model and inform inspectors work, their interactions, writing and judgements. Such documents serve to standardise and coordinate inspectors' observations, interactions and writing and they thus entail "particular ways of seeing" (Freeman and Sturdy 2014, p. 11) inspection practice as well as quality/deficiency or under-performance in schools. This is a form of knowledge that can be stored and that travels in time and space. In such a way as it becomes, inscribed knowledge, which "provides a corrective to the instability and fragility of human bodies and memories" (Freeman and Sturdy 2014, p. 10). Within a web of inscribed knowledge it can serve as a means of administrative control and administers inspectors' work from the central hub of an inspection agency in order to produce a standardised and legitimate system of judgement (Lindgren 2015). As noted by Latour and Woolgar (1979) inscription is often, at least temporarily, an end product. Inscription devices work in order to obfuscate the material process that gave rise to this inscription. It thus earn the status of a "confirmation, or evidence for or against, particular ideas, concepts, or theories" (Latour and Woolgar 1979, p. 63). Inscribed knowledge and the production of such knowledge through "inscription devices" (Latour and Woolgar 1979) is intrinsically related to matters of legitimacy.

Finally, enacted knowledge is the form embodied and inscribed knowledge takes when it is expressed in doings and actions; for instance, the ways in which new knowledge is generated as people meet, use and share embodied and inscribed knowledge. Freeman and Sturdy (2014, p. 13) describe it as "the very act of knowing"—learning and using new knowledge that "endures only as long as the enactment itself". Although embodied and inscribed knowledge inform and frame actions, enacted knowledge is never totally determined. Enacted knowledge is

"generally highly localized and transient, both in space and time" (Freeman and Sturdy 2014, p. 15). It offers a particularly productive concept in order to study the concrete knowledge use and production of policy actors such as inspectors:

> [Enacted knowledge] is characterized by a high level of interpretative flexibility which means that one instance of enactment may differ very significantly from another, even when both instances draw on the same embodied and inscribed knowledge. This makes enacted knowledge an object of especial importance for those interested in understanding the work of policy (Freeman and Sturdy 2014, p. 15).

In this chapter, we employ this conceptual scheme as an "observational language" for our empirical research and reflection, as a way of exploring and discussing what forms of knowledge that are in operation within the inspection context. In so doing, we want to highlight how different forms of knowledge move, take shape and are re-shaped in different stages and in the course of an inspection event and in the inner workings of the inspection agency.

In the next section, we turn to the national context to situate the Inspectorate and its inspectors in relation to some of the national specifics of the Swedish case, outlining some contextual frames for understanding issues relating to different form and transformations of knowledge in inspection and inspectors' work.

Swedish School Inspection and Swedish School Inspectors

School inspection was initiated in Sweden in the 1860s. Since then, inspection has been carried out by different national and regional state agencies, which have differed in focus, scope, and intensity. School inspection was abolished altogether in the wake of the extensive decentralization reforms of the 1990s, but after being out in 'the political cold' for a decade, it was reintroduced in 2003, it was reintroduced in 2003. In 2008 government focus on inspection intensified and The Swedish Schools Inspectorate was formed. In a decentralised and increasingly marketised educational landscape, politicians across the political spectrum have argued that inspection is both needed and valuable. The political reasons for school inspection have largely been framed as a need for stronger central steering to ensure so called national 'equivalence'. The notion of educational equivalence has played a central part in the political framing of education policy both generally and in the context of school inspection and the concept has changed its meanings over time. Today, and after the extensive decentralisation and marketisation reforms of the 1990s in particular, the concept is increasingly linked to individual rights, outcomes and choice, rather than to the unifying social-justice dimension it once incorporated. The concept can be seen as a non-challenged semantic magnet in Swedish education policy that can be employed in different contexts and for different purposes, but still with little room for opposition. For instance, the importance of standardised

judgements by inspectors and comparability across inspection reports are termed equivalent (in Swedish 'likvärdiga bedömningar') in both policy texts and by school actors and inspectors themselves.[3]

School inspection is a highly flexible political instrument that may be used and adapted to suit very different circumstances and expectations: it can serve both legally and control oriented purposes as well as more developmental/improvement and dialogue oriented ones (Rönnberg 2014). As we will see in the following, its procedures and tools are continually remolded as different forms of knowledges are continually used and serve different roles at different points in time.

Restructuring Education in the 1990s

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a far-reaching restructuring of the Swedish education system took place. Decentralisation, deregulation, and marketization in the form of free school choice, a tax funded school voucher system and liberal regulations to set up so called free schools, were prominent features of the restructuring. In addition, all employer responsibilities were transferred from the state to the municipalities,[4] a new funding system was introduced, and a new curriculum, grading system, and syllabuses were implemented. The changes were conceptualized in terms of 'governing by objectives' and they had important implications for the role and function of school inspection.

In 1991, Skolöverstyrelsen, a state agency associated with the former centralized forms of governing, was closed and a new agency, called the National Agency for Education (NAE), was formed. The NAE did however not examine schools or municipalities in the form of inspection. In the decentralised system it was the municipalities that were responsible for overseeing and ensuring educational quality. However, NAE still scrutinized the newly established (and at that time, very few) independent free schools. This meant that school inspection in the form of national school inspectors engaging in the scrutiny of individual schools on a regular basis, simply did not exist. A recurrent institutional feature of the Swedish education system that had been in operation for 130 years was abolished (Rönnberg 2014): a change that was not to last long.

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[3]Translation to English is not straightforward, and there may be good reasons to translate the concept of equivalence to equity in some instances (Englund 2005; Englund and Francia 2008). However, the official Swedish translation is equivalence.

[4]There are 290 municipalities in Sweden and these are the local authorities responsible for, among other things, pre-schools and nine year compulsory schools, upper secondary schools, care of elderly and disabled, planning and building, emergency and rescue service. The Local Government Act regulates the responsibilities of the municipalities. Municipalities differs in size, the smallest has less than 3000 inhabitants and the largest over 700,000 inhabitants.

Reintroducing Inspection

In 2003, almost a decade after it had been terminated, school inspection was reestablished in Sweden. Politicians from both left and right had advocated for its reintroduction according to a rationale premised upon on a perceived need to reinforce national control; expressed as the need for greater visibility and clarity regarding the role of the state in a decentralised system governed by objectives and results (Government development plan 2002). In this way, inspection became rhetorically possible to realign and co-exist with an overall decentralist policy direction. Inspection was supposed to bring about improvement and also became a tool for collecting valid information and to promote national equivalence and high quality schooling (Government development plan 2002).

The revived inspection from 2003 was performed by the NAE and was to some extent development oriented. Based on a holistic perspective it offered support to schools and their authorities. The inspection report highlighted both good examples and strong areas that appeared to be working well in the school/municipality, as well as pointing out areas in need of improvement. Even if compliance with national regulations was central part of the revived inspection, the NAE also declared that:

> Educational inspection aims above all to provide an underlying basis for quality development in preschool activities, childcare for school children and the school system of the inspected responsible organisation as a whole. The inspectors try to obtain a broad picture of each activity inspected in order to draw conclusions about which areas could be improved. (Skolverket 2005, pp. 8–9; c.f. SFS 2002:1160)

In 2006, a non-socialist government was voted back into Office after being in opposition for more than 15 years. Even if this was a new government with new parties and new ideas and priorities, there was political consensus about the need for intensified inspection (Government bill 2007). Inspection was now to be intensified and far tougher and would be transferred to a new national agency: the Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen, SSI). As stated by a top level SSI Officer:

> The political intentions were to strengthen inspection in certain ways. (…) they said it would mean doubling the number of inspections performed. The Inspectorate was to have a more transparent and pronounced image (…) and school inspection was to be given a partly different set of tools (SSI Officer I).

The SSI opened in October 2008 and it became evident that so called regular supervision was aimed at explicitly targeting formal regulations, focusing only on deviances; i.e. failure to meet national requirements and regulations (and not 'good examples') and they were to be standardized in a single format for all compulsory schools. The task was to ensure each pupil's individual right was adhered to, with an overall emphasis on safeguarding and upholding law and regulations (c.f. SFS 2011:556). Thus, in general, compliance or 'juridification' became an apparent trait of the SSI (Lindgren et al. 2012).

Also the work of inspectors became more explicitly regulated by and oriented to forms of inscribed knowledge. Historically, Swedish school inspection has moved away from embodied forms of knowledge which manifested in locally recruited inspectors who made judgements based on their pedagogical expertise, to a system in which inspectors follow and use written instructions. As we will show, the legal orientation of the present form of regular supervision emanates from inscribed knowledge and requires particular forms of text-bound reasoning and consideration.

2008 and Onwards: The Role and Function of Inspectors and Their Knowledge

An experienced inspector asserted that the SSI implied changes compared to the NAE:

> We had a kind of different outlook when we came from Skolverket [NAE], and when we moved to Skolinspektionen [SSI] then it became something different. It is probably because new people entered the organisation, and there was a new management and a leadership that took charge right from the start (Inspector I)

The SSI deliberately targeted the recruitment of Inspectors with more diverse professional backgrounds, such as individuals with legal training or generic analytical skills, expressed by an Officer as:

> Our idea is that we want as many competencies as possible; expertise to conduct investigations, persons with a background in research, statisticians, general social science competencies, legal competence (SSI Officer I).

The SSI performs a range of activities beside regular supervision. The agency approves independent schools and licenses their right to public grants; investigates the increasing numbers of complaints filed by students and/or parents or others and finally also performs quality assessments, where a particular topic or school subject is assessed in a sample taken from a number of schools (c.f. SFS 2011:556). This latter task also involves more explicit efforts of creating and transferring (research based) knowledge and is performed and planned in close collaboration with research and researchers. A SSI Officer explains:

> We want to make use of research knowledge. Best practice. So when we do a thematic quality assessment we want to gather as much knowledge as possible, to do literature reviews, to see what research has been pointing to in this thematic area, what knowledge there is and we do our own literature searches as well as make use of research reviews (…) we have picked up a lot from research on successful schools (SSI Officer I, c.f. Skolinspektionen 2010a).

The SSI has been characterized by continuous transformation since inception. First of all, an increasing number of tasks have been assigned to the Inspectorate. The agency is now responsible for monitoring teachers' assessments of national tests, due to problems with lack of standardised assessments on the tests and grade

inflation. Also in this context, the term of educational equivalence is used by policy makers as a way of framing the need for intensified state-led control via the SSI. The same justification applies to the more prominent role assigned to the SSI with regard to marketization and the tax funded free schools. Venture capitalist firms that own the largest free school chains tend to have short-term ownership which creates uncertainty, fluctuation and negative consequences for pupils because schools are shut down without warning (Skolinspektionen 2014). As the SSI Director General put it in a debate article: "Free schools are not as transparent and open to public scrutiny as the public schools are. That is why it is both motivated and needed that inspection is performed more often" (Begler 2014, p.10).

Secondly, the different activities have been constantly modified as a consequence of, organisational learning, internal and external criticism and new legal and political directives (c.f. National Audit Office 2013). For example, the 2010 school act, in force from mid-2011 onward, meant that the Inspectorate was allowed to apply more powerful sanctions: to issue fines or revoke permits for independent schools to operate (SFS 2010:800). The act in itself did not imply a radical change of inspection practices or focus, but it further reinforced the juridical/legal direction of and dimensions of both schooling and inspection and it also drove further adjustments in the inspector work force:

> There will be more complicated judgements and also because we now have sanctions and our assessments have to be correct of course, but now we shall put injunctions that maybe have to hold in a court of law. (SSI officer I)

At the same time, the act made explicit the fact that the SSI was to offer certain forms of feedback (SFS 2010:800, Chap. 26). In a somewhat paradoxical move, the judicial and punitive orientation was accompanied by a successive re-orientation towards a more dialogical and developmental approach. Such an approach invites and opens up for other forms of knowledge than those inscribed in laws and statutes, relying upon both embodied and enacted forms. But from the outset there have been different standpoints regarding the agency's stance towards this double mission, explains SSI Officer 1:

> Now it says in the school act that we shall give advice, feedback and guidance, so there is no need for further discussions (…) our inspection cannot end without us sharing the enormous body of knowledge that our inspectors have (SSI Officer 1)

According to Freeman and Sturdy (2014), this quote highlights how feedback and sharing embodied and enacted knowledge becomes important to be employed in addition to the inscribed written inspection decision. The feedback activities also take an inscribed form: The current SSI website contains a section labelled "Advice and guidance". Under the headline "From deficiency to opportunity"—which succinctly captures the rhetoric of re-orientation—the agency offers support in relation to central areas of development identified by previous regular supervision (Skolinspektionen 2015a).

The most recent model of regular supervision introduced in 2015 is portrayed by the SSI as one that involves a stronger focus on teaching and learning and less on documentation, (the inscribed form, delivered by the inspected schools to the SSI). One reason for this remodeling is the conclusion that a strict and "shallow" administrative focus on failure to comply will eventually damage the trust in inspection as an agent of educational development (Skolinspektionen 2014, p. 5). Another feature of the most recent version of regular supervision is the increased level of proportionality. Explicitly following the Dutch example, this inspection activity is now targeting schools where the need for support is most acute (Skolinspektionen 2014; c.f. Skolinspektionen 2015b).

Inspection as Aspiring to Build Knowledge

The Swedish Inspectorate not only works in order to improve schools and the school system based on regulations and particular forms of research; it attempts to be a learning organization marked by rigorous systems of internal quality assurance that serve to improve and develop different inspection activities through the use of (certain forms of) knowledge.

> It is very important that our judgements are based on facts and that they are duly substantiated. This is why we triangulate, why we use different methods and draw on different forms of competence. You also need [organizational] process descriptions as a support to get this level of substantiation. We are not researchers, of course, but it is the scientific methods that must be applied. (SSI Officer 1)

Thus the SSI strives to make schools align with research evidence, and they also seek to make their own activities research-like when it comes to methods and procedures. In order to do this the agency enrolls academics in this work. Researchers are engaged in the development of new methods, in training, in the production of knowledge reviews, as reference persons and as guarantors of quality of judgement areas and criteria. As an Officer states: "We have fallen in love with evidence based knowledge and methodology. And it is not that we are already working in that way, more that we want to be working in that way" (SSI Officer II).

In sum, the inspectorate deliberately builds expertise and uses certain forms of knowledge by, for instance, employing inspectors with different backgrounds and by aspiring to employ research like methods in the performance of central evaluative functions and knowledge production. This has implications for knowledge as embodied, inscribed and enacted. In order to further this discussion, we now look to highlight and contextualize some aspects of school inspection as processes of governing, and inspectors as important brokers and implementers within these processes.

Knowledge, Policy and Inspection

In Sweden and in Europe, there has been an increase in inspection activities (Rönnberg 2012; Lawn and Grek 2012). Apparently, different forms of data on performance and goal attainment appear insufficient to govern complex education systems alone. Thus, expanding and increasingly sophisticated systems of data production have not made inspectors, as a form of embodied regulation, redundant. The need for 'on site'—physical and social—presence in schools appears to be intact (Grek and Lindgren 2015).

Inspectors' expertise is enacted and developed within a changing education landscape. In the previous section we mentioned the Swedish transformation from a form of centrally regulated and detailed system of governing by rules into a goal- and results governed system. This change also implied profound changes in inspectors' work, further accentuated by for instance new forms and use of performance data. As we have concluded elsewhere, "inspectors confront, translate and make 'actionable' the mass of information carried by data" (Grek and Lindgren 2015, p. 4). Such data tend to infuse 'new' dimensions and challenges into 'older' problematics, such as the relationship between judgement and evidence, in the work of inspectors. As we saw in the previous section, inspectors are more explicitly governed by rules, standards and guidelines today. This, in turn, imposes challenges to co-ordinate forms of personal and individual knowledge *and* collective judgements in relation to authoritative forms of official knowledge. Indeed, "inspectors come to these tasks with their different professional dispositions and with historically framed experience and expertise" (Grek and Lindgren 2015, p. 6). As previously emphasised, in Sweden such differences were further accentuated by for instance the strategic recruitment of professional expertise outside of the field of education, articulated most notably in the recruitment of individuals trained in law.

It can be argued that inspection is located within a new public realm that may be described in terms of "public doubt" (Frank 2001, p. 21); i.e. "sceptical/cynical response to dominant truth claims" (Clarke 2004, p. 215). In a situation where school results are declining and differences and segregation between schools are increasing, school inspectors are represented as a response and solution to these difficult problems. In this vein, school inspectors become situated in complex macro and micro dramas of governing. They must orient in the wider fields of "cultural changes in relationships of power, authority, and knowledge" (Clarke 2004, p. 215) played out in fields of politics and national media. But there are also intriguing problems at local level where inspection results have become high stakes not only for inspectors, but also for responsible actors in the form of governing bodies, head teachers, teachers, students and teachers working in the domain of the "school quasi markets" and the dynamics of free school choice. In these (often mediatised) dramas, new forms of information and knowledge are produced and made accessible to different audiences; they circulate and bring forth an image of a more democratic

mode of governing in comparison to traditional bureaucratic forms (Grek and Lindgren 2015). Inspectors are producers and users of such knowledge.

Inspectors also become mediators, transferring knowledge to the political level and to local actors and practices, but simultaneously the subject of such knowledge —shaped and governed by it under conditions marked by increasing "social acceleration" (Rosa 2013). To provide a historical point of reference; school inspectors working in the 20th century have described how the formal written instructions governing their work, were seldom consulted, and remained largely unmodified between 1914 and 1958 (Thelin 1994). Today, such instructions are comprehensive, detailed and indispensable for inspectors. In addition, these formal instructions are revised at such a speed that it poses a serious problem for scholars interested in inspectors' frame works and criteria: while a research study is conducted the data it is based on is usually replaced, as we discovered in our projects (c.f. Carlbaum et al. 2014).

The widespread and highly coordinated usage of such instructions and other forms of regulative inscription devices displays a belief in "generic management" (Cutler and Waine 1997), namely that organisations share common characteristics and benefit from being governed by a distinct set of universal principles, knowledge and skills. This tendency, related to an idea that 'one size fits all', is clearly at odds with ideas about decentralisation and local autonomy, and as such it is yet another example of how contradictory and complex the current education policy landscape has become. Governmental distance, the distance between the central state and local schools, is managed by "devices" such as "policy statements, targets, regulatory agencies, forms of conditionality (e.g. attaching to performance standards), data collection, display and publicity (e.g. in 'league tables') and the process of inspection itself" (Clarke 2015, p. 17). Importantly enough, and in the context of this chapter, these devices also require particular forms of knowledge in order to be enacted in concrete inspection practice.

Discussions on inspections and knowledge also raise important questions about "embodiment" (Clarke 2015, p. 19). In a rather unique fashion, and unlike most other forms of data production, inspectors actually enter the inner and practical world of the school in order to directly observe and make judgements about delicate and intangible aspects. Interactions and face-to face meetings are central to the very 'art and craft' of inspection as a professional activity. Given the fact that inspection now operates under critical political, social and emotional conditions, we argue that questions about embodiment and knowledge are related to important issues of legitimacy and authority. As noted by Clarke (2015), the status of particular forms of knowledge—embodied, inscribed or enacted—tend to be conditioned differently in terms of legitimacy.

Against this background, we now turn to examine different forms of knowledge as they manifest in our empirical data, also focusing on their transformative aspects before, during and after inspection events and in the course of Inspectors' work.

Phases of Knowledge in Inspection

A regular supervision process (see Fig. 8.1) follows a certain formal scheme defining its chronology, aims, methods etc. To a certain extent this process is presented on the agency's website, but there are also internal and highly detailed sets of instructions that steer each and every step of inspectors work. These include a handbook regarding terminology, templates for different documents that are produced, method support for interviews with different stakeholders, observation protocols for classroom observations, guidelines for quality assurance of decisions and reports etcetera. Standardised and transparent approaches, as noted by Power (2003) serve the purpose of alignment and control within organisations. Hence, texts coordinate inspectors work and supposedly render possible professional bureaucratic harmonization. In this way, texts are used to "circulate and publicise explicit statements about who should act, how, and under what circumstances" (Freeman and Sturdy 2014, p. 11).

Regular supervision begins with SSI forming a team that is responsible for the particular school unit or principal organiser under scrutiny. The latter know well in advance that an inspection will be taking place. The inspection team collect and receive statistical reports on background data, student performance and other types of numerical data, as well as results from SSI managed surveys to parents, students and teachers. Information about any failed complaints to the school/responsible authority is also included as well as the report from the last round of inspections. Schools and principal organisers also send in a great deal of documentation to SSI, including a 'self-reflection' based on a template from SSI that addresses the assessment points. These documents serve the purpose of making the school inspectable. The idea is that relevant aspects of the school; i.e. relevant in relation the judgement points of regular supervision, will be captured in texts and be made accessible to SSI. Using the words of Freeman and Sturdy (2014, p. 11) these documents are "common perceptual worlds" constructed by schools and entered by inspectors at their offices. Some of the documents are produced by schools. As pointed out by van Maanen and Pentland (1994) such texts or records have their own rhetoric. They cannot exhaustively represent the social process and situation in a school, hence they are not neutral and factual documents. On the contrary they serve legitimate ends and are designed—through acts of impression management— to "produce an effect in some kind of audience" (van Maanen and Pentland 1994, p. 53). Schools want to give the impression that they follow regulations and they want to be regarded as good and successful schools. In the Swedish educational context where inspection results affect schools' value in a highly competitive
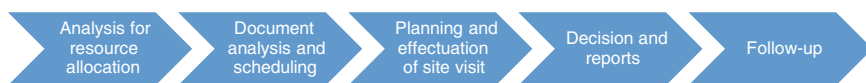

Fig. 8.1 The regular supervision scheme (Skolinspektionen 2010b, p. 3)

'market' this becomes important (Rönnberg et al. 2013). As a result, inspectors' work is to read; analyse and decipher texts that potentially contain strategic manipulation in order to mask deficits or even criminal behavior. To coordinate and read such material and make initial judgements on their basis under limited time, requires knowledge also based in experience. In our observations of on-site visits, we have been able to witness the swift ways inspectors detect and extract core information from large piles of school documents. It is a matter of knowing where and what to look for and of having the ability to bring this information into alignment with other local knowledge about the particular school, along with other forms of inscribed knowledge such as laws, regulations, judgment points and legitimate forms of pedagogical best practice in order to detect potential deficiencies.

On the basis of this information, resources are allocated and the process of inspection is planned. Thus, inscribed knowledge is immediately essential within the initial phase of inspection. The inspectors then decide how to organise the inspection: i.e. if the situation at the particular school requires a thorough inspection including an on-site visit or not. After this initial phase, and if required, inspectors undertake a visit to the school that involves on-site interviews, walks around the premises, classroom observations etc. Head teachers, teachers and pupils are interviewed in three or more separate groups. The inspection visit either ends with oral feedback on the findings to the head teacher, or the head teacher is contacted after the on-site visit for immediate feedback on what to expect in the forthcoming written inspection report, called 'decision'.

As noted above, the visits are circumscribed by written schemes and rules, but as they also involve face-to-face meetings there are qualitatively different forms of knowledge that are required. School actors may be nervous and struggle with making their work explicit. The ability to establish an atmosphere where respondents feel safe and able to provide extensive narratives about particular aspects of schooling while retaining an official role as a person in authority cannot be pre-defined by any written guidelines. There are examples where our informants struggled with this difficult challenge and cases in which school actors were insecure, intimidated, provoked or even furious after encounters with inspectors. In such situations it is evident how emotions are closely related to action and the willingness of school actors to act (or not act) on the basis of knowledge produced by inspection (Grek et al. 2015).

One would assume that inspectors, in order to understand and make judgements about educational matters, must have a sufficient amount of pedagogical knowledge. This is also the standpoint of most of our informants—both inspectors and school actors. However, as we mentioned above, the workforce includes inspectors with judicial and more generic investigative competencies. As the educational system has become more regulated by formal regulations, judicial knowledge is now regarded as indispensable in order to perform stringent judgements that can hold up in a court of law Inspectors work in teams which means that collaboration and deliberation is necessary. These aspects of inspectors work are particularly important when all the information—inscribed and embodied—about a particular

school will be processed and transformed into a final written decision. We will expand on that important and intricate process below.

Inspection Events: Knowledge Moves and Transforms

Embodied, Enacted, Inscribed: Transformations and Tensions

The inspection reports specify in which areas a school or a principal organiser is failing to meet national requirements. An inspectors' work is to identify and report deficiencies. As shown by Lindgren (2015), the reports are 'front stage' representations of a working process. The reports signal objectivity and judicial precision as if judgements were solely built on knowledge about specific schools; about phenomenon like poor leadership, poor teaching, poor special support, poor assessment and grading that exists independent of inspection. Inspectors generally see their work this way—as epistemological realists. However, they also recognise themselves as 'constructors' of deficiencies. In fact their own vocabulary includes a new Swedish verb-form of the word deficiency: "the act of making a deficiency" [att brista] (see Lindgren 2015). This, however, is a way of talking about judgement making before judgements have been finalised.

The actual process of "making deficiencies" can best be described as "conversation" and "negotiation" (Latour and Woolgar 1979, pp. 154–157). And this process is not dependent on an epistemological evaluation of the basis for their work as described by themselves on their website or in reports. The internal meetings where reports are finalised display a process of social negotiation or 'craft' where the linguistic 'tone of voice' is calibrated in relation to inspectors' embodied feelings from the on-site visit. Inspectors that we interviewed described how different inspectors understand and see the educational practice differently, but how discussions always settled differences: "Inspectors are very professional, so they very seldom just go ahead and write a decision (…) you cannot do that. You've got to sort of cohere? Somewhere, you must reach an agreement" (School inspector). But once the decision is solidified into inscription it harbours the truth and can be announced in press releases and used to hold agents accountable. In this way Latour and Woolgar's (1979, p. 182) description of laboratory life is tangent to inspectors' epistemological metamorphosis: "Once the controversy has settled, reality is taken to be the cause of this settlement; but while controversy is still raging, reality is the consequence of debate…".

As a form of inscription device school inspection balances the need for transparency and black-boxing in order to establish legitimacy. As noted by Fourcade (2010) procedures elicit authority. SSI have their methods, procedures, judgement areas and points publicly declared on their website. At the same time inscription works in order to conceal the traces of social production of facts (Latour and

Woolgar 1979); i.e. to conceal the embodiment and enactment that goes into the inspection report. Latour and Woolgar (1979, p. 76) uses the notion of "literary inscription" to capture this strategic persuasion of readers. Decisions are therefore void of descriptions or narratives concerning the actual process that have led to the judgement (see Lindgren 2015).

Another essential aspect of inscription is the cyclic or spiral model of knowledge production (Nonaka 1994). Not only is inscription produced through externalisation of inspectors' tacit knowledge: other sources of inscribed knowledge in the form of schools' self-evaluations, old SSI-reports, research reports and official statistics provides sources used to write inspections reports. This mode of knowledge production govern the education system through "materialisation" or "reification" (Latour and Woolgar 1979, pp. 238–242). Inspection picks up ideas and concepts from research and uses them as part of their "inscription device" in order to produce judgements and facts. The importance of "high expectations" is one example of an idea that have been reified and become part of inspectors' tacit knowledge and their material equipment *and* school actors', students', politicians' and the publics' common sense. Although the concept of "high expectations" goes back to Rosenthal and Jacobson's (1968) influential study "Pygmalion in the classroom" it did not reach its' current fact-like status until years after the millennium when social and ethnic school segregation and general economic crisis paved the way for it. Today the concept is self-evidentially used by SSI as an explanatory factor in order to produce idealistic explanations about under-performance of students (particularly immigrant students in segregated areas): teachers are not 'believing' enough. Our argument here is not that theories of 'self-fulfilling prophecy' are inadequate, but rather to draw attention to how knowledge is transformed, stabilised and materialised under specific organisational and socio-cultural conditions.

Knowledge in Inspection: On-Site Embodied Enactments in the Limelight

This chapter has emphasized inspection as an embodied governing activity. Contrary to many other forms of regulatory and governing activities, the embodied presence with direct and qualitative observations and judgments are central features of inspection. This also makes the enactment phase of knowledge in the inspection context particularly relevant and interesting to study. Knowledge is enacted as people meet, use and share embodied and inscribed knowledge, for instance in on-site observations and interactions. In the forthcoming section, we empirically explore some aspects with regard to the question "What is it that the embodied presence of the inspector adds to the process of regulation?" (Clarke 2015, p. 19) by drawing on observation data in the enactment phase. We do this in order to provide some 'flesh and blood' to the discussion of knowledge forms and their

transformations with particular emphasis on enactments a central but often under-explored feature of inspection.

As Freeman and Sturdy point out, enactments are sensitive to context and interpretation. In acknowledging this contextually dependent character of enactments, we also add the importance of acknowledging the affective dimensions or "atmospheres" (Anderson 2009) surrounding these enactments. But enactments are not only controlled by context, interpretation and emotions, but also by the composition of the group and situation on-site and knowledge in its enacted phase thus has an important collective dimension as well. As Freeman and Sturdy (2014, p. 16) put it:

> Individuals may know things – they are themselves bearers of embodied knowledge, and they may have access to inscriptions of many kinds – but their enactment of that knowledge is policed and disciplined by the community of knowers of which they are part.

In the following part of the chapter, we illustrate how knowledge is made into a collective endeavor and how important contextual frames are operating during the enactment phase. Often they become even more visible when the enactments are being less 'policed and disciplined' than expected. This example illustrates how the (to the inspectors somewhat unexpected) on-site enactment resulted in 'new' knowledge being enacted and the subsequent transformation of that knowledge.

At a regular supervision in a secondary school, six teachers took the opportunity to criticize school management at the on-site inspection interview. This particular school had a record of low academic achievements and a not very favorable inspection report in the last round of inspection. Even so, the inspectors later said in an interview that they were actually taken aback by the tensions that were revealed during their visit. One of the first questions posed by the inspectors in an on-site teacher interview is usually something like 'tell us what is good about your school and why should parents choose this school for their child?' As a response to this question, three out of the six teachers present first started reporting on some of the advantages, such as that teacher teams work independently and autonomously, pupils are happy, no bullying, etc. So far the inspection interview had followed the 'expected script' in which the teachers take responsibility and provide an account for the good work the school is doing, thereby opening up the conversation by offering opportunities to say positive things—hopefully obtaining an "affective atmosphere" (Anderson 2009) characterized by mutuality, trust and interest, also in the positive and good things in this particular school. But the conversation then rapidly took a different turn as disadvantages were brought up by the teachers. The criticism concerned management in particular:

Teacher 1: Bad long-term planning

Teacher 2: Lack of leadership (…)

Teacher 1: We get no decisions about things we want to do, or pupils we want to help: nothing happens.

Teacher 3: Pupils are stuck with the same problems for too long

Teacher 4: (…) but nothing happens (…)

Inspector A: You have no pedagogical leader?

Teacher 1: No, no visits to my classroom

Teacher 6: I have not had any visit from the Head teacher either

Teacher 2: There is no point in discussing learning matters with management. They do not know these things. (…) We want a leader who can further our professional development (Barch school, on-site observation field notes).

An on-site school visit often ends with oral feedback from the inspectors to the head teacher as a way of sharing the perceptions the inspectors had from the visit, and to provide an indication of what to expect from the written report. Issues of management turned out to be a substantial part of the feedback talk at this particular school. In their talk with the head teacher, the Inspectors repeatedly used phrases such as "leadership is needed", or that "this is a matter to be handled by management/leadership" or "you [as a head teacher] have got to do something" (Barch school, on-site observation field notes). In these enactments, the head teacher remained quite passive; listening rather than making many attempts to convince or argue with the inspectors to see things otherwise.

A few weeks later at the 'quality assurance meeting', the two inspectors met with a colleague from the Inspectorate who was trained in law and deliberated on how to put the wording in the final inspection report. At this stage, the embodied and enacted experiences were to be translated into an inscribed form. As previously pointed out; inspectors may experience considerable difficulties with this transformation. It is considered important that the head teacher does not just end up in a defensive position but reads and acts on the points in the report in a constructive manner. As the Inspectors said at the meeting: "It was difficult to find a balanced tone" (School inspector I) and "I have been working a lot with not being too hard but not too soft either, and still…" (School inspector II, from meeting observation notes).

In the final written inspection report, there were several shortcomings for the school to rectify—and several of them concerned management; for instance the head teacher's responsibility to ensure standardisation across teacher teams, special needs and teacher professional development. Judging from the criticism that was raised in the resulting inspection report, the teacher's voices were listened to by the inspectors at the on-site enactment, resulting in and providing 'new' knowledge that was then transformed into an inscribed form in the format of the inspection report. In this transformation, the ambiguities, in for instance deciding on wording and tone, is removed, leaving the inscription as the manifested end product, hiding the process leading up to its inscription (c.f. Latour and Woolgar 1979). The empirical example also points to context and what is usually disciplined or policed in certain given settings and groups. The strident admonishment from the teachers in relation to school management were not to be expected given the implicit 'code of conduct' that usually operates during enactments in the on-site interviews. But it also shows how this knowledge was then transformed by the embodied and enacted experience

of inspectors into the inscribed report. Underlying these transformations are certain affective atmospheres that contribute to the accumulation and transition of knowledge. A range of emotional expressions, from anger to distress and ambivalence are visible in these processes.

The next example is also infused by emotions and a certain affective atmosphere. In common with the former example, it places the embodied and enacted nature of inspection in the center of attention, as it zooms in on enactments on-site. In our project data, we have several examples of individual children looking up and seeking to speak to the inspectors when they are visiting the school, as a way of reaching out for help with their—in one way or another—pressing situation. In the following, we describe one of the examples we witnessed when we were observing on-site inspection visits.

During a break between the interviews that inspectors conducted with different categories of staff and students at the school, a teenage boy entered the room together with a friend as support. He said his mother had encouraged him to talk to the inspectors when they were to visit the school. The story told by the boy about his situation and how the school had reacted and failed to react was touching to say the least. In the interviews with the inspectors that we conducted afterwards, one of the inspectors said it had made them "feel heavy at heart" (School inspector II, Barch School). When the boy was in the room telling his story, the inspectors listened and then said that the boy's mother was welcome to call them and they handed a business card with their contact details to the teenager, as an inscribed artefact to be transferred to the parent. The boy left the room and looked like he had accomplished what he was there to do. At the very end of the on-site school visit, the inspectors met with the head teacher to give their oral feedback from the two days they had spent at the school. The story involving this boy was explicitly brought up in that conversation. The head teacher agreed that it was indeed "a tragedy" (on-site field notes) and the inspectors asked several questions about what had been done to handle the situation, and overall the head teacher had a chance to tell his side of the story during this enactment. The inspectors later commented on this episode positively in our interview: "it feels like something was listened to [by management] and an attempt is being made to resolve it" (School inspector II).

This example illustrates inspection as an embodied activity with interactions and meetings that in themselves constitute important forms of governing that involve the transfer of knowledge in different forms and phases. The inspectorate has a very strong commitment to ensuring and defending every student's individual right to a good and high quality education (Lindgren et al. 2012). In a situation such as the one described above, the inspectors have to rely on both their tacit and manifested knowledge, both from embodied experiences as well as from inscriptions in statutes and other regulations and frameworks. When this knowledge is enacted, as embodied and inscribed knowledge are shared in the room, new knowledge emerge that lasts only as long as the enactment. But the enacted knowledge is transformed into other forms, for instance inscribed in a card with contact details, or as an embodied experience of the mood and feelings the enactment gave rise to.

The relative and contextualised nature of enactments are seldom recognized in the formal documents and regulations. Instead, values such as comparability, transparency, and equal judgments are put to the fore—expressing a belief in "generic management", also as an appropriate source for legitimation of inspection practices (Rönnberg 2012; c.f. Wilcox and Gray's conceptualization of inspection as "a naïve form of 'positivism' (1996, p. 110)". At the same time, the embodied and enacted knowledge are vital parts of the inspection 'assemblage' and of 'what makes inspection into inspection' (c.f. Clarke 2015).

Knowledge and Inspectors' Work: Final Words

In this chapter, we looked to highlight and discuss forms of knowledge and how they are transformed in and through an inspection process and in the course of inspectors' work. We wanted to situate the Swedish inspector in an historical and governing context, in which certain knowledge forms are de- and re-valued and in which certain forms come to be perceived as more legitimate than others at particular points in time. In this way, inspection has a close relationship to governing and to the means and tools used to implement education policy. Regulatory tools are emphasized as instruments to give effect to education policy, such as in the contemporary emphasis of legal and judicial inscriptions as a basis for inspection judgements. In their inscribed form, these tools come to function as important sources of legitimation for what is considered 'proper' and 'stringent' knowledge in inspection and for policy implementation—further reinforcing the governing-legitimation relations.

This is a mode of governing that, using the words of Callon and Latour (1981, p. 287), capture "durable elements" of both the inspection practice and the school practice; that replace traditional "weak" and "reversible interactions" by "strong interactions": "Instead of swarms of possibilities, we find lines of force, obligatory passing points, directions and deduction" (Ibid.). In terms of political implementation of inspection by government, this strategy may, on the one hand, be efficient in the sense that it expands its regulative and judicial language, values, elements, concepts and other artefacts through webs of texts and formalized practices. On the other hand, it might not be as effective in terms of goal achievement and student performance. The results of Swedish students have continued to fall and the differences between schools have continued to increase (OECD 2015). In addition, it is a mode of governing education that appears to orient schools to judicial formalities and away from professional pedagogical realms of thinking and acting (Lindgren 2014). Such features of inspection have resulted in OECD recommendations that the Swedish Inspectorate ought to "shift from a culture of administrative compliance to responsibility for improvement" (OECD 2015, p. 10).

At the same time, we also showed that embodied and enacted forms of knowledge remain essential qualities of and for what is to be perceived as a valid inspection process. In for instance the legally inscribed feedback seminars, the

embodied and enacted character of inspection knowledge is acknowledged, but more often, inscribed versions of inspectors' knowledge are given precedence in the inscribed texts and artefacts produced by the Inspectorate.

We have highlighted the collective and contextual nature of knowledge transformation in inspection: Showing that inspection reports constitute a form of condensed inscribed knowledge in the form of an end-product that can be transferred in place and time and convey a representation of order and coherence, contrary to the more multifaceted embodied and enacted phases preceding their inscription. We have argued that when embodied and enacted knowledge are translated into inscribed form, different processes of judgement and adjustments are made, forming the complex 'craft' of inspection work and holding important implications for how inspection and inspectors are perceived in terms of legitimacy.

From the discussion in this chapter, we propose that inspection—at the core—can be conceived as a set of activities aiming at transformations of different forms of knowledge. As we have shown, inspection attempt to turn embodied, inscribed and enacted knowledge into the 're-inscribed' format of an inspection report, for instance. These transformations are taking place within certain social and historical frames, and they are inscribed in and affected by the embodied and enacted practices and inspection contexts in which they occur—albeit to different degrees under different circumstances. Still, transformations of different forms of knowledge appear to lie at the very heart of inspection and in the professional craftsmanship of inspectors.

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Chapter 9
Framing the Debate: Influencing Public Opinion of Inspection, Inspectors and Academy Policy: The Role of the Media

Jacqueline Baxter

Abstract International research has shown that school inspection and the media are both powerful influences on education policy. Since 2010 the government has sought to implement radical changes to the English education system, creating a new system of autonomous schools that support one another through formal or informal partnerships. These changes have suffered from considerable resistance from both schools and Local Education Authorities who often perceive these changes to be ideologically motivated and largely ineffective in raising standards of teaching and learning. The changes are largely implemented following inspection visits by Ofsted, the English schools' inspectorate, in which schools are deemed to be underperforming. For this reason Ofsted has become a powerful driver within the implementation of this policy: lending both legitimacy and rationale to the process. Yet Ofsted, is arguably independent agency, purporting to inspect 'without fear or favour' and has, on many occasions since its inception in 1992, argued that its strength lies in its independence from government. But this argument is undermined when the agency is used to implement what is perceived as ideologically motivated policy. This chapter investigates to what extent Ofsted is used within the framing of education policy and what this means in terms of perceptions of the agency (its impartiality) and for education more broadly. Sampling from 3 national newspapers the study analyses 160 articles on inspection, drawing on media discourse theory it posits a framework developed in order to examine the ways in which Ofsted (the English school inspectorate) is used to frame debate on the government's academies project. Employing this framework it investigates to what extent the media shape their coverage of a policy which has proven contentious with certain publics, in order to frame the debate in ways which appeal to their readership. Using the framework for analysis the chapter responds to the following questions: (A) To what extent do broadsheet newspapers frame their approach to the Academy Project, by the work of the inspectorate (B) What values are assumed of the

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readership of each newspaper and how are these mobilised within news articles (C) What do the results of questions A and B imply for Ofsted's claims of impartiality from government?

Keywords Press · Education policy · Media · School inspection · England

Introduction

Studies into implementation theory have shown that an important element within the rollout of policy (of any type) is the credibility of the organisations seen to be effecting the change. The media form part of the complex and convoluted processes of implementation within modern systems of governance (see for example Henig 2009; Herman and Chomsky 2008). They are also instrumental in forming and shaping public perceptions of 'public value' (Bennington and Moore 2011). This in turn colours and conditions the ways in which those involved in the delivery of public services go about their work and duties (Pressman and Wildavsky 1984). In the world of the 'street level bureaucrat,' the media is just one of a number of factors that can make policy goals 'more like receding horizons than fixed targets,' (Landau 1973, 536; Lipsky 2010). This has prompted government to place great emphasis on the media in relation to policy making and implementation.

For some time now researchers have been exploring the influence that the media has on education policy (see for example Anderson 2007; Opfer 2007; Rönnberg et al. 2012). Media effect has also been the subject of interest by policy makers too: Pile, former Permanent Secretary to the Department of Education between 1970 and 76, identified twelve trends or factors which he believed to be the driving force behind educational policy making:

> Demographic trends; population movements; children's health; technological change; deprivation; the explosion of knowledge; the impact of the media; the development of educational research; changing ideas about the nature and aims of education; the idea of equality; the demand for participation and the scarcity of resources. (Pile in Lawrence 1992, p. 59).

More recent studies investigating how education policy is made and influenced, suggest that in spite of recent attacks on the power of the media, (such as the Leveson inquiry 2014), they remain one of the most potent influences on education policy making in the UK today (see Bolsen and Leeper 2013; Opfer 2007; Perry et al. 2010). Researchers in the broader field of communication studies have also investigated the impact of media on policy makers; for example Bennett and Yanovitzky's work examining the patterns of congressional news media use concluded that, '*on average, legislators spend 1.8 h each day reading a daily newspaper,*' (Bennett and Yanovitzky 2000, p. 10). But other researchers believe that although policy makers are influenced by media, the there is little likelihood that this will take precedence over their beliefs and ideologies, '*unless they are*

challenged by cogent contrary information,' (Bennett and Yanovitzky 2000, p. 10). Governance stands in contrast to elder concepts of the state as monolithic and formal. Opening up the, 'black box of the state,' (Bevir 2011, 3), and drawing attention to the processes and interactions through which all kinds of social interests and actors combine to produce the policies, practices, and effects that define current patterns of governing (Bevir 2011, p. 3).

Some researchers have investigated the ways in which this complex relationship functions using a variety of discourse analytic methods: Studies such as Sue Thomas' extensive work on the Queensland school curriculum, known as The Wiltshire review, illustrates exactly how powerful and integral to policy making and implementation the media have become (Thomas 2005). Mediatization of policy is also recognised and researched extensively in fields outside of education, such as Stuart Hall's seminal study into policing and crisis on sentencing laws in the UK, showing how publics can become 'sensitized to certain elements of policy by the guiding hand of the media (Hall et al. 1978). Whilst later work by Peter Golding and Sue Middleton illustrated how recipients of welfare became demonised in the media and how this demonization resulted in much harsher government (and public) approaches and opinions on welfare (Golding and Middleton 1982).

More recent research into the field of poverty and media representations by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (McKendrick et al. 2008), in common with earlier work, found that media portrayals of poverty were influential when linked to a particular political ideology and were used to justify existing policy, whilst providing the catalyst for policy innovation. Whilst research carried out in 2016 showed the ways in which media representations of school governors changed the way in which they are perceived by the public, thus paving the way for policy changes in this area (see Baxter 2016, Chap. 3). As Lingard and Rawolle remark, the media often tend to have a short memory where reporting of policy is concerned, and this 'structural amnesia,' (2004, p. 367) is more prevalent when policy derives from politically motivated interventions. Blackmore and Thomson take this further in their work on the creation of superstar heads, suggesting that the ones that most tend to be lionised by the media are those who most closely aligned to government agendas (2004, p. 308). In the UK the extent and tone used when reporting policy and people connected with this policy varies according to the particular readership of the publication. An element described further on in this chapter. What is clear from research that has been done over the last thirty years, is that the media act as both policy influencer and policy implementer. In the UK, governments have recognised this power since Churchill (Dean 2013; Moore 2006) and used it with varying degrees of success ever since.

UK government manipulation of the media reached its apogee during The New Labour Administration, summed up by the declaration by former Prime Minister Tony Blair when elected as party leader: That, 'The only thing that matters now in this campaign is the media, the media, the media' (Dean 2013, p. 44). New Labour focused so heavily on the media, issuing 32 thousand press releases during their tenure that this eventually resulted in The Phillis Report, an inquiry into the breakdown of public trust in government statements and was prompted in part by

journalists' complaints that, 'information was being used as the currency in a system of favouritism, selective release and partisan spinning' (Phillis 2004). Yet the use of the media persists as politicians and senior bureaucrats issue daily press releases in order to justify and influence policies; increasingly using market polling as a means by which to construct debate on an issue, follow: 'posing possibilities they most favour then gaining feedback from polling and the focus group' (Blackmore and Thomson 2004, p. 306, see also Yanovitzky 2002a, b). The public response largely depends on how the issue is framed by the newspaper in order to maximise public reaction and public engagement, and not least, to ensure that circulation is increased (Wallace 1994a, b). But as Golding and Middleton explain, they create 'comfortable certainties' particularly in times where there are none:

> The media do not invent social concerns, nor do they deliberately organise the priorities in public debate. But in particular periods of real social change they cut through popular uncertainties with a display of the political eternal verities around which social consensus is sustained (Golding and Middleton 1982, p. 59).

Framing, Naming and Shaming: The Media as Cultural Influence

Hall's extensive work into the effects of media coverage of muggings in the 70s and the way in which it impacted on UK culture and criminal legislation, defines three specific elements of the social production of news:

> The bureaucratic organisation of the media which produces the news in specific types of categories; the structure of news values which orders the selection and ranking of particular stories within these categories and the moment of construction of the news story; this involves the presentation of the item to its assumed audience, in terms which, as far as the presenters of the item can judge, will make it comprehensible to that audience. If the world is not to be represented as a jumble of random and chaotic events, then they must be identified (i.e. named defined related to other events and assigned to a social context,' (Hall et al. 1978, p. 54).

These three elements link to both the political affiliation of the newspaper and readership and are instrumental in creating a consensual community of readers that forms a loyal readership which depends on the newspaper's ability to present news as if there are, '*no major cultural or economic breaks, no major conflicts of interest*,' within the readership (ibid.: 55). I will return to this later in this chapter.

Education is traditionally a site of political tensions; influenced by particular ideologies and theories around the role and purpose of education. Denis Lawton's incisive work into education and political ideologies describes approaches to education that have been particularly popular with both Conservatives (Tories) and Labour, in his extensive work into the links between both (Lawton 1994a, b, 2005). Since 2010 these political tensions have been a constant focus for the media, reaching a crescendo in 2014 with The Trojan Horse Affair and its aftermath

(see Baxter 2016 for more detail). In order to understand the ways in which these political partialities play out, it is important to understand both the readership of the particular newspapers under scrutiny, and the ways in which the newspapers frame their stories in order to reach out to this readership; to engage them and boost newspaper circulation in the process (Negrine 2013).

In England, the increase in media interest in the policy field of Education, has been prompted by a number of factors, not least of these resulting from a number of policy innovations brought about by the Conservative/Liberal Coalition which came to power in 2010. Under the direction of Michael Gove MP, The Coalition Government embarked upon some of the most substantial changes to education since the 1988 Education Reform Act opened up education as a marketplace, side lining the role of Local Education Authorities and encouraging schools to opt for greater levels of financial and curricular independence (Parliament 1988; Maclure 1989). The Act which also enjoined parents as consumers and instigated educational reform was premised on rational choice theory: a form of economic monetarism which assumes that individuals make prudent and logical decisions based around self-interest and personal satisfaction, and that consumer satisfaction is maximised by a marketplace that offers ample choice (Laver 1997, p. 22). Although power is only one of a number of goals of the media—'*alongside profits, sales, dominance, entertainment*,' political influence remains important to both newspaper owners and editors, as well as individual journalists. As Rupert Murdoch (media magnate) explained to his biographer, '*That's the fun of it, isn't it? Having a little smidgen of power*,' (Dean 2013, p. 8).

The Academies Project

Although Lawton was able to identify certain traits of Labour's political thinking on education, he does point out that in the case of New Labour, much of their work under Tony Blair tended to countermand traditional Labour educational ideologies founded on ethical principles emerging from a structural functionalist belief, and based on shared values that centre around education as a shaper of society (Lawton 2005, vii). Early labour policies developed between 1990 and 1994 by the Labour Think tank The Institute of Public Policy research were developed around socialist values, but in spite of an election manifesto which outlined the centrality of education to Labour policy, and a focus on educations' transformational potential, New Labour's approach to schooling in many ways replicated the previous Conservative Government's approach which centred around neo-liberal ideals of for example: choice, competition, autonomy, performativity, centralisation and prescription (see Clarke and Newman 2010).

The Academies project, a flagship policy initially instigated by the Labour Government under Tony Blair, was originally set up in order to convert failing schools, often in deprived, inner city areas, into more successful ones (Woods et al. 2007).

In 2010 the project was intensified and widened by the Academies Act 2010 (Parliament 2010). The Act changed the way in which the policy could be applied: under Labour, the policy was initially reserved for failing schools in inner city areas, but under the new regulations, outstanding schools too could opt for academy conversion. The Academies Project firstly under Michael Gove, the Conservative Secretary of State for Education, and subsequently Nicky Morgan, progressed this market ideology and neo-liberal belief in efficiency of the market to effect *natural selection* sorting strong schools from weak by a gradual process of elimination based on public choice (Gorard 2009). From 2010 under The Coalition Government and subsequent Conservative Government (elected May 2015), the school inspectorate Ofsted, (The Office for Standards in Education, children, families and skills), has been placed under a great deal of pressure to regulate perceptibly 'failing schools' and thus 'encouraging' their conversion to academy status. This is largely premised on the Conservative belief that school financial and curricular autonomies leads to improved standards in education (see Baxter 2016, Chap. 1 this volume).

The English inspectorate, Ofsted set up in 1992 by John Major's Conservative Government and based originally around the principles of transparency and value for money defined within his Citizens Charter (Parliament 1991), is a quasi-autonomous government agency (QUANGO), originally designed to provide greater information into the so called 'secret garden of information'—a pejorative term coined by the Conservative Minister David Eccles to describe his dislike of, 'important areas closed to public scrutiny and discussion' (Lawton 1978, p. 13). It proclaims its independence to inspect, 'Without Fear or Favour', a powerful mantra designed to indicate its lack of partiality to any particular political agenda, and its freedom from influence by the teaching profession (Ofsted 2012). Its longevity bears testimony to its ability to transcend the electoral cycle by remaining purportedly impartial to prevailing government ideologies and political agendas (Flinders 2008). Following the demise of the original inspectorate, Her Majesty's Inspectorate, during the late 80s, Ofsted was also designed to eliminate what was perceived by The then Conservative Government, to be an incursion of progressive ideals into the curriculum, an incursion blamed on inspectors whose relationship with schools was thought to be too cosy by half (Maclure 2000). One of the most contentious and enduring of all of the Quangos that appeared within the early nineties, Ofsted has been a source of focus and fascination for both the media and government who have on a number of occasions, criticised its methodology, value for money (Ofsted 2004; Parliament 2011a, b), and the educational outcomes associated with it (Matthews and Sammons 2004). Since 2010 this media attention has intensified, and with it, accusations of political partiality and invocations of international comparisons that appear to illustrate that in spite of some 20 years of costly inspection, England still lags some way behind its OECD counterparts when it comes to educational outcomes (OECD 2010); the media's reporting of results of international studies such as PISA (Programme for International School

Assessment), has in itself created a political focus for educational policy, as is documented in Grek's (2008) report on PISA in the British Media (Grek 2008).

Although the power of the inspectorate to shape policy has varied since its inception, there is little doubt that its core regulatory role in the governing of education, is influential in the forming, shaping and to a certain extent the spinning of government education policy (Baxter 2016). It has traditionally exerted a powerful influence on communities and via its inspections and reports, and in common with inspectorates throughout Europe, has coloured public perception on education (see Chaps. 1–8, this volume), as well as exerting a Prospero like effect-often hidden yet always powerful, on education policy. It adopts a normatively, 'common sense' approach largely based on quantitative data which is aimed at convincing both public and government of its centrality and credibility in the field of maintaining and raising educational standards (Ozga et al. 2011).

But the issue of whether it is impartial has dogged it since inception.

> Although the inspectorate was keen to promote its independence, media coverage of inspection between 2012 and early 2014 was riddled with references to its supposed 'cosiness' with government. It appeared to many that far from being the independent body it purported to be, Ofsted was portrayed instead as mere 'tool' of government complicit in carrying out Michael Gove's 'ideological agenda' to convert failing schools into academies (Gunter 2011), in spite of evidence from a number of reports, including one by The House of Commons Education Committee, suggesting that becoming an academy is far from guaranteed to raise standards (HCEC, 2014–15 in Baxter 2016, p. 42).

Inspection, as other chapters within this volume amply demonstrate, is not easy work at the best of times, but any sense that inspectors might be pushing a particular agenda, renders it doubly so. When inspectors are judged before they even enter a school their work, whether they see that work as a driver for school improvement or regulatory office responsible for compliance, (see Chaps. 3 and 4 this volume), their perceived ability-or lack of it-to place school interests before those of their 'political masters' leaves the entire process hanging in the balance. Given the press interest in Ofsted since its inception it is little wonder that public opinion of the agency and its work vacillates between credulous belief and vituperative hatred, and that this in turn influences how inspectors carry out their work.

The Newspapers

Legacy media in the UK are a far from homogenous group. The history of the development of the British newspaper is complex and riddled with political, social and economic battles waged against a background of both national and international news cultures. *As Kevin Williams argues*, '*newspapers mean different things to different people. A variety of functions can be attributed to the different needs of advertisers, readers, owners, editors, politicians, governments, amongst others*,'

Fig. 9.1 Framework for
media analysis
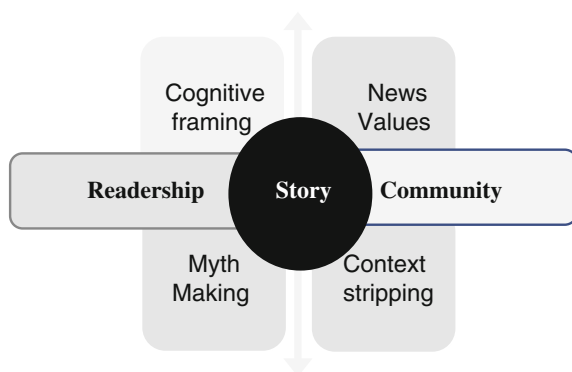
(Williams 2010, p. 10). Cultural theorists such as James Carey and Raymond
Williams believe that the newspaper fulfils two very distinct functions. The first, is
overt: to transmit daily or weekly news; the second, a little less so but no less
powerful: to bring together the readership into the form of community that Hall
refers to earlier (Carey 2008). In order to explore how this community is achieved,
it is useful to draw on the work of Erving Goffman whose writing investigates the
frames of understanding employed by individuals when interpreting texts or media.
Goffman argues that these frames are often united by a set of shared values that
either overtly or covertly appeal to individuals within a particular community
(1974). In terms of the news media, a number of media researchers have revealed
that particular frames of understanding can be triggered by links to existing debates
by employing textual metaphors that create cognitive links between one story and
another. These are classed under the umbrella term *news values*, by media analysts
(for example Negrine 2013; Golding 1982). These values often link to individual's
belief systems, personal identities s and political affiliations. News values also
possess a second meaning which refers to a journalist or editor's frame of reference
in relation to their particular conception of what will appeal most to reader values—
this is then translated into an estimation of the value of a particular story in relation
to the readership, a basis for inclusion or exclusion of particular articles. Using the
Academy Project as articulated by The 2010 Academies Act this chapter analyses
how three specific newspapers use references to Ofsted in order to engage and
influence their readership on areas relating to academy policy, and how using
Ofsted in this way may have the effect of undermining the agency's claims of
impartiality, affecting the work of inspectors and how it is received by inspectees.
Using the framework in Fig. 9.1 for analysis, the paper looks to respond to the
following questions: (A) to what extent do broadsheet newspapers frame their
approach to the Academy Project within the context of Ofsted? (B) What values are
assumed of the readership of each newspaper and how are these mobilised within
news articles (C) What do the results of questions A and B imply for Ofsted's
claims of impartiality from government?

Caveats

Although the study acknowledges that online news media are increasingly influential in affecting public opinion, research into readership and other information about how readers engage with online content, is still in its infancy. Bearing this in mind, in order to investigate the research questions the research is confined to three broadsheet newspapers based in the UK: The Times, The Telegraph and The Guardian. Audience analysis is also confined to elections before 2010 as the 2015 elections were analysed in relation to readership which includes online content. These three particular newspapers were chosen due to their long history and great deal of information that is known about their readership. Taking each publication in turn, the next part of the chapter examines the reader affiliations of each in order to explore research question one in light of the readership of each publication.

The Papers

Established in 1785 The Times has had a mixed political affiliation; Although it was originally considered to be a fairly moderate publication which for a number of years supported The Conservative Party, it moved to support Labour in the 2001 and 2005 general elections (see Table 9.2). According to statistical data its readership currently runs at. 1.3 million people daily, 87% of these readers fall into Group ABC1 with an average household income of £45.000, its Sunday edition, The Sunday Times is read by 2.5 million people with 49% of its readership possessing a degree or higher (UK 2014b) (Table 9.1).

During the 2010 election the newspaper declared its support for the Conservative party. The last pole by Mori showing voting intentions of the three newspapers is illustrated in Table 9.1. According to Media UK, there are slightly more male readers than female with 59% male readers to 41% females. Seventy three point four percent of readers are over thirty four years of age, whilst only twenty six point six percent are between the ages of fifteen and thirty four. The voting affiliations of readers, in 2010 showed that forty percent of readers intended to vote Conservative, with twenty nine percent for the Liberal Democrats and just twenty six percent intending to vote Labour (UK 2014a).

The Guardian describes its readership as, 'affluent, young urban consumers,' 'well connected, information hungry, vocal and voracious media consumers,' 89% of the readers fall into social grades ABC1[1] out of a possible 54% of all adults. Forty seven percent of them working full time (Guardian 2010a). In contrast with The Times, The Guardian has supported Labour for six elections, whilst also supporting the Liberal Democrats in 1992, 1997, 2001 and in 2001. In terms of its

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[1]Higher managerial, administrative, or professional, intermediate managerial, administrative or professional, supervisory or clerical, junior managerial or professional (Guardian 2010b).

Table 9.1 Voting affiliations of readership 2005

Paper	Conservative	Labour	Liberal democrat	Scottish/Welsh Nationals	Green Party	UK Independence Party	Other
The Times	40	26	29	1	2	2	1
The Telegraph	61	15	17	0	0	4	1
The Guardian	5	44	37	1	9	1	3

http://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/755/Voting-Intention-by-Newspaper-Readership.aspx

Table 9.2 Support for political parties from 1987 to 2010 by Newspaper [adapted from figures in The Guardian (2010b)]

Paper	1987	1992	1997	2001	2005	2010
The Times	C	C	C	L	L	C
The Guardian	L	L/LD	L/LD	L/LD	L	L DEM
Telegraph	C	C	C	C	C	C

readership (Table 9.1), a mere five percent of its readership intended to vote Conservative in 2010, whilst forty four percent supported Labour and thirty seven percent, the Liberal Democrats.

The Daily Telegraph's readership comprises 88% of occupations ABC1, 52% of their readers are male whilst 48% are female. The average age of the telegraph reader is older than the other newspapers in the study, at sixty one, with 88% of readers falling into the thirty five plus age bracket and only 12% of its readership between the ages of fifteen and thirty four. The Daily Telegraph is a staunchly Conservative paper that has consistently supported The Conservative Party six elections prior to and including 2010. The voting intentions of the readership at the last election were again predominantly Conservative with 61% intending to vote for the Tories, 17% for the Liberal Democrats and only 15% for The Labour Party.

Drawing on the work of Goffman (1974), Negrine (2013), Wallace (1994a, b, 1996, 1997, 2007), this study draws upon a framework developed in my previous work on inspection in the media (see Baxter and Rönnberg 2014) in order to address the research questions for this study. The diagram illustrates four areas in which news stories influence their readership: the first, cognitive framing, is drawn from the work from Goffman and alludes to the ways in which stories are organised or framed in the context of existing experience and knowledge in the area. It specifically includes the use of metaphor to create links between reports, stories and public understandings in order to effect causal shifts in practices and policies. The second quadrant of the diagram refers to news values, or the ways in which media stories are coloured and conditioned to appeal to what newspapers know about their readership. In order to appeal to a particular readership they attempt to tap into their value systems. This can also be used to polarize debate by tapping into these same systems in order to provoke rage or disgust, depending on the desired reaction.

Exploring the values that are implicit within news stories can often indicate particular ideologies or assumptions that underpin them (Negrine 2013, p. 32). The remaining quadrants of the diagram allude to myth making or context stripping. This has already been mentioned in terms of the very '*short memory*' of the media, but it has other roots in terms of political democracy. Liberal democracy is grounded on the notion of 'legitimate governance and legitimacy requires the consent of the governed (Louw 2010, p. 77). This in relation to governance involves reconciliation of two seemingly contradictory needs,

> To try and prevent the masses from disrupting and convoluting the policy process by keeping them at arm's length from the actual decision making process […] to try to make the masses believe they are actually participating in governance as a way of building consent. (Louw 2010, p. 77)

One of the solutions that government employs in order to do this is to pursue 'calculated strategies of distraction (Louw 2010, p. 77). This can range from 'mobilising support for a person or position; demonizing people; creating pariah groups and building selective outrage, indignation and hostility' (Louw 2010, 83, see also Henig 2009; Jones 1995). Spinning in England became particularly popular during the Blair administration who employed 'spin doctors' in order to influence the media and to steer voter opinion on a variety of issues.

> Spin doctors are often engaged in trying to get journalists to look at damaging stories from a different angle […] to shift public perspectives on policy […] to mobilize public support for particular policies (Louw 2010, p. 105).

Evidence of spin is often seen as a distortion of values in order to produce the type of public ordure that leads to crisis; a phenomenon that Hall examines at length in his work on mugging (Hall et al. 1978). In this work Hall examines how the term mugging was variously framed and de contextualised in order to create a media sensation and public outcry, an outcry which concomitantly affected sentencing and policy in the longer term. Researchers in the field of education policy and the media also note the ways in which soundbites create a sense of urgency and dilemma (see Lingard and Rawolle 2004; Blackmore and Thomson 2004). These soundbites are influential in summing up the essence of an issue. A good example of this is to be found in the English Trojan Horse Drama (see Baxter 2016), in which the connotations of Trojan Horse not only suggest a plot but also suggest an element of combat—in this case government against Muslim hard liners. In this study distortion or de-contextualisation of events will be examined in light of the differing ways in which inspection is used to frame the Academy Project.

Methodology

A sample of 160 reports dating from January 2009 to April 2014 were drawn using Lexis Nexis news database. The reports were drawn using the search terms school inspection + academy/academies. The reports were filtered according to whether

Table 9.3 Breakdown of articles within sample

Newspaper	Number of articles	Dates
The Times	60	April 10-2009–May 6th 2014
The Telegraph	60	April 10-2009–May 6th 2014
The Guardian	60	April 10-2009–May 6th 2014

they were focused on academies or inspection—this was done by including only those with academy or academies in their title and/or by—lines and eliminated reports that centred upon the inspectorate in isolation. The reports were filed according to the particular publication and thematically coded using Nvivo Software. The three newspapers chosen for the reports were: The Times, The Telegraph and The Guardian. The final breakdown of articles is shown in Table 9.3.

The articles were coded according to the framework in Fig. 9.1. The key themes emerging from the coding process were further sub-categorised into elements within the themes. The paper uses critical discourse analysis to investigate the ideological context of the reports and the ways that they are framed to appeal to particular readerships, and to investigate how the three papers use the inspectorate in order to 'sell' their articles on academies (Berger 1992, 1995, 1997, 2011). I also employ Goffman's Frame analysis to further investigate this, and to analyse what kind of intertextual links—or links to other established arguments are employed in order to strengthen and give credibility to the frame in light of what this paper has already established about the readership within this study (Goffman 1974).

Findings

A preliminary word frequency search revealed that the word Ofsted was used most frequently in articles pertaining to academies. As a weighted percentage it appears as 1.14% of all articles whereas the word academy or academies appeared as 0.80 and 0.74% respectively. The tag cloud in Fig. 9.2 shows the thirty most frequent terms within the articles.

When the same search was performed for individual newspapers the results were slightly different (Table 9.4).

The Guardian and The Times use the word Ofsted most frequently in their articles about academies whilst The Telegraph use the term less frequently. All three employ it in relation to the term 'education', with The Telegraph and The Times using it more frequently than The Guardian. Analysis of the five most frequent words to appear after the four primary terms offers additional insights into the way in which the stories are framed. The most frequent words to be used within The Times are: e*ducation, Michael Wilshaw, Government, inspections* and *local*, reflect the newspaper's reputation as the voice of government (Williams 2010). Although the three newspapers mentioned Ofsted frequently an analysis of the way

Academies academy children education England first government inspection inspections inspectors' length local London Michael Ofsted measurement parents people primary pupils report school schools section staff Standards state teacher teachers teaching Wilshaw

Fig. 9.2 Most frequent 30 words appearing in all reports

Table 9.4 Frequency of word usage (weighted percentage)

Word	The Telegraph	The Guardian	The Times
Ofsted	0.80	1.29	1.28
Academy	0.74	0.77	1.02
Education	1.08	1.03	1.25
Academies	0.79	0.56	1.28
Most frequent 5 words after the above	Muslim, teachers, teacher, primary, state	Local, teachers, children, inspection, state	Education, Michael Wilshaw, teachers government, inspections, inspectors

in which they used it to frame their articles on academies reveals some considerable differences. The next part of the chapter looks at these differences in framing and the ways in which they frame Ofsted's independence (or the converse) from government.

The Times

The Times used the term Ofsted most frequently in association with Sir Michael Wilshaw HMCI (Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools), particularly in articles from 2010 onwards. Using HMCI to articulate particular values such as: *damning, outrage, targets, ambitions, champions; good education* and *cull* in order to refer to particular qualities apparently possessed by the Chief Inspector: these particular values 'reach out' to readers of the newspaper in order to illustrate a 'battle' for high standards. The term *outrage* is used frequently to indicate the depth of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's (HMCI) ostensible 'disgust' at the state of Education in

England. There is also a marked tendency to refer to his combative stance with words such as '*war*' used in conjunction with '*poor performance*'. These terms are powerful in giving the stories momentum and engaging the public in what appears to be a very personal battle between Chief Inspector and the educational establishment. This personalisation of an institution is a powerful and well known tool in mobilising a media argument (Jones 1995), 'translating official viewpoints into public idiom and creating a powerful personal link between the protagonist (in this case the HMCI) and the public' (Hall 1978: 61). In attributing emotions to this individual he is endowed with charismatic, hero like qualities that personify an ideological struggle between good, (the government agenda for education), and bad, (the educational establishment). This personification of a fight goes further when HMCI writing in The Times, identifies himself with Clint Eastwood—popular hero of Westerns and Sir Alex Ferguson—ex Manager of the successful Manchester United Football Club. These intertextual links with real and folk heroes are powerful influencers of public opinion often used in the tabloid press. In seventy percent of incidences in which HMCI is mentioned within stories, it is HMCI who is quoted and who himself makes these intertextual links. These not only extend to the qualities of inspirational leadership, but are also used in a more subtle manner in order to link intended future policies to personal feelings of disappointment in the education system. An example of this is to be found in the constant references made to schools being described as inadequate in articles that appear from 2011 until late in 2012. This word is then picked up in reports and press statements on the Ofsted website which link to a change in terminology for schools that were previously deemed 'satisfactory.' By linking the word satisfactory with constant reference to the terms 'coasting' and 'inadequate' the way is paved for those schools to be deemed 'failing' and converted into academies.

The words of Sir Michael are used to frame debate about academies in 32 out of 60 articles: His approach and personal characteristics used to justify the closing of schools with poor standards. In terms of framing their stories, out of the three newspapers The Times favoured this approach to a far greater extent than the other two papers. These narrative techniques have the effect of creating what appears to be coherence between government policy and Michael Wilshaw (representing Ofsted). Framing policy in this way echoes earlier studies, for example a study on poverty in the media by McKendrick et al. (2008). In their study they found that in news articles, understandings of poverty were most likely to be shaped by an authoritative expert voice: only sixteen percent of articulations of poverty in UK legacy media were articulated through the voices of any individuals actually experiencing poverty (page 21). In framing the debate on academies The Times uses 'common sense arguments' framed by known values of the readership in order to engage them in the debate. Rather than pursuing a 'for or against' policy on the monitoring and development of academies, it frames the debate within the wider one of good and poor standards in education. Attributing hero qualities to HMCI, the newspaper creates a personification of the fight against good and poor education and aligns itself with the academies project. In so doing it also creates coherence between Ofsted and the academies project—a Conservative Government policy.

Metaphors, jargon, euphemisms, puns and clichés,' tend to form part of what Allen refers to as the characterisation of a newspaper's 'social personality' (Allan 1999: 83). In attributing certain values to HMCI The Times employs these values to polarise debate on education. As part of its strategy to elicit emotional arousal (see Holland 1983; Herman and Chomsky 2008), it must also create a sense of the enemy; 'summoning the spectre,' (Clarke and Newman 2010), in a move that invokes Vogler's classic plot architecture (Vogler 1998). In the case of The Times the normative spectre is the failure of the education system and the resolution takes the form of the academies project, as implemented by the inspectorate. In terms of the frame, this places HMCI as the champion of good education leaving the role of the enemies of promise to be filled by someone or something. Although teachers and heads do get a mention in terms of resistance to change, within the predominant enemy of promise is without a doubt the teaching unions—particularly the National Union of Teachers (NUT) which is very often used as an eponym for all teaching unions. In a number of articles the terminology and descriptions are so vivid as to verge on spin (see Fig. 9.1) (Dean 2013). Although articles appear to give a balanced view of union activity, the way in which the information is, sequenced is done in such a way as to make the most extreme factions appear to be the norm— even in instances when the journalist does latter express the feeling that they are not the norm. A good example of this appears in the passage below; taken from The Times.

> The problem for the NUT is that these views, extreme and unrepresentative of most teachers as they may be, not only generate headlines but drive the union's policy and strategy. During the debate Tony Dowling, a delegate from Gateshead, urged a revolution to topple the British Government before 2015, similar to that in Egypt. Few delegates seem surprised and he received polite applause. (The Times; 110412)

The words used in association with the teaching unions are both powerful and militarised as illustrated in the diagram (Fig. 9.3).

The inspectors themselves are treated as good foot soldiers, championing the 'greater cause'. In so doing they must challenge poor practices. Where The Times mentions inspection or inspectors it refers to them in teaching terms normally associated with wise teaching or facilitation: *inspectors warn*, inspectors *advise*, inspectors *council*, inspectors *penalise*. This polarises the terms reserved for schools in terms of non-compliance with inspection: referring to *heads* that: *cheat*, teachers that *coast* and teachers that expect pay rises whatever the standard of their performance, and teacher unions that *rebel*.

Although The Times reports on academies with the same regularity as The Guardian and the Telegraph, its reports are framed in terms of a wider argument that centres on the improvement of education, personified by the fight articulated by the current HMCI to do right by parents, teachers and pupils. The articles display a common sense appeal to both left and right, engendering some of the ideals held dear by Conservative supporters: standards, achievement and economic competition, whilst also framing teachers and inspectors in language which is suggestive of the pupil teacher relationship. This has the effect of making the debate seem
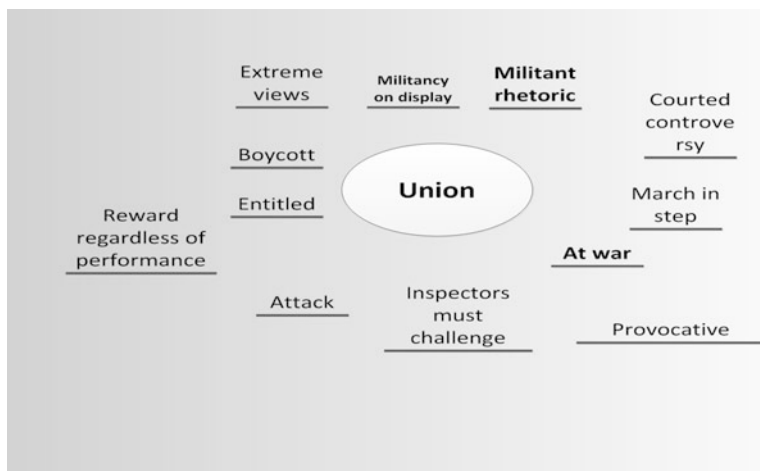
Fig. 9.3 Words associated with Teacher Unions—The Times

familiar: all readers can relate to these familiar and well used terms—engendering a sense of comfort on the part of the readership (Allan 1999). The academies project is framed as a by-product of the relentless march towards a better education system, one that will, in time, aid creation of a strong and economically competitive nation: sentiments that echo the Coalition Government's early declarations regarding education policy (DFE 2010; Parliament 2011a, b).

As I mentioned earlier in the chapter, The Times has one of the most inconsistent records in terms of political partisanship, vacillating in its support of Labour and The Conservative Party. It could be argued that its support of New Labour was predominantly due to its proximity in many respects to previous Conservative Policy, particularly in terms of education (Lawton 1994a, b, 2005).

The Telegraph

In contrast to The Times, The Daily Telegraph is a consistently Conservative newspaper, in the last election 61% of its readership indicated they would be voting Conservative. It has supported The Conservative Party at every election since 1987 (see Fig. 9.1). In his book on the history of British newspapers Williams describes it as, 'A strongly Conservative paper but independent in its thinking' (Williams 2010: 205). An analysis of the 60 articles revealed that the word academy was most commonly linked to the notion of struggling schools; how these schools fit into the scheme of things—education as it is today—making connections for the readership that 'prepare' them for subsequent debate on the issue:

> You can't learn from common sense how things are; you can only discover where they fit
> into the existing scheme of things (Hall 1978, p. 325).

The Telegraph locates its common sense approach to academies by locating within the, 'range of cultural and social identifications,' of its readership (Hall 1978, p. 54). Although a Conservative newspaper, it draws heavily on The Labour instigated notion of academies as transformers of failing schools in difficult areas (Lawton 2005). The analysis revealed it to be less overtly concerned about the politics behind academisation, focusing instead on problems with structure and management issues: governance, finance and financial mis-management. The whole debate on academisation is framed as a business discussion and the vocabulary employed to describe outcomes and issues emerging from the academisation of schools reflects this. This manner of framing the academies project, invokes a high incidence of terms that cognitively link with business: *leadership; quality; performance; improvement; trust; failing; directors; boards; sponsors; under-performance; outstanding; taxpayers money.* Within this inspectorate is firmly framed as an agent of government, rather than an independent agency—in spite of the fact that some stories focus on a battle between the Secretary of State for Education and The Head of Ofsted—Michael Wilshaw. In some cases the inspectorate was completely left out of direct action, but remains implicit in the pursuit of such actions, as illustrated by these quotations:

> In most cases, restrictions are imposed where officials have concerns over education standards. But some cases have emerged of academy chains suspected of misusing tax-payers' money. (The Telegraph: 190314)

> But school expansion can be difficult; missteps can be expected. The lesson from American reform is that entirely new schools are as likely to fail as new companies. And such failures do attract headlines. (The Telegraph; 280214)

In keeping with the cognitive framing of the academies project in business terms, the paper also engages its Conservative readership by emphasising the links between the academies project and economic success. This emphasis lies not only within the province of Conservative education policy, but is part of a wider international move towards neo-liberal ideals in education, one that frames education in almost purely economic terms (Ozga et al. 2011; Robertson and Dale 2002). In England a number of the numerous Education Acts within the period from 1988 onwards have made this link explicit: In 1994 The White Paper: Competitiveness: Helping Business to Win, 'specifically intended to encourage what was now seen as the most important, if not the only, purpose of education—servicing the human resource needs of the economy,' (Lawton 2005, p. 111). These links to economic competitiveness are framed as a common sense approach to schooling and are based on an implicit assumption that the private sector is efficient and cost effective, whilst the public sector is bureaucratic and economically draining for the tax payer. There are numerous examples throughout stories appearing in The Telegraph, which juxtapose the idea of business efficiency with the idea of the organisational impoverishment of the public services.

The paper also has a tendency to de-contextualise the inspection process by aligning past frameworks with lax standards and poor performance—particularly when criticising The Labour Party, as illustrated by the following quotation:

> Labour claims - with the aid of highly misleading reporting by the state broadcaster - that the statistics prove its point. For example, a higher proportion of maintained schools in England are rated outstanding. This conveniently omits a crucial fact. Most of the maintained schools in question were inspected under the old Ofsted regime: a liberal system that tolerated failure and awarded far more schools "outstanding" status than deserved it (The Telegraph; 010813).

This is particularly powerful in aligning the inspectorate with political agendas rather than situating it as an independent agency.

The Telegraph, in common with The Times tends to refer the teaching unions as enemies of promise: militant and intransigent employees that are by and large, inimical to the education of Britain's young people. The paper articulates this by juxtaposing their *dogmatic and* '*luddite*' views within a frame that appeals to the common sense values of the paper's conservative readership. The NUT (National Union of Teachers) is employed as an eponym for all teaching unions. The use of this juxtaposition is particularly striking in these quotations:

> The results have not pleased the teaching unions, which say that Sir Michael likes to "inject fear into the school community". But they are more in line with reality: under these tougher criteria, 62 per cent of schools have been judged "good or outstanding". By that measure, free schools really are doing better than the national average (The Telegraph; 010813)

> It would not be surprising if IES Breckland were categorised as "inadequate" - the worst result. For the teaching unions, who loathe reform in general and profit-seeking schools in particular, this will be seen as vindication (The Telegraph: 280214).

The Guardian

The Guardian readership is predominantly left wing/Liberal Democrat as indicated by Tables 9.1 and 9.2 earlier in the paper. In contrast to The Times and The Telegraph it frames the academies project in political terms. Rather than linking it to the business values core to stories in The Telegraph; The Guardian frames the debate in terms of society and achievement of parity within educational provision. Out of the three papers it couches Ofsted and its inspectors in political terms; placing it and them as a semi-independent political players in the field of education.

> It's kind of astounding it's taken them so long to visit. Can you imagine that, had this been a Haringey local authority school, Ofsted would not have been all over the school very quickly? (The Guardian; 080414).

In terms of values, it appeals to its left wing readership by framing its stories about academies in relation to both the ideological nature of the project and the untimely haste with which it has been carried out. In polemicizing debate, it creates

the impression of a system in chaos with neither parents and teachers nor inspectorate able to keep up with the constant changes. It does so in a number of ways: it emphasises division rather than cohesion between inspectorate and government:

> As the education secretary, Michael Gove, and minister David Laws apparently battle it out over whether Ofsted should inspect academy chains, news comes in that, it seems, the watchdog has already begun coordinated inspections of schools within chains. (The Guardian: 110214)

In contrast to The Telegraph, it emphasises the lack of wholehearted public support for the project, using Ofsted as a means by which to emphasise this and drive home the point that this is—in their view—a government orchestrated project designed on an ideological basis rather than the wishes of the electorate:

> What both parties have not mentioned though is that the academy programme is far from a proven success; while there are some good ones, increasingly Ofsted, parents and teachers are blowing the whistle on some pretty terrible academies. (The Guardian; 071009)

In contrast to the other two papers it places Ofsted as defenders of the educational establishment and parental rights—an element which is rarely seen in either of the other papers. It rarely portrays Ofsted in aversive terms, preferring instead to see it as an organisation that is labouring to retain education as its focus—an agency embroiled in constant and relentless battle for independence from political interference. The phrases most frequently linked to Ofsted in terms of the academy project include: *criticised + academy; found academy had failed; judge the flagship school; judged inadequate; placed in special measures; the gaze of accountability; audits of academy chains; Ofsted refuses; inspectors police*. These terms among others place the inspectorate as part of a struggling public service, attempting to impose some sort of order upon a system that has—due to government ideology—grown too fast for its own good.

The Media Policy Link

If, as some researchers assert, that a, 'direct symbiotic link exists between media, public opinion and education policy,' (Anderson 2007; Yanovitzky 2002a) then the analysis in this paper has gone some way to analysing how this effect is produced and how powerful it is in seeking influence public opinion. In framing and aligning stories on the academy project with the values and political beliefs of what is known about their readership, the legacy media use the English inspectorate in very different ways. In invoking the inspectorate—a powerful influence on education policy—in debates on education policy they frame the debate using the values that they believe will be most influential in engaging their readership. Each newspaper creating their own common sense version of the project that focuses on different aspects of the policy; each creating its own cultural representation of education today with 'no major cultural or economic breaks, no major conflicts of interest,' within the readership (Hall 1978, p. 55).

The impact of this framing on inspectors working 'at the chalk face' is undoubtedly a powerful one, influencing both inspectees and the wider public. It is perhaps little wonder that the inspectorate is so often linked to government and party political agendas as these are the very elements that sell most copy. It is widely recognised that the most influential education stories are reported not only in the education section of the papers, but feature in the political sections too (see Baxter 2016, Chap. 3). This makes for a toxic combination for an agency which constantly seeks to distance itself from party politics and ideology. Although this study has not sought to investigate how inspectors feel about media representations of their work, it is clear from this and many other studies that have featured within this chapter, that public opinion does affect the work of 'street level bureaucrats' and that this opinion is often created and coloured by the media in any number of ways; relating not only to how the work is carried out, but also how it changes in relation to public opinion and government policy (see Chaps. 1–9 this volume, see also, Hall et al. 1978; Golding and Middleton 1982).

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Chapter 10
The Short Flourishing of an Inspection System

Herbert Altrichter

Abstract During recent decades many school systems in Europe have undergone extensive changes in their governance structures. The guiding image of this 'modernisation' was an idea of evidence-based governance of schooling: 'New school inspections' have been a recurrent feature of such modernised governance systems in most countries. In this chapter the case of the development, implementation and replacement of 'team inspection', an example of such a 'modernised' inspection system in the Austrian province of Styria, is explained and analysed based on documentary analysis and interview data. This case is illuminating in at least two respects: Firstly, school inspection is certainly a 'travelling policy' which has been taken up by different national school systems. While on a general level many features of national inspections seem to recur again and again, they may take on different meanings when embedded into different national and cultural frameworks. The Austrian case allows for examination of what happens when elements of 'evidence-based governance' are embedded into a system of long-standing centralist bureaucratic school administration. Secondly, a number of countries have recently changed their original formats to introduce another 'new generation of inspections'. The Austrian case allows cross-national comparison of reasons and principles underlying these changes.

Keywords Austria · School inspection · Quality management · Quality assurance · Quality development

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Introduction, Research Questions and Method

During recent decades many school systems in Europe have undergone extensive changes in their governance structures. The guiding image for this 'modernisation' was an idea of evidence-based governance of schooling: 'New school inspections' have been a recurrent feature of such modernised governance systems in most countries.

From a governance perspective (Altrichter and Maag Merki 2016) inspectorates are a cultural invention which is to contribute to coordinating and regulating multi-level systems (which are complex and characterized by specialized knowledge) by bridging the distances between a multitude of actors (Clarke 2011) and by supporting 're-contextualisation' (Fend 2006, p. 174) of quality concepts and strategies between levels. The contributions of inspectorates are 'indirect'; they support system coordination by mediating between actors on various levels, in particular between the regulative requirements of education policy and top administration on one hand and the classrooms and schools which are the places where system performance is produced on the other.

In this chapter I want to analyse the development, implementation and replacement of a 'team inspection' model in the Austrian province of Styria: an example of a new inspection system which aims to 'modernise' the governance relationships in a school system.

The case will be organised around three research questions. Basing the work on the assumption that 'new inspections' are a major contemporary means of modernizing education governance I will ask:

(1) *In what respect are governance relationships in this school system changed by implementing a new inspection model?*

School inspection is certainly a 'travelling policy' (Ozga and Jones 2006) which has been taken up by different national school systems. While on a general level many features of inspections seem to recur again and again, they may take on different meanings when embedded into different national and cultural frameworks. The Austrian case allows examination of what is happening when elements of 'evidence-based governance' are embedded into a system of long-standing centralist bureaucratic school administration. As a consequence the following questions are discussed:

(2) *What specific features of 'new school inspections' are emphasized and downgraded in this model and in its implementation? How can they be connected to the specific systemic context?*

Recently a number of countries has altered their original formats of 'new inspections' in order to introduce another generation of inspections. The Austrian case allows identification of reasons and principles of these changes and their cross-national :comparisons:

(3) *What reasons are given for changing the 'new inspection system'? What principles are applied in the construction of an alternative system?*

The description and analysis of the case is based on documentary analysis, literature research, and interview data collected in two phases: In 2011 in-depth interviews with members of the inspectorate were conducted in order to record their understanding of the inspection model and their ways of putting it into practice (relevant for research question 1 and 2). In the school year 2012/13, i.e. in the year in which the inspection system was changed again; additional interviews were held with members of the inspectorate and the department head for school quality assurance in the Ministry of Education in order to collect views on the changes in inspection (relevant for research question 1 and 3; see list of data sources at the end of the chapter). Interviews were recorded and transcribed. The material was then analyzed according to a strategy of thematic coding (see Flick 1996, p. 206).

School Administration and 'New Inspections'

During recent decades many school systems in Europe have undergone extensive changes in their governance structures. Improvement of effectiveness, equity and quality in education (Faubert 2009) have been proclaimed as the goals of these changes. Accountability of educational services (Barber 2004), output orientation and evidence-based decision making in education policy, school and classroom development have been the main operational principles guiding these governance reforms (Altrichter and Maag Merki 2016). In this scenario of unfolding an evidence-based governance of schooling 'new school inspections' have occupied an important place.

While school inspections have been in operation in many countries since the 19th century (van Bruggen 2010), inspection systems have been modernised (Ehren and Honingh 2011; Jones and Tymms 2014) and new inspectorates have been built up (e.g. in the German states; see Döbert et al. 2008; Rürup 2008) since the 1990s in order to cope with the increased demands for accountability and to control and promote the quality of schools more resolutely.

These 'new inspections' seem to have some features in common depending upon the particular country (see Altrichter and Kemethofer 2016):

- *Explicit criteria and procedures*: While the criteria of traditional inspections were not always explicitly laid down but 'incarnated' in the authority of the experienced and hierarchically superordinate professional (which the inspector was), the work of 'new inspectorates' is characterized by explicit quality criteria (often laid down in extensive 'quality frameworks' which are openly accessible to the public) and by standardized procedures (represented by forms, checklists, etc.).
- *Expertness through reference to research*: 'New inspections' aim to professionalize their evaluative functions by various references to social research: They refer to research findings for formulating and justifying the criteria of their quality frameworks; they employ externally collected data, for example, statistics and performance data, and they enrich their operation by the use of

instruments (e.g. interviews, standardized classroom observation) taken from social science. Transparency and reference to research is supposed to support legitimacy and acceptance by schools and the public.

- *Involvement of stakeholders*: 'New inspections' often include stakeholders in the school (e.g. parents, community, local business) into data collection and presentation of results. This is not only aimed at making inspection judgements more valid, but also aims to boost improvement as a consequence of inspections: Knowledgeable stakeholders will support the school's development efforts or, if this is not the case, built up 'accountability pressure' by urging school staff to improve quality.

By virtue of these features 'new inspections' fit well to the image of rationalized control propagated by the proponents of evidence-based governance. School inspections are expected to monitor the quality of schools under local management. They are also often seen as an important strategy to bridge the distance between central government and locally produced and delivered public services such as education (Clarke 2011). By virtue of their intermediate position, inspections are one way of ensuring that strategies and requirements formulated by the top levels of government and administration translate into appropriate processes and structures in schools. On the other hand, inspection systems can also be used to probe and explore the current state of schools according to specific quality criteria (Ehren et al. 2013). By producing data in a more 'localised' or 'contextualised' way than other monitoring instruments (e.g. large scale student assessment), school inspections are expected to promote school improvement with higher probability as they often incorporate context-rich means for development actions (Gärtner and Pant 2011; Ehren et al. 2013). At the same time, school inspections collect knowledge about the current state of quality in the school system at an organisational level, which allows for reporting to higher levels within the education system, particularly to inform the development of education policy.

There are common features of European school inspections, however, there are also distinct differences (see e.g. Van Bruggen 2010; Ehren et al. 2013; Döbert et al. 2008; Janssens and van Amelsvoort 2008). New school inspection is clearly a 'travelling policy' which has been imported by some national education systems. Embedding this policy into different national political contexts, education systems and governing apparatuses will—according to Ozga and Jones (2006)—result in varying constellations which cannot be expected to function and produce in identical ways. I want to highlight two features which may be important for analysing this case.

Monitoring, control and enforcement of service quality and lawfulness are clear and regular responsibilities of line management, i.e. of the directly superior management persons in any hierarchical organisation. Why—one might ask—is a specific body of inspectors needed; indeed, why are the levels of school administration which are superordinate to individual schools not in themselves capable of fulfilling the function of quality evaluation? (Altrichter and Kemethofer 2016).

For many countries which have served as exemplars for 'new inspections' the explanation is relatively straightforward: Their schools have not been directly

administrated by the central state, but by administrative bodies acting on an intermediary level: In England Local Education Authorities were once completely responsible for the administration of their school systems, for hiring personnel and for support services (Jopling and Hadfield 2015, p. 50), their role in these activities has been downgraded as a result of recent emphasis on school autonomy. Maintenance and administration of schools was done by the local communities in Scandinavian countries and by the 'school boards' of the local governments or by the various non-state school systems in the Netherlands. In all these cases inspectorates control whether or not these actors on intermediary levels fulfil the quality demands set by central state.

Why would inspectorates be necessary in the school systems of Austria and the German federal states (Bundesländer) considering that the administration of such bodies are considered to be exemplars of centralized bureaucracies? In a traditional centralist and state orientated perspective the individual school is the last link within a bureaucratic-hierarchical organization in which there is "an unbroken chain of legitimation from the top administrative level (which is responsible to the parliament) to the executive level[1]" (Lange 2003, p. 139). In such a system the state school administration itself would be in a position to take on all tasks of quality control and development.

In fact, 'external evaluation' of schools has been and still is a traditional part of the official tasks of the intermediary levels of school administration (called "Schulaufsicht") in Austria and in German states (Maritzen 2008, p. 87). Nevertheless, all German states have introduced different varieties of new inspection systems since the middle of the 2000s, in addition to existing administrative bodies and without substantially changing their responsibilities (Füssel 2008, p. 156). Some commentators have expressed surprise at the speed of this "viral expansion over the whole republic" (Füssel 2008, p. 153), whilst also criticizing the lack of clarity within the division of labour between intermediary administrative bodies and new inspections, along with the lack of plausible justification for the reconstruction of evaluative function in the school system (Maritzen 2008, p. 86). "Vague references to experiences in foreign countries had to suffice" (Füssel 2008, p. 154).

What reasons can be given for this quick transformation in a long-standing system? For Maritzen (2008, p. 85) the introduction of 'new inspection' bodies in German states is an element of the reconstruction of governance structures in the school system which was considered politically necessary after the PISA shock of 2011. On the other hand, these changes are also seen as a "reaction to a crisis of the intermediary school administration" which was widely considered ineffective in terms of quality assurance (Maritzen 2008, p. 88; see also Lange 2003, p. 141). In the course of new developments in the education system (e.g. school autonomy, increased quest for accountability, more and better performance data, evidence-based policy) traditional ways of creating system information by intermediary administrative bodies seemed to lag behind new demands and opportunities (Maritzen 2008, p. 94; Füssel 2008, p. 153).

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[1]All texts from German language sources have been translated by the author.

This specific relationship between existing administrative and 'new evaluative' functions must be kept in mind when analyzing inspection in 'Continental governance regimes', such as Germany or Austria (West and Nikolai 2013; Pavolini 2015). I take up this theme in the analysis of the Austrian case. But there is another feature which may distinguish between ways of functioning and variation of results: This is the '*evaluative context*' of national education systems into which inspections are embedded (and which they themselves communicate to the school system). In *high-stakes* systems school inspection is aimed at controlling quality and promoting quality development by using mechanisms of hierarchical control and/or market-mechanisms. Inspections represent 'hard governance' structures which operate through target-setting, indicators, benchmarks, and evaluations (Grek et al. 2013, p. 495). In such systems 'accountability pressure' is designed to be an important factor to promote improvement activities (see Reezigt and Creemers 2005, p. 410). In the context of inspection arrangements pressure on schools can be regulated by using certain elements such as: differentiated inspections, thresholds for distinguishing failing schools, comparative student performance information, administering sanctions and incentives, and publishing inspection results of individual schools (see Altrichter and Kemethofer 2015). *Low-stakes* or 'soft governance' regimes on the other hand emphasize rational insight (Böttger-Beer and Koch 2008), self-regulation and supportive context as the spring boards of improvement. By providing meaningful information to schools, inspections are meant to give new insights to in-school actors which they will use for quality development of schools and classrooms.

Quality Assurance in the Austrian Education System

The Austrian education system in many respects resembles those of the German states and has been rightly subsumed under a shared category of 'Continental governance regimes' by West and Nikolai (2013). There is a predominant statist idea of education, and a strong central administration in operation; this is organised as a hierarchical bureaucracy with a line of command from the Ministry in the capital over intermediate administrative bodies in the provinces and regions to individual schools.

In a similar manner to Germany, Austria was badly struck by a PISA shock in that the student performance unearthed by the comparative assessments did not match the long-held self-image of a well-functioning school system. In both countries these studies captured much public attention, and built up pressure for politics to show capacity to act (see Tillmann et al. 2008). And in both countries education policy reacted by 'modernising' the governance of education systems along the tenets of 'evidence-based policy and school development'. Important building blocks of the new governance architecture were the introduction of performance standards, standard-related comparative nation-wide testing, and data feedback, the establishment of regular 'national education reports', and—not least —the development of new inspection regimes.

While the elements and the general direction of reforms in 'Continental systems' are very similar to those used in other states, they have been "more cautious" (Pavolini 2015, p. 93) with respect to the pace and rigour of implementing them. Although there are relevant elements of marketisation and managerialisation in their policies, these countries cannot be seen as spearheads of these reforms, if for example they are compared to England and Sweden (for example: Pavolini 2015).

The introduction of 'new inspections' may be a good example for the moderating influence of particular system conditions. While inspection systems in Germany and Austria were modelled in many respects on the operative features of English and Dutch predecessors, the proponents insisted that inspection should not work through putting pressure on schools and teachers, but by providing additional information which would fuel the 'insight' of participants (Böttger-Beer and Koch 2008; Rürup 2008).

This does not seem to be mere ideology as, from a comparative perspective, Austrian school leaders report on significantly less 'accountability pressure' than their English and Swedish counterparts. They initiate fewer development activities in the wake of inspections, but see also fewer unintended consequences of inspections (e.g. narrowing the curriculum, discouraging teachers from new teaching methods; see Altrichter and Kemethofer 2015; Ehren et al. 2015).

Both Austria and German states did not originally possess separate bodies for administration and inspection before the post-PISA reforms. There is, however, one important difference between them: While intermediary administrators in the education systems of the German states were usually referred to by administrative terms such as "Schulaufsicht" or "Bezirksregierung", Austrian regional administrators have held the functional title of 'inspectors' since the second half of the 19th century (Scheipl and Seel 1985). Several supervisory functions for schools were traditionally amalgamated within this role. Inspectors were both administrative superiors to the schools in their region (e.g. distributing staff and resources to individual schools) and also responsible for 'inspecting' and controlling the quality of the schools in their region. Criteria for assessing 'quality' may have varied over time but have always included some mixture of educational effectiveness and quality aspects on one hand along with legal and administrative appropriateness on the other.

Characteristics of the School Administration/Inspection Before Post-PISA Developments

The legal basis for administration and supervision of schools in Austria was the *Federal Act on School Supervision* (Bundes-Schulaufsichtsgesetz; quoted as BSAG 1962) which originated from the last big school reform in 1962 and was amended in 2008. Federal administration and supervision of schooling is enacted on the highest level by the *ministry of education* (BSAG 1962 § 3 (1)).

The next administrative level is made up from federal offices in the nine provinces called *Provincial School Administration* (*Landesschulrat; LSR*). Although this is an office of the central state, regional politics has a heavy influence on the recruitment of its leading officers and can shape its practical operation which may result in some differences in the operation and the features of the regional school systems.

The *supervision of schooling* (which is called in BSAG 1962, § 18 "Schulinspektion") is federal responsibility practically exerted by "civil servants of the school supervision service". *Duties and work procedures of inspectors* are not specifically stipulated in this law, but entrusted to special ministerial decrees, e.g. to the Circular 1999–64 on the "Task Profile of School Supervision" (BMUK 1999) which was valid in the period analysed here. This document assigns "multiple functions" to inspectors: They are inspection agents for school supervision and they also have educational-administrative tasks in the respective (state or district) school administration office" (BMUK 1999, III). They have supervisory tasks with respect to their *regional system* and individual *schools* within this system. Supervision (including consultancy, control, and development) of *individual teachers* is primarily a task of the head person of individual schools (BMUK 1999, III, 2.2).

The main *criteria for inspections* were "educational effectiveness and quality" and "legal, administrative and economical appropriateness" (BMUK 1999, III, 2.2). The task profile assumed that schools have already established a process of self-evaluation and critical examination of their work. The procedures and results of these activities were to be included in a 'school programme' which formed the "starting point" for the evaluation by school inspectors (see BMUK 1999, III, 2.2). The provisions for the conduct of a school inspection were extremely vague: A school inspection was to be carried out by the single inspector administratively responsible for the specific school. "Where appropriate, an external evaluation may be conducted by a team headed by the responsible inspector also for several days" (BMUK 1999, III, 2.2). As a *consequence of a school inspection* an official briefing ("Dienstbesprechung") took place "with the headperson and the group of people concerned, the most important task of which is promoting efficient school development and educational, subject-related, and teaching methodology-related counselling". The result of this meeting, its consequences and perspectives were documented in order to guarantee "commitment and sustainability" (BMUK 1999, III, 2.2). The entire wording of the regulations has an administrative-bureaucratic flavour, however, the language also seems to have a developmental and supportive accent as opposed to one that implies corrections and sanctions.

Team Inspection in Styria

In the wake of the PISA shock, inspectorates in some of the Austrian provinces began to discuss alternative ways of fulfilling their functions and to search for a new balance between administration, quality control and developmental support.

Although the work of inspections is organized according to a legal framework which is valid for all provinces in the same way, it leaves ample room for experimenting with new inspection modes, this resulted in different experimental inspection approaches in some of the Austrian provinces. The following case study reports on the development process and the features of the 'team inspection' model in the province of Styria (see Zoller 2005, 2008; Altrichter 2011).

The immediate cause for initiatives to analyze and change inspection practices in Styria was an examination process by the Austrian Court of Audit in 2003/04 which criticized the fact that inspectorates in the Austrian provinces did not work according to comparable criteria and that their results were not useful for comparative analyses and for well-founded development initiatives (RH 2007, 2009). In 2004 a working group of inspectors in this province was briefed to devise a rationale and a structured procedure for a more systematic way of inspecting schools. The group drew on experiences of EU inspectors and on inspection models from the German state of Lower Saxony (which itself was based on Dutch inspection practices) and England. In the school year 2005/06 an experimental version was piloted and for 2007/08 an amended version was produced. The legal basis for the experimental model remained the existing law on school supervision (BSAG 1962, § 17) and the "task profile for school inspection" which "did not mandate team inspection, but also did not forbid it" (CI1, p. 2[2]).

The *goals* of the new *team inspection model* were phrased in a supportive language in the inspection documents: Its aims: recognizing and appreciating the work of schools, stimulating and motivating schools to further development (see LSR 2010; Zoller 2008, p. 4), and allowing comparison for authorities (CI1, p. 8). There was no comprehensive document—similar to the German quality frameworks for inspection ("Qualitätsrahmen")—which articulated an elaborate set of quality criteria and indicators. Rather, criteria were implicit in the various forms which were used during team inspections (e.g. forms for classroom observation and interviews; see Doc 1–9).

The procedure included the following *elements* (see Altrichter et al. 2013): An analysis of school documents (e.g. school programme, results of self-evaluation) acted as the starting point. After an advance notice inspection teams of two to three inspectors visited the school for one to three days for inspecting the site and its resources: observing classroom teaching, interviewing students, parents, teachers, school leaders, and the regional mayor. All of the data collection was done according to a set of fixed procedures and forms which represented the 'quality criteria' that the inspection aimed to communicate to schools. The inspection experiences and additional data (e.g. student feedback data, however, no state-wide student performance assessment) were condensed into an inspection report of ten to twelve pages (GI1, p. 15) which explained the strengths and weaknesses of the school and included "very concrete recommendations" for development (for

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[2]For identifying references to interview data and documents see the list of data sources at the end of the chapter.

example, how to check assignments in open learning phases and inform parents about their children's progress; see GI1, p. 15). A preliminary version of the report was discussed with management and staff of the respective school. Afterwards a final version of the inspection report was prepared by the inspection team and sent to the school (CI1, pp. 6 and 15). Originally, it was planned that inspections were to take place in regular intervals of two to four years, however, this schedule proved to be too ambitious.

As a *consequence of inspection*, there were no positive or negative sanctions, (e.g. with respect to budget, personnel, in-service training hours), tied to the results of the inspection report (CI1, p. 18). Even in cases which highlighted most need, it was impossible to invest additional personnel or financial resources to push towards change (CI1, p. 18), however, an inspector said that he tried to negotiate with the regional teacher training and in-service institution for additional school-based in-service events (GI1, p. 18).

Heads (in communication with staff) were obliged to produce a 'school development plan' detailing measures to improve those issues criticized by the inspection report. Four to five weeks later this school development plan was discussed and, if necessary, amended in a meeting of the head and the inspector of the respective district and signed by both parties (GI1, p. 18). The final version of the school development plan served as 'target agreement' between headperson and inspectorate. Usually in a "two-year rotation" (GI1, p. 13) the inspector then checked how the development plan was put into practice in a meeting with the head (GI1, p. 6). This meeting proved to be most important since some schools initially had thought that "peace and quiet would rule again after the inspection. Many schools were surprised when the inspector returned with the school development plan in his/her hands and checked progress for all targets formulated in this plan" (GI1, p. 13).

The head also had to "demonstrably inform school partners" (parents, students, and teachers) and the school maintaining body (mostly communities) about the inspection results (CI1, p. 6). The inspectors interviewed did not think that the whole report was passed on as a rule, but that a verbal report was given which might have been—in some cases where there was much "potential for development"—"a little biased or sugar-coated" or "less dramatic" than the original report (CI1, p. 16). However, there were also schools which reprinted the whole inspection report in their annual public report (GI1, p. 16). Inspectors usually did not check whether or not the inspection report was on the agenda of a whole-school parent-teacher meeting, however, they would have done so, if problems persisted or parents complained (CI1, p. 16).

Reactions to Team Inspection

In the beginning team inspection caused some *irritation*, the extent of which is described in interviews with inspectors in terms which vary from "a little concern" to "massive objections" (CI1, p. 5). Some schools, teachers and also teacher union

representatives considered classroom observation an "unreasonable imposition" and were irritated by the questions and feedback by inspectors (GI1, p. 24). The interviewed inspectors attribute this to the novelty of a procedure in which teachers were lacking experience and to the fact that there was "no existing culture of feedback" (GI12, p. 5; CI1, p. 5).

After the first round of inspections many fears appeared to have vanished. According to an interviewee's perception there was "a really positive underlying tone" (GI1, p. 5) towards the new inspection. An inspector explained that she just had briefings with heads on target agreements based on inspection results. She thought that heads had "enjoyed [the fact] that somebody spends eight hours discussing subject/professional questions and steps for development with them … They never felt that thoroughly guided and accepted before" (GI1, p. 5).

Feedback from school leaders in a questionnaire-based survey in 2011 showed that after initial scepticism 'team inspections' were relatively well accepted as an instrument of school governance (Altrichter et al. 2013). In a comparison of six European countries the mean satisfaction of Styrian primary and secondary school leaders was well above the theoretical average and did not differ significantly from Swedish principals who reported highest overall satisfaction with their inspection system. Inspectors' behaviour and competence received positive feedback by more than 70% of respondents. A clear majority (however, 31% indifferent) said that the inspection process was a worthwhile experience. More than two thirds thought that the inspection report offered an appropriate image of their school. However, less than half of the respondents said that the new team inspection model was preferable to the traditional relationship with their inspectors in order to identify useful perspectives for school development (40% were indifferent). About a third of the school leaders thought that the inspection report had only highlighted measures which would have taken place anyway without inspection (see Altrichter et al. 2013).

If asked for expected effects of inspections, school leaders agree most with two items which seem to reflect some impact on teachers' work-related attitudes, i.e. that school inspections will "improve teachers' awareness that taking part in school development is one of their professional duties" (M = 3.81 in a five-point Likert scale) and "will clarify for teachers what is important for a good school" (M = 3.63). They are more hesitant in agreeing that school inspections will "guarantee comparability of schools" (M = 3.04) and "promote quality and effectiveness of classroom teaching" (M = 3.37; see Altrichter et al. 2013).

In term of international comparisons, the Styrian 'low stake' inspection approach appears to trigger fewer activities of school development and self-evaluation than English and Swedish inspections models which put more 'accountability pressure' on school leaders. On the other hand, Austrian school leaders were more attentive to the messages of inspection feedback and saw fewer unintended consequences than English and Swedish ones (Altrichter and Kemethofer 2015).

The model clearly includes many elements familiar to other inspection approaches. One special feature, however, should be highlighted: The individuals doing 'team inspection' did not come from an independent institution, but were members of the administrative body in charge of the inspected schools. The leader

of the inspection team was the administrator directly responsible for the district in which the inspected school was located. The inspection team was initially completed by one or two inspectors from a neighbouring district. Later on, they were recruited from a broader geographical pool; the decision was ultimately the inspection team leader's prerogative because, as was explained in an interview, "it is also important that the chemistry is right, since team inspectors have to communicate a lot and should feel confident with the team" (CI1, p. 3).

In addition, the selection of schools to be inspected fell within responsibilities of the team leader. In interviews, inspectors gave various strategic considerations for their selection: An inspector selected the oldest heads for the first round of secondary school inspection because "they would be least likely to get nervous about the new scheme". The inspector did not want to confront new heads with an inspection because they should be given some time to settle in (see GI1, p. 8). Another inspector did not select heads close to retirement because she did not expect them to fully implement changes, but rather waited until a new individual took office. For the first round of inspection she chose schools which were expected to react positively towards the new instrument in order to avoid a negative image becoming associated with inspection (CI1, p. 8).

Analysis and Interpretation

The team inspection model may be understood as a 'moderate modernization' of traditional forms of school administration. It is '*modernizing*' existing inspection-school relationships, as it is introducing some new arrangements and procedures which reflect the main characteristics of the 'new inspection' type described in the initial sections of this chapter: Teams instead of single inspectors, more explicit criteria and procedures included in forms and checklists, involvement of stakeholders into data collection and presentation of results, references to social research by including new 'research-oriented' instruments such as classroom observation sheets and interviews.

The modernization is '*moderate*' in that it stays very close to the existing structures of the system: There is no 'new independent inspection' which could have posed new challenges both for the existing 'administrative inspectorate' and for school leaders who would have to cope with two supervising bodies. The documentation of the whole inspection model is not particularly elaborate, which reflects, on one hand its origin in after-work assignments of a working group taken from the existing 'administrative inspectorate,' and, on the other, efforts to keep the whole enterprise lean and simple in order to avoid overloading both schools and inspectors. In general, the model refrains from formulating clear criteria, from threshold levels, from labelling schools and grouping them in categories, such as 'excellent schools' or "schools not doing well".

On the other hand, inspectors do make 'qualitative distinctions' and are aware of 'the highlights and what schools need to take care of a little more consequently'

(CI1, p. 19). Inspectors do not want to press for development by communicating this knowledge to the public, but rather wish to use their status as direct superiors of the schools and focus their attention on these schools: "I look at them more closely and more often" (GI1, p. 19).

What idea of making inspection an important lever of quality assurance and development is implied in this procedure? Obviously, the model assumes that more comprehensive control of the operations and results of schools is necessary. Similar to what has been said about German models of inspection (see Rürup 2008), the Styrian team inspection model reflects a low stake approach which builds on development by rational insight (and assumes good will and operative competence of the actors involved) rather than on pressure by sanctions or competition. It aims to make schools more aware of quality goals considered important by present education policy and politics and to provide additional information to schools and administration. It assumes that schools, school maintaining bodies and inspectors themselves will be willing and able to translate inspection feedback into correct choices for development initiatives and into feasible plans of realising them.

The new and novel elements which are implemented in the Styrian school system are '*travelling policies*'. They are openly taken from other European inspection models and clearly reflect the present 'official' European discourse on quality assurance and evidence-based governance. The selective use of elements of this discourse and the special way in which these elements are imported into and implemented within the existing framework 'moderates' the impact on various actors and produces a 'moderate modernization' which is quickly well-accepted by most actors affected by it: The existing 'administrative inspectorate' acquires new, more exiting, but also, more time-consuming and strenuous tasks. By taking over this new version of evaluative duties, the existing inspectorate avoids the establishment of a new 'independent inspection body' which may well have been seen as controlling and evaluating their work with schools. School leaders represent the second group, on which the new inspection system has a major impact. After some initial antagonism, school leaders now feel that the new model does not pose additional threats to their work and does not harm existing relationships to their administrative superiors. On the contrary, a clear majority of school leaders seem to accept the more explicit quality criteria signalled by the inspection procedures because they help them to communicate goals and, thus, support them in their leadership role (as can be derived from school leaders' belief in a positive impact of inspection on teachers' attitudes; see Altrichter et al. 2013).

Teachers are obviously less affected than heads by inspections which focus on whole-school quality issues rather than on individual teaching behaviour. Parents and students receive greater consideration than before, even if they rarely get a real say in school-based decisions which the team inspection procedures still reserve for the professional teaching force, and in particular, for the heads. There is one important actor which is not satisfied by the development of various new inspection systems in the provinces: the central administration, the ministry.

Replacing Team Inspection by a New Quality Management System

In spring 2011 the national legal framework for quality assurance in the Austrian education system, the Federal School Supervision Act (BSAG 1962), was completely revised (see BSAG amendment 2011): Article 18, formerly titled 'school inspection' was renamed as 'quality management'. A *National Quality Framework* (*Nationaler Qualitätsrahmen*) was articulated in order to organise quality monitoring and quality development in the Austrian school system: It consists of the following main elements:

- a '*definition and description of school quality*' clarifies the goals of development and the criteria of evaluation;
- a '*system of planning and reporting*' by which all levels of the school system (from central administration to individual schools) periodically (annually to every third year depending on the school type) plan and evaluate their development;
- '*periodical target agreements*' between all levels of the school system which clarify (national, regional, and school specific) goals, measures and expected performance; and
- the obligation of the national authorities to *provide instruments for governance and (self) evaluation and support structures for schools*.

The BSAG amendment (2011) came into effect on September, 1st, 2012, however, the schools' obligatory development plans were only due by the end of 2013. The school year of 2012/13 was understood as a 'pilot year'. In order to implement the new quality management strategy, the education ministry launched a nation-wide programme, *School quality in general education* (*Schulqualität Allgemeinbildung, SQA*) which has been put into practice since 2013/14. The programme is aimed at providing programmatic and organisational guidelines and pragmatic tools for quality assurance and development in schools. The support material appeals to teachers' willingness to collaborate and professional ethos and states that school administration wants to work with teachers on a basis of equality ('auf Augenhöhe'): "SQA stands for an appreciative and respectful attitude, for a culture of success and an initiative, for willing ness to feedback, [self-] reflection, and for taking responsibility for the impact of one' own action" (Radnitzky 2015, p. 8).

Central elements of SQA are *development plans* (*Entwicklungspläne*). They are —in the official rationale—both "working instruments for goal- and result-oriented planning and implementation of educational measures" and central instruments of accountability (Radnitzky 2015, p. 9). The individual school's development plan must specify two 'themes' (at minimum) which it wants to promote during the next development period. The first theme is nation-wide, obligatory, and phrased by the ministry; for the school year 2015/2016 it was "further developing learning and teaching with respect to individualization and competence-based teaching" (see

BMBF 2015a). The second (and all further voluntary themes) theme is chosen by the individual school according to need and interest.

SQA mandates minimum content of development plans: for every theme the plan must include some evaluation of the present state, goals, indicators, and measures for reaching the goals (including a plan for evaluation of development measures), a professional development plan, and information with respect to processes, responsibilities, and structures of the overall development effort (see BMBF 2015c). The planning period is three years and an annual update is required which has to be sent to the inspectorate. Development plans will also be written on district, province, and central state level and summarized in a National Education report (see BMBF 2013, p. 2).

The second central element of SQA are *conversations on results and target agreement* (*Bilanz- und Zielvereinbarungsgespräche; BZG*). They aim for "strengthening commitment" and "balancing of interests between nation-wide frame requirements, regional needs, and personal aspirations" (see Radnitzky 2015, 9f.). These target agreements (as I will call BZG in short) take place between leading individuals on all levels, for example between a school leader and the 'administrative inspector' responsible for the respective area, between the province chief inspector and the respective department head in the ministry etc. They aspire to 'dialogue-oriented leadership' and are to be conducted as dialogues of equal partners. In these target agreements developments will be discussed, and if necessary, amended; thereby, directions for future school development are agreed upon (see BMBF 2015b).

Finally, SQA also offers a *support structure* for quality evaluation and development of schools (see Radnitzky 2015, p. 11). There is an electronic webpage (http://www.sqa.at/) which gives access to various informative documents, to development and evaluation instruments and to a pool of consultants for school and classroom development (see M2, p. 10). The implementation concept included workshops for inspectors and school principals. A network of coordinators on school, province, and system level is to support further implementation (see M2, p. 4; CI2, p. 4).

The official documents emphasize the "systemic perspective" and the "interplay of *all* levels" (Radnitzky 2015, p. 8) which the program aims for, e.g. by engaging all levels in the tasks of writing development plans and discussing them in target agreements. Development plans and target agreements are to "bind the various levels and areas together and aim for increased commitment in a school system which is traditionally characterized by a high level of non-responsibility" (Radnitzky 2015, p. 9).

Perceptions of the New Quality Management System

In the 'pilot year' after the decision to introduce the new system and before its full-scale implementation, interviews with five inspectors (among them the provincial chief inspector) who had been active in the province's 'team inspection'

and with the departmental head responsible for quality assurance in the central ministry were conducted and transcribed. The inspectors had had the chance to acquaint themselves with the new quality assurance approach through a training programme and through the pilot run of the new system. They express mixed feelings when they talk about the termination of the province's team inspection system and its replacement by SQA. In their view, a strong element within the new approach is that it increases *the institutional responsibility of individual schools* and *upgrades the position of the headperson*. However, better training and professional development of heads and SQA coordinators are needed to prevent SQA from being treated as 'additional paperwork for heads' (GI2, p. 3) and to equip schools for taking advantage of the new scheme.

However, they also feel—quite unanimously—that they are also losing something. Team inspection had a "clear and accepted structure" (GI2, p. 2) and allowed more continuous contact to individual schools. The interviewed inspectors fear to *lose* "*direct perception*" (GI2, p. 1; see also CI2, p. 1) of the schools which they were able to acquire in the 'team inspection' format through inspection visits and interviews with students, parents, and teachers (CI2, p. 2). This impairs their opportunity to intervene in time in their role as administrative superiors should this be necessary.

In the interview with the provincial chief inspector many of these arguments are echoed. He was quite satisfied with team inspection, since it allowed to acquire a "quite broad and elaborate image" (CI2, p. 1) of individual schools and, based on this, well-founded intervention (CI2, p. 2). Since it offered a more independent, external appreciation of the situation, team inspection was particularly important in situations when school leaders were not able to intervene because they were too entangled in long-developed social relationship of the staff and of the community (CI2, p. 3).

A negative aspect was that 'team inspection' needed resources which might not be available in other provinces (CI2, p. 2). He welcomed that the 'responsibility of heads' is made more explicit and strengthened by SQA (CI2, p. 1) and that the development perspectives of individual schools are clarified and publicly spelt out in 'development plans' (CI2, p. 3), even if there are too many in-detail prescriptions for development plans to his liking (CI2, p. 8).

Besides resources, there is another criticism which the ministerial department head raises against team inspection: "There is a version of team inspection in which the superior line manager (i.e. the 'regional inspector') goes to his own school—and takes someone with him—i.e. they go to a school they are in charge of. That is something we don't want at all. That is exactly a contradiction to the SQA philosophy" (M2, p. 9).

For the ministry official SQA implies a "change of paradigms", a "cultural change" which only can be put into practice in "project of generations" (M2, p. 5). SQA's main messages are in his view:

- The central state provides strategic leadership for quality assurance in the education system and presses for nation-wide coherence. Before the new law

"central governance did not work. […] there was no shared, no shared and binding frame for quality assurance. Things developed in different directions." (M2, p. 3) "The central state did not press for commitment in this respect. As a consequence, regional traditions—and also differences between school types— have emerged" (M2, p. 2). A provincial approach, such as "team inspection" was a search for meaning and a step of self-determination, because nothing was coming from the top. They said: 'Well, then we are organising ourselves!'" (M2, p. 3) Through SQA the ministry clarifies its position towards quality assurance, provides strategic leadership for systemic quality development and goes for some coherence of approaches in the provinces.

- SQA aims to introduce a "stronger sense of obligation and commitment into a system of loosely coupled top-down governance" (M2, p. 1) through instruments such as the prescribed 'first development theme', development plans, and target agreements. The ministry official wants to "stimulate schools to use external data for development planning" (M2, p. 1) and to make school development "a bit more systematic, and a bit more goal-oriented and a bit more result-oriented than before" (M2, p. 4).
- On the other hand, SQA wants to support a move away from a "top-down philosophy" to more equal and dialogue-oriented relationships between partners, and to proactive schools. In eyes of the ministry representative it is important that the "first step is done by the school, then it is the administration's turn." (M2, p. 6). This is why he opposes inspections which put schools in a reactive role. Instead of "top-down issue of orders" it must be the other way round: a "culture of negotiation and agreement, more room for manoeuvre and responsibility of schools" are needed (M2, p. 7).
- Finally, it is important for him to safeguard SQA against objections that "a quality management bureaucracy will take on a life of its own" (M2, p. 5). SQA "must not degenerate to a paperwork reporting system. It must be slim, efficient, development plans which result in real changes in schools, in real changes which have positive effects for students" (CI2, p. 7). This is also the justification that only two development goals have to be pursued: "better two things in some depth than the full field of issues" (M2, p. 6).

Primary and secondary school leaders in the province of Styria have been asked for their reaction to the new quality assurance model SQA in an online survey between November 2013 and February 2014 (see Kemethofer and Altrichter 2015). In general, their evaluation of SQA does not differ profoundly from the one of 'team inspection' (see above and Altrichter et al. 2013): Nearly two third of the respondents said that they thought that SQA was reasonable and useful, and about the same percentage agreed to items stating that SQA is an important support for developing learning and teaching with respect to individualization and competence-based teaching. Those who had had concrete exposure to SQA in pilot projects were even more positive in their judgements: Working with SQA obviously does not deteriorate their positive attitudes.

Analysis and Interpretation

Maritzen (2015), one of the leading German experts for school administration, has recently published an analysis of innovatory governance aspects of the Austrian SQA model. He understands SQA as an institutional way of coping with the effects and repercussions of a prior reform when "a technologically defined programme of education monitoring [including performance standards, nation-wide comparative testing, central school leaving examinations, and national reporting] had been transplanted into a system largely unprepared for that" (Maritzen 2015, p. 15).

In his interpretation SQA implies "an entirely new dimension of intervening in the education system. It is not only about giving stimuli for school development but —much more than that—about a new definition of roles and actors." (Maritzen 2015, p. 16). By virtue of its "systemic approach" it contains "a requirement for development for superordinate system levels (district, province, central state)", "a fixed format of mutual communication between system levels which claims reversibility of relationships", and "increasing requirements for binding agreements and reliable commitment" (ibid.). The implementation of SQA will necessitate professionalizing and modernizing school administration and in-school leadership (Maritzen 2015, p. 16).

The main characteristics of the SQA reform may be summarized in the following way:

- Compared to the uncontrolled regional growth of the preceding period, *national responsibility and influence* is reclaimed by establishing a 'National Quality Framework' and uniform procedures which embrace all system levels. This was also seen as a necessary next step after having established a national system of performance standards and testing.
- The law emphasises on various occasions that quality assurance activities will be *periodical* and will *include all levels of the education system*. Thereby it communicates comprehensiveness and continuity of the new style of quality management. However, it is more precise in its provisions for the school level than for higher administrative levels.
- *Costs* prevented the 'team inspection' system which was explored in some provinces from being generalized to the whole federal state.
- The new quality management regime claims to promote a *new philosophy of school and system governance* which consists of the following (partly contra-dictory) elements:
  Result orientation and evidence-based governance: It is communicated to schools that their performance in standard-related tests is important information which is to stimulate further improvement. "The ideal model of output-based governance […], the *control cycle of goals, evaluation, feedback, support systems, and improvement*" (Specht 2006, p. 33; emphases by the author) is reflected by both the 'National Quality Framework' and the individual 'school development plans'.

More autonomous responsibility of schools for development and evaluation: *Self-evaluation* of schools and other levels is upgraded at the expense of external evaluation, e.g. by inspection teams. However, § 18 (4) of BSAG amendment (2011) regulates that external evaluative information (e.g. of national student performance tests, peer reviews) may have some role for evaluating the target agreements. In an interview a ministry representative wants individual schools to take account of external evaluation information in their planning (see CI2, p. 1).

Commitment and increasing links between levels: *Target agreements* are seen as important instruments of commitment and of linking various levels.

The new legislation deprived the regional 'team inspection' models of their legal basis and made, in the interpretation of the ministry, 'team inspection' impossible as it was considered to be too intrusive and disenfranchising. The 'National Quality Framework' aims for improvement cycles starting from self-evaluations of schools (rather than from external evaluations) and from self-devised development plans (rather than from development plans which responded to external feedback). The main function of the existing inspectorate under the new legislation (alongside their continuing administrative duties) might lie in negotiating target agreements with individual schools. Thus, they would continue in their intermediary role of linking education system levels but would use 'more modern' instruments of target negotiation and agreement to do so.

Summary and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses a case study of the development and implementation of a 'new inspection' model in an Austrian province, and its demise and replacement by a nation-wide quality management system. In the course of portraying the case I have discussed three questions. The first two sets of questions were extensively discussed in earlier parts of the chapter:

(1) *In what respect are governance relationships in this school system changed by implementing a new inspection model?*
(2) *What specific features of 'new school inspections' are emphasized and downgraded in this model and in its implementation? How can they be connected to the specific systemic context?*

The 'team inspection' model was devised and implemented in a period of rising doubt as to the effectiveness of traditional ways of school governance, and of lacking guidance on a national level at the same time. In this context the existing 'administrative inspectorate' in the province of Styria was searching for ways of making their work more meaningful, and they found what they were looking for in

international examples of 'new inspections'. They adopted many of the characteristics of these models which, in sum, focussed more explicitly on the quality of the schools' work, involved stakeholder views, and included more data collected by 'modern social research instruments'.

In effect, the new model was a 'moderate modernization' of previously existing governance relationships. The 'moderate' model features, in particular, are a result of an adaptation to the specific contextual features. 'Team inspection' provided new roads of access to information about individual schools and asserted the role and relevance of inspectors, without producing much adverse reactions by headpersons and teachers. This was achieved by two important characteristic of the approach in which foreign models were not mimicked: (1) The model was 'slim' with respect to the number of quality criteria, documents, and processes. This reflected its history as an after-work product of inspectors, but also the will to keep it low key and 'slim'. (2) The new inspectorate was not institutionalized fully or relatively independently of the existing school administration, but on the contrary, taken over by them as an additional task. This feature did not only protect the existing administrative body from new forms of control, but also kept an important dimension of change at a low level: the controlling body stayed the same for schools and teachers, they knew what relationships to expect. The price to be paid: Additional work for the existing inspectorate (which made the model vulnerable for criticism of being too costly), difficulties in arguing as to its novelty effect.

The third set of questions is: (3) *What reasons are given for changing the 'new inspection system'? What principles are applied in the construction of an alternative system?*

The Austrian SQA example may be explained by three broad reasons for change: The central state wanted to *establish national influence and coherence with respect to quality control* after a period of increasing diversity of institutional arrangements in the provinces. The *costs* of an alternative, the team inspection, were too high. And the central state wanted to implement a *new philosophy of system governance* which on one hand complemented recent reforms with respect to evidence-based governance (e.g. performance standards, comparative testing), and merged them with appeals to teacher professionalism and proactive school development on the other.

The new legal regulation of quality assurance in Austrian education and its implementation through the SQA programme may represent one version of a new generation of quality policies. It aims to combine two contemporary strategies: The older models of self-determined, staff-driven school development (e.g. indicated by reference to school programmes in the 'development plans of SQA' and to self-chosen development goals in the 'second SQA theme') with the use of new instruments of evidence-based governance (in its plea to use external data and its formalized target agreements). The recognition and appreciation of teacher professionalism (indicated by the requirement for 'dialogical target agreements' and in its belief in the willingness and power of schools to carry out first steps in self-evaluation and development) is a necessary underlining of the first aspect, but also highlights the tensions which are built into this combination of evidence-based

instruments and professional agency. Additionally, the 'systemic aspiration' to establish quality management on all system levels in a similar way is high, or even "courageous" (Maritzen 2015, p. 16); it is yet to be seen how these claims are met within the context of their practical implementation.

Adopting a comparative view it may be noted that changes of 'new inspection system' have recently also taken place in other countries. Some German states have abolished their 'new inspection systems', e.g. Schleswig-Holstein in 2010, and Rhineland-Palatinate[3] in 2016. In the latter country, this move was explicitly motivated by cost reasons, inspection was to be replaced by a system of target agreements between schools and administration. Also Lower Saxony, the fore-runner of 'new inspections' in Germany, changed its inspection model in 2013.[4] The main features of the new approach are fewer quality criteria, more attention to process quality, and a dialogue-oriented, 'more equal' relationship between schools and inspectors (see Sowada and Dedering 2016).

Some countries have changed to *differentiated, more focused inspection approaches* (also called "proportionate" or "risk-based inspections"; see Ehren and Honingh 2011 for the Netherlands; Baxter 2014 for England). In these models different inspection approaches are in place for 'strong' and 'weak' schools: Obviously, *resources* are bundled and focused on schools with deficiencies, while strong schools are allowed more room for manoeuvre and expected to self-determine their development efforts. The last aspect seems to echo a third theme of the 'very new' generation of quality control approaches: Inspection and quality control are searching for a *new relationship with teacher professionalism combined with 'autonomous' school development*. It is too costly, if not impossible to govern a system by external control; professional teachers and leaders are needed who are prepared to take over parts of the task of governing. Education systems appear to be turning to hybrid approaches to gain the 'best of both worlds', which, however, may also contain a range of conflict areas which must be dealt with.

Data Sources

Reference to these data sources is given by the following acronyms and the page of the respective transcript (e.g., M2, p. 3).

CI1 … Interview with the Chief Inspector of the Austrian province Styria in 2011 (in the operational phase of team inspection)
CI2 … Interview with the Chief Inspector of the Austrian province Styria after the termination of 'team inspection' in the experimental phase of SQA

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[3]See   www.bildungsklick.de/pm/94606/agentur-fuer-qualitaetssicherung-evaluation-und-selbststaendigkeit-von-schulen-soll-aufgeloest-werden; 27.12.2015.
[4]See http://nibis.de/nibis.php?menid=8376; 27.12.2015.

GI1 … Group interview with two inspectors in 2011 (in the operational phase of team inspection)

GI2 … Group interview with four inspectors in an Austrian province after the termination of 'team inspection' in the experimental phase of SQA

M2 … Interview with the department head responsible for quality assurance in the Austrian Ministry of Education and Women

Doc 0 … see references: Zoller (2005)

Doc 1 … observation sheet for classroom observation in secondary I schools

Doc 2 … Instruction for interviews with parent representatives Schulinspektion – Besprechung mit Klassenelternvertreter/innen und …

Doc 3 … Instructions for interviews with student representatives

Doc 4 … Instructions for the interview with the school leader

Doc 5 … Instructions for school development plans

Doc 6 … Letter from the inspectorate to a secondary school announcing a school inspection

Doc 7 … Instructions for the staff briefing

Doc 8 … Instructions for document analysis

Doc 9 … Instructions for visiting primary class rooms

Doc 10 … Draft Amendment § 18 Federal Act on School Supervision; Nov., 11th, 2010

Doc 11 … Commentary to the Draft Amendment § 18 Federal Act on School Supervision; Nov., 11th, 2010.

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Chapter 11
What Stated Aims Should School Inspection Pursue?—Views of Inspectors, Policy-Makers and Practitioners

Maarten Penninckx and Jan Vanhoof

Abstract Apart from research investigating what works in the field of school inspections, research is also required into what aims inspections should pursue. These 'desirable aims' should be defined by the shared expectations of various stakeholders in the field of education, including inspectors as well as policy-makers and other professionals with a role in quality assurance in education. This chapter reports on a Delphi study within the Flemish education system with 15 stakeholders with the aim of contributing to the construction of an inventory of different aims that inspections should pursue, as well as the implications of these aims on the administration of inspections. The Flemish inspection system is characterized by the very strict distinction between school inspectors (to control schools) and school counsellors (to give advice to schools). Several assumptions underlie this policy, for instance the idea that an Inspectorate that controls schools, is not able to make an independent verification of the school quality when it is also involved in terms of providing advice to the school. The strict distinction is also related to the constitutional principle of 'Freedom of education', which—from an interpretative standpoint—implies that an Inspectorate should merely be focused on school output and results. This study shows that notwithstanding this policy, there is an increasing demand on Flemish school inspectors to contribute to school development and therefore to move beyond accountability-oriented aims. Based on a written questionnaire in the first research phase, three general aims and 62 stated aims were defined for an inspection to pursue. However, the second and third research phased showed that not different stakeholders could not reach a consensus with regard to every single aim proposed by the study. This chapter shows that raising questions on the purpose of school inspection, unearths differing views on fundamental issues and ideologies within the field of education policy and from there to different views on what inspections should look like.

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Introduction

In most countries, it is clear that the quality of schools should be monitored in some
way. Most often, an Inspectorate is established in order to inspect schools on a
regular basis. Notwithstanding the differences between different educational con-
texts regarding the operationalisation of inspections and the way inspections are
conducted, there is generally a remarkable similarity between methods used and the
aspects focused on during an inspection (Ehren et al. 2013; OECD 2013).

   During the last two decades, there have been numerous studies into the impact of
inspections on schools—for an overview of impact studies, we refer to Chapman
and Earley (2010) or Penninckx and Vanhoof (2015). Each of these studies
describes the effects of inspections on the processes and/or the output of schools.
These studies, however, do not evaluate these effects with regard to a prescriptive
frame of reference, as they do not include an assessment of the extent to which
inspections fulfil their aims. In other words, these studies do not make an analysis
of the effectiveness of inspections. An effectiveness analysis implies that one res-
olutely assesses whether or not an inspection meets predetermined expectations or
aims (Scheerens 2011). Most studies are indeed limited to a description of effects. It
is not sufficient to describe the effect of an inspection to make an assessment;
instead the described effects should be weighed against what is considered to be
'desirable' (Biesta 2009). The question of which aims inspections should pursue,
has only very rarely been explicitly responded to. Clarifying these aims is a nec-
essary step in order to assess whether or not the actual effects are reflected in
desirable effects (Rossi et al. 1999).

   The study presented in this chapter aims to explore a frame of reference in which
these desirable aims of inspection are defined. Theoretically, one could try to derive
these desirable aims from the legislative framework. However, this is problematic
because of two concerns of both a pragmatic and a fundamental nature. The pragmatic
element relates to the finding that, in the Flemish educational context, the Decree
regarding the Quality of Education (2009) does provide an enumeration of the tasks of
the inspection, but it gives little information regarding inspection aims. The funda-
mental concern in this case is the idea that the aims of inspection should not be
unilaterally defined by the authorities competent to issue decrees. Instead the desirable
aims of an inspection should be determined by the shared expectations of different
stakeholders with regard to these aims (Faubert 2009). The aim of an inspection is to
be found in the realization of these expectations (Harrington and Harrington 1994).

   This chapter aims to provide an inventory of desirable aims that inspections
should pursue. These desirable aims should be supported by different stakeholders
in the field of Flemish education. The research question is: "What are the aims that
inspection should pursue, according to different stakeholders in the field of Flemish

education?" It is important to note that this study is related to an assessment of *desirable* aims, and it is not about an inventory of the actual aims of inspection as they currently stand. To our knowledge, this kind of research has not yet been conducted. It therefore concerns an exploratory study in a new area of research.

Depending on one's position in the field of education, one may hold different understandings of the term 'quality of education' (Hoy and Miskel 2008). Representatives of different interest groups may also assign different meanings to the evaluation of educational quality (O'Hara et al. 2007). It is therefore to be expected that obtaining a consensus between various stakeholders regarding some of the desirable aims of inspection may well be difficult, as there may be strongly polarized points of view. By mapping the different arguments in these fields of tension, this study also contributes to the policy and academic debates regarding the aims of inspections.

Conceptual Framework

The aims that are assigned to inspection, are most often related to one of two perspectives: either accountability or development (Earley 1998; Janssens and Van Amelsvoort 2008; Van Bruggen 2010). With regard to the accountability-oriented aim, it is expected that the inspection will help to control the school's quality, and in so doing, to open up "judgemental" information for the authorities, as well as for pupils, parents, and the school's own school board, in order to endorse the legitimacy of the school (and, by extension, of the whole education system) (Ng 2011; Penzer 2011). The accountability functions regarding the government; pupils and parents; and stakeholders within the schools, are referred to respectively by the International Institute of Educational Planning as: "*contractual accountability*", "*public accountability*", and "*professional accountability*" (IIEP 2011, pp. 6–7).

With regard to the development-oriented aim, there is an expectation that inspections will contribute to the quality of schools (Vanhoof and Van Petegem 2007). In most countries, both aims are assigned to the inspection, albeit often implicity (Van Bruggen 2010). There are, however, slight differences between countries, as inspections in some education systems are predominantly accountability-oriented, while others focus more on development aims (Ehren et al. 2013; van Amelsvoort et al. 2006). Nevertheless, it is unclear how these functions can be combined.

The roles of 'inspector' and 'counsellor' have been perceived as incompatible in several education systems (Ehren and Honingh 2011; Waterman 2013). Different scholars have argued that inspected schools do not open up for development due to the fear caused by the inspection experience (Faubert 2009; MacKinnon 2010). It is assumed that in order assume a developmental perspective, it is crucial that there is some kind of trust between the inspector and school, and that the school has the courage to show itself in full view for inspectors (Macbeath 2006; Ouston and Davies 1998). According to several scholars, this is only seldom really the case, due

to the position of the school with regard to inspectors, who have the power to decide the school's fate (Ferguson et al. 1999; Lonsdale and Parsons 1998), and also due to the potential sanctions after a negative judgement (Ferguson et al. 1999; Woods and Jeffrey 1998). Moreover, imposed changes cannot include real school development due to frequent lack of support within the school (Faubert 2009; MacKinnon 2011; Perryman 2010). McNamara and O'Hara (2008) have argued that the more an inspection system leans towards accountability-oriented aims, the less useful it is in orchestrating development. Some scholars have noted that the accountability-oriented aim may not only inhibit the development-oriented aim, but that it may even have a negative impact on school development, as schools are seduced to engage in practices that are deleterious for their own development; such as window dressing activities, giving up their own priorities and reflections, or placing undue attention on the "measurable" aspects of the school (Ball 2003; Ozga 2009; Perryman 2009; Suspitsyna 2010).

In this study, we define the development-oriented aim in a broad sense. The concept encompasses the "conceptual effect" ("The extent to which inspection influences the thinking of decision-makers (and practitioners) and as such may have an impact on their actions"), the "instrumental effect" ("The decisions taken as a result of inspection and the actions that are based upon these decisions") (definitions based on Visscher 2002), as well as the results of these decisions and actions.

Apart from the accountability-oriented and development-oriented aims, several scholars have assigned a third purpose to inspections: Inspections are expected to support national education policy by collecting and analysing data from different inspections, which is then considered to contribute to an information-rich environment for policy-makers and other stakeholders in the field of education (Matthews and Smith 1995; Scheerens et al. 2003).

Research Context: The Flemish Educational Accountability Context

Given the context-inclusive nature of this study, it is important to describe accountability mechanisms in the Flemish educational context. An important feature of this context is the absence of central examinations—or any other kind of imposed standardized tests—in the Flemish education system. The absence of central examinations is a subject of perennial debate. Until now no initiatives have been taken to implement (obligatory) central examinations, mainly because of the fear of negative side effects such as the possibility of ranking schools based on pupils' learning outcomes (Andersen Consulting 2002), and because of the idea that central examinations would affect the constitutional principle of 'freedom of Education' (Shewbridge et al. 2011). Because of the current absence of central examinations, inspections are the only measure of school accountability in terms of educational authorities (Standaert 2001).

Remit of Inspections

Flemish schools enjoy a relatively large degree of autonomy to set up processes according to their traditions and beliefs on how to achieve 'attainment targets and development goals' ["Eindtermen en ontwikkelingsdoelen"] imposed by government (OECD 2013). The Decree declaring the Quality of Education (2009), stipulates that the inspection controls to what extent schools have made informed choices that ensure that pupils achieve these attainment targets and development goals. The inspection also assesses whether or not schools systematically monitor their own quality. Finally, inspection controls whether or not the 'habitability, safety and hygiene' of the school infrastructure meets the legal requirements.

Like many Inspectorates in other education systems, the Flemish Inspectorate pursues both accountability- and development-oriented aims. Its ambition is to monitor schools, but also to contribute to the quality of the education provided by schools (Michielsens 2008; Onderwijsinspectie 2015). However, in terms of its development function, the Inspectorate is limited by the Flemish legislation's strict distinction between inspectors (assigned to control schools) and school counsellors ["pedagogische begeleidingsdiensten"], who are assigned to provide advice and support to schools. This distinction implies that inspectors are expected to analyse and report on the schools' strengths and weaknesses, but that they need to refrain from making recommendations to the schools on how they can enhance their quality. The Inspectorate's operating assumption in terms of pursuing its development-oriented function is that the insights into the schools' own strengths and weaknesses provided by the inspectors (uncovering the 'blind spots' that schools are unable to detect through self-evaluation) will serve as an impetus for the schools to secure their strengths and address the identified weaknesses (Vanotterdijk 2008).

Methods and Instruments of Inspection

The inspectors employ the CIPO-model during inspection. The acronym CIPO stands for context, input, process and output (Vlaamse Regering 2010). Each of these four components is further divided into several indicators, which are assumed (based on research or experience) to have an impact on the quality of education. Although the primary focus of inspection is on the output delivered by schools (the extent to which the attainment targets and development goals are achieved), the absence of central examinations implies that no standardized data about school performance regarding pupils' learning outcomes are available. The lack of reliable output data constrains the inspection, requiring the inspectors to adopt a process-oriented approach (Shewbridge et al. 2011; Van Bruggen 2010).

During the inspection, which lasts approximately three to five days, the inspectors' data collection methods include interviews (mostly including principals,

members of the management team and teachers), document analysis and lesson observations.

The inspection adopts a 'differentiated approach' which implies that it does not carry out 'full inspections' of all areas. Instead, two or three education areas (e.g. mathematics) or particular departments, and a number of process indicators (e.g. pupil evaluation, human resource policy), are selected for detailed inspection. The inspection judges purely at the school level. On the few occasions on which individual teachers are mentioned, the inspection report is required to ensure strict anonymity. 'Teacher evaluation' is the exclusive responsibility of the school board and the principal. Inspectors are therefore not allowed to give formal or informal individual feedback to teachers or principals (Ministry of Education and Training of the Flemish Community 2010).

Consequences of the Inspection

The inspection leads to two independent judgements—on educational matters and on school infrastructure. These judgements are in effect, advice to the government about prolonging the school's "recognition", a condition for the receipt of public funding. The judgements given to schools are either 'positive', 'restricted positive' or, in a few cases, 'negative'. The 'positive' judgement means a school is considered to have the competencies and preparedness to continue working in an optimal manner, and that no follow-up needs to be scheduled. The 'restricted positive' judgement denotes that a second inspection is required three years later to determine whether or not identified shortfalls have been adequately addressed. Schools that show structural deficiencies are given the judgement 'negative'. Policy-makers and the Inspectorate are convinced that pupils in malfunctioning schools do not benefit from an eventual school closure, but neither are they helped by a soft approach with regard to their school. Therefore, although the judgement 'negative' officially means that the recognition of the school is being revoked, in reality the school is allowed to set up a plan for improvement by which it is obliged to be monitored by an external agency—mostly the school counselling services that are already in charge of providing advice to schools (Ministry of Education and Training of the Flemish Community 2010). Therefore it is highly unlikely that a school be closed down as an immediate result of an inspection. This explains why the Flemish inspection system is generally seen as 'low-stake' compared to other educational contexts (OECD 2013; Van Bruggen 2010). During the school year 2014–2015, the judgements 'positive', 'restricted positive' and 'negative' were given respectively to 51.5, 45.5 and 3.0% of the inspected primary and secondary regular schools (Onderwijsinspectie 2015). Due to the differentiated approach, different departments in the school may receive a different judgement. For instance, it may be the case that while one department in the school is assessed as 'positive', the school in general receives a 'restricted positive' judgement.

In sum, in spite of several similarities between the Flemish context and other countries regarding accountability measures in education, there are some notable features in which the Flemish context differs from that of some other inspection systems. These features are the absence of central examinations, the perceived lower inspection stakes, the strong process-oriented approach of inspection, the relatively low frequency, the long notification period, the strict distinction between inspectors (for control) and school counsellors (for advice) and the restriction on inspectors with regard to giving individual feedback to teachers or principals.

Research Design and Methodology

The Delphi Method: Argumentation and Constitution of the Expert Panel

Due to the explorative nature of this study within a research area in which only a small amount of evidence is available, we selected the Delphi method. The Delphi method is a technique that allows the exploration and confrontation of the points of view of different experts through several sequential research phases (Dalkey and Helmer 1963; Day and Bobeva 2005; Okoli and Pawlowski 2004). The Delphi method is used to structure a process of group communication in such a way that individual experts can examine a complex matter as a group (Day and Bobeva 2005; Linstone and Turoff 1975). By using an iterative feedback technique, this method collects the opinions of different experts, rather than objective facts (Schmidt 1997). One of the major benefits of this method is that there is no direct confrontation between different experts. The approach therefore implies that the method supports independent reflection (Dalkey and Helmer 1963; Dalkey and Rourke 1971; Okoli and Pawlowski 2004), that it avoids a scenario in which experts join too easily with a stance taken earlier by another expert (Dalkey and Helmer 1963), and that experts do not experience pressure to conform with others' points of view, which may particularly be the case when there is some kind of (implicit or explicit) hierarchy between the experts (Van de Ven and Delbecq 1974).

One of the most critical demands for the validity of a Delphi study's results, is in the selection of appropriate experts (Chong et al. 2012; Custer et al. 1999; Okoli and Pawlowski 2004). It is recommended that the panel not be limited to experts at policy level, but rather that it should also include experts that are directly touched by the subject of the study, in this case experts from inspected schools (Hsu and Sandford 2007). Considering functions and expertise, after careful selection a panel of fifteen experts was constituted. The selection process' point of departure was the three actors in quality assurance in the field of education, as defined by the Decree regarding the Quality of Education (2009): schools (n = 5), inspection (n = 3), and counselling services (n = 4). In the category 'school', we selected representatives of

different sections within the school: two principals and one member of a school board, one teacher representative, and one parent representative, all having been recently affected by inspection. The panel was then completed with the inclusion of policy-makers (n = 3), for whom it was necessary that their position allowed them to discuss inspection from a well-underpinned position. The anonymity of each of the experts was guaranteed throughout the entire process of this study.

Research Development

This study is built on three research phases. As is customary in Delphi studies, the first research phase consisted of an open examination of the experts' ideas regarding our subject (Day and Bobeva 2005). A written questionnaire was developed with open questions and several sub-questions, e.g. 'How would you describe in your own words the function(s) of an inspection?', 'Supposing that you were asked to evaluate inspections, which criteria would you use to evaluate whether or not an inspection is effective?', and 'Which effects should an inspection lead to?' This questionnaire allowed the researchers to probe the opinions of the experts with regard to the aims that an inspection should pursue. In this first research phase, the experts were encouraged to give as many responses as possible (Schmidt 1997).

The second research phase consisted of individual semi-structured interviews with a dual aim: It allowed different experts to clarify their earlier responses, and to comment and react on the responses of other experts. During these interviews, the different aims for inspections were expanded upon further, along with examination of the fields of tension that had come out of the first research phase.

Both the written responses from the first research phase and the transcribed interviews were encoded. We first used an 'open' coding, creating 'nodes' during the process. These nodes included 'general aims of inspection', 'school areas on which effects should show up' as well as combinations of both. While coding the data into nodes, we carefully documented which information was delivered by which expert, in order to examine the extent of consensus and support, as well as the comprehensiveness of the data. The open coding was followed by 'axial coding', which included consolidating (partially) overlapping or related nodes into one node. Finally, the sources were re-analysed on the basis of the remaining nodes ('selective' coding) (Gibbs 2002).

During the third research phase, a closed, written questionnaire collected data on the extent to which the experts attached importance to the various stated aims that were derived from the results of the first research phase. Each of these stated aims was scored by the experts on a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (an unimportant purpose) to 4 (a key purpose). This written questionnaire allowed every expert to react on each of the responses that different experts gave in the first research phase. We received a response on this closed written questionnaire from 13 out of 15 experts. The parents' representative stated that she—given her lack of vision regarding the

subject of 'inspections'—was not able to give valid responses to the questionnaire: "*as an organization, we do not have a formal point of view about the inspection*". In addition to this the teachers' representative did not return the questionnaire.

As mentioned earlier, it was expected that some discord would manifest between the points of view of various experts. In this respect, the present study deviates from the traditional aim of a Delphi study, namely to obtain a full consensus (Hsu and Sandford 2007; Linstone and Turoff 1975). The aim of this study was rather to identify different aims and the assessment of these aims by the individual members of the expert panel. This 'looser' application of the Delphi method has been applied before by other studies with the intention to inform an inventory of opinions regarding a certain subject (Okoli and Pawlowski 2004). Even the founders of the Delphi method have indicated that "*it cannot even ideally be expected that the final responses will coincide, since the uncertainties of the future call for intuitive probability estimates on the part of each respondent*" (Dalkey and Helmer 1963, p. 459).

Results

We first discuss the general aims that inspections should pursue, according to the expert panel. Then we examine the school areas to which these general aims apply in order to arrive at specific aims, these areas are investigated under the headings:

General Aims of Inspections

Accountability-Oriented Aims of Inspections

Every expert agreed that inspections should have the purpose of making schools account for their actions. It was stressed that schools need to account to the authorities, as well as to the parents of (future) pupils. Internal stakeholders were only rarely mentioned. As schools are financed or financially supported by the authorities, every expert thinks that it is logical that inspection leads to the school accounting for their use of public money: "*If any organization receives financial funding from the authorities—and for such a substantial remit at that—it is just plain logic that accountability is expected*" (Policy-maker C).

This does not, however, relate to financial control, but rather a quality control on standards of education within schools. Furthermore the expert panel agreed that the accountability-oriented purpose also includes a sanctioning role, namely the revoking of the recognition of schools that are not able to sufficiently account for their quality.

Development-Oriented Purpose

There was less agreement amongst the experts regarding the development-oriented purpose of the inspection. Some of the experts (from the category 'counselling services') thought that it cannot be the explicit purpose of an inspection, in that it needs to result in schools taking the initiative for its own improvement (the above-mentioned "instrumental effect"). Neither should it be an explicit purpose of the inspection that schools improve their output (learning results, or pupil well-being) as the result of an inspection. Two arguments were mentioned by these experts to support this position: on one hand, the instrumental effects or output effects cannot be directly linked to the inspection, as they are, by definition, the result of a complex interrelation between different factors, some of which are not under the direct control of the inspectors. On the other hand,—and more importantly—it was argued that if this purpose was to be expected from an inspection, it would require that inspectors be assigned to provide concrete and constructive advice to the school, and to offer concrete solutions for deficiencies identified in the school. Such a requirement—starkly contrasting with current policy in Flanders—is considered as undesirable, not only by the experts from the group that includes 'counselling services', but is also by several (not all!) other experts from 'schools', 'inspection services', and 'policy-makers'. The main argument mentioned by these experts was that "*one body cannot be judge and party at the same time*" (School counsellor B). Furthermore, allowing the inspectors to provide concrete advice for improvement, would imply that certain teaching methods may be encouraged by the inspectors, a facet which is seen as a threat to the independence of the Inspectorate, as well as to the schools' autonomy. Another problem that may be expected if inspectors are allowed to provide advice, according to these experts, is the lack of alignment in educational ideas between inspectors: "*And then you see, due to a lack of coherence between the inspectors, then you see that the inspectors' subjective ideas regarding education play far too large a part*" (School counsellor A).

Notwithstanding the above arguments, a minority of the experts (three experts from the category 'school', one inspector and one policy-maker) were convinced that inspectors should be allowed to provide constructive and guiding advice to schools. The arguments to support this statement were threefold: that inspectors, through their regular monitoring of many schools, may be a key source of 'good practices'; that when schools receive criticism, they also desire constructive feedback from the body that has voiced the critique; and that the inspection may have a larger impact on school development by providing direct advice. Although the latter argument was supported by most of the experts, most of them remained convinced that the arguments against such a direct contribution towards school development, outweigh the positive arguments: "*I think that we have the task to ensure that the report is something that helps the schools to develop, even in cases of a positive evaluation. But concrete recommendations, that would of course be going too far*" (Inspector A).

From a confrontation of points of view during the second research phase, it was clear that consensus could be obtained on a "conceptual effect" with regard to the development-oriented purpose: an expectation shared by each expert was that inspections need to pursue the aim of staff members in inspected schools gaining more insight into their own functioning, and increasing levels of reflection on their own quality. The inspection report and/or the inspector's informal feedback should serve as a basis from which schools can look critically at their own quality and thereby come up with new ideas, or result in the confirmation of existing ideas.

The experts thought that the accountability-oriented and development-oriented aims could be combined. Although three experts (two policy-makers and the representative of parents) recognized there may be some tension between these two aims (for instance because the school needs to present itself in an open and vulnerable manner in order to attain development), there was a general consensus that the two aims can be reconciled. Three experts (one policy-maker, one inspector and one principal) suggested that both aims can even strengthen each other, particularly when school development is the consequence of being held to account.

Eight experts thought that the development-oriented purpose was as important as the accountability-oriented purpose. Six experts, evenly divided over the categories 'inspection', 'counselling services' and 'school', thought that the accountability-oriented purpose was more important: "*Quality assurance and monitoring whether or not the goals are obtained is their first task, so accountability is the key task*!" (Member of a school board).

In contrast, one school principal indicated that she thought the development-oriented purpose of the inspection should be the predominant purpose.

Policy-Informing Purpose

Next to the accountability-oriented and development-oriented aims, providing relevant information for policy-making should be a third purpose of inspections. The information generated by inspections needs to lead to a coherent view on the quality of the Flemish education system, which is seen as a support for development at policy level. Inspections also have a signalling purpose to help the authorities determine priorities and to assess the attainment targets and development goals.

> For me, [the inspection] includes that the authorities can ameliorate their expectations, and through the inspection it should be clear that certain attainment targets and goals need readjustment. It is also important that the authorities see that certain expected improvements are only feasible when the financial means of a school are in line with these expectations. (Principal A)

In contrast with the accountability-oriented and the development-oriented aims that apply to individual school inspections, the policy-informing purpose only applies to the wider picture-inspections of many schools taken as a whole. There was consensus amongst all the experts regarding this third purpose.

Stated Aims of an Inspection

The accountability-oriented and the development-oriented general aims of inspections were elaborated in more detail in the experts' responses. A stated aim entails that expectations of an inspection are that it should lead to the school accounting for a certain school area (e.g. the teaching methods applied by the teaching team, or the personnel policy in the school), or that it should lead to development in the school regarding these school areas. During the first research phase, 68 of these concrete school areas were identified by the experts. After 'axial' and 'selective' coding, the number of school areas was reduced to 31. These 31 school areas are enumerated in Table 11.1. They are divided over one school area related to infrastructure, 23 school areas related to the schools' processes, and seven school areas related to the school's output.

After the first research phase, 31 potential stated aims were identified with regard to the general accountability-oriented purpose, and 31 stated aims with regard to the general development-oriented purpose. The policy-informing purpose of the inspection was not made specific, as this purpose applies to many inspections taken as a whole and as such, is not related to specific school areas.

Based on the second and third research phases, an indication can be provided as to the extent to which these 62 stated aims are supported by the expert panel. In view of the small number of respondents that participated in the third research phase (n = 13), we need to be careful with interpreting the quantitative data. Nevertheless, the mean scores in the four categories of experts (schools, inspection, counselling services, policy-makers) provide an additional indication of the extent to which these stated aims are considered to be important in the Flemish educational context. These mean scores are listed in the second column of Table 11.1.

In the remaining part of this section, we will discuss the importance that the experts attach to each of these stated aims. We first discuss the stated aims related to infrastructure, next the process-related stated aims, and finally the output-related stated aims.

Stated Aims Relating to 'Infrastructure'

According to the expert panel, an inspection should make schools account for their compliance with regulations regarding the school infrastructure:

> An inspection has to examine whether the school complies with the demands regarding hygiene, tidiness, safety, toilets, classrooms, fire safety, safety of the outdoor equipment, … (Parents' representative)

The data collected during the third research phase indicated that, on average, one of the two stated aims of the inspection viewed as most important, was that inspections should make schools account for the hygiene, safety and habitation conditions of their infrastructure. The development-oriented purpose with regard to hygiene, safety and habitation conditions of the school's infrastructure was also

Table 11.1 Importance attached by the different groups of experts to the different stated aims(1/2)

	Importance attached to concrete accountability-oriented stated aims					Importance attached to concrete development-oriented stated aims				
	Mean	School n = 3	Inspection n = 3	Couns. services n = 4	Policy makers n = 3	Mean	School n = 3	Inspection n = 3	Couns. services n = 4	Policy makers n = 3
Infrastructure										
Hygiene, safety and habitation conditions	3.83	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.33	3.42	3.33	3.11	4.00	3.22
Processes										
Education process										
Teaching by the teaching team	3.58	4.00	3.33	3.00	4.00	3.47	4.00	2.67	3.42	3.78
Teaching by individual teacher	2.69	3.33	2.00	2.75	2.67	2.78	3.33	2.00	2.92	2.89
Pupil assessment	3.58	3.67	4.00	3.00	3.67	3.63	3.67	3.78	3.42	3.67
Pupil counselling	3.38	3.33	3.33	3.50	3.33	3.45	3.33	3.67	3.58	3.22
Education of pupils with specific needs	3.38	3.67	3.33	3.50	3.00	3.35	3.67	3.44	3.50	2.78
Parental involvement	2.77	3.33	2.33	2.75	2.67	2.63	3.11	2.11	2.75	2.56
School and classroom climate	2.79	3.33	2.67	2.50	2.67	2.55	3.11	2.22	2.75	2.11
Personnel matters										
Education degrees of the school staff	2.65	3.33	2.00	2.25	3.00	2.33	2.44	1.89	2.75	2.22
Professionalization	3.73	3.67	4.00	3.25	4.00	3.63	3.33	4.00	3.50	3.67
Personnel policy	2.94	3.33	2.67	2.75	3.00	2.75	3.11	2.33	3.00	2.56
Self-conception of the principal's job	3.10	3.00	3.00	2.75	3.67	3.08	3.00	2.89	3.08	3.33

(continued)

Table 11.1 (continued)

	Importance attached to concrete accountability-oriented stated aims					Importance attached to concrete development-oriented stated aims				
	Mean	School n = 3	Inspection n = 3	Couns. services n = 4	Policy makers n = 3	Mean	School n = 3	Inspection n = 3	Couns. services n = 4	Policy makers n = 3
School policy										
Educational policy	3.31	3.33	3.00	3.25	3.67	3.24	3.11	3.00	3.42	3.44
Internal quality assurance	3.58	3.67	4.00	3.00	3.67	3.53	3.44	4.00	3.33	3.33
Shared leadership	2.94	3.67	3.00	2.75	2.33	2.81	3.67	2.44	3.00	2.11
Orientedness towards shared goals	3.33	3.67	3.00	3.67	3.00	3.25	3.56	2.78	3.67	3.00
Consistent approach towards school policy	3.33	3.67	3.67	3.00	3.00	3.36	3.67	3.44	3.33	3.00
Internal communication	3.02	3.67	3.00	2.75	2.67	2.85	3.67	2.22	3.17	2.33
External communication	2.63	3.33	2.00	2.50	2.67	2.58	3.22	1.78	3.00	2.33
Responsive capacity (adaptivity to changes)	2.85	3.67	2.67	2.75	2.33	2.87	3.33	2.78	2.92	2.44
School team as a professional learning community	3.19	3.67	3.33	2.75	3.00	3.14	3.33	3.22	3.00	3.00
Innovative capacity	3.19	3.67	3.00	2.75	3.33	3.11	3.44	2.89	3.00	3.11
Reflective capacity	3.00	3.67	2.33	3.00	3.00	2.91	3.33	2.44	3.08	2.78
School team's perception of the school policy	2.50	3.00	2.33	3.00	1.67	2.40	2.78	2.22	2.92	1.67

(continued)

Table 11.1 (continued)

	Importance attached to concrete accountability-oriented stated aims					Importance attached to concrete development-oriented stated aims				
	Mean	School n = 3	Inspection n = 3	Couns. services n = 4	Policy makers n = 3	Mean	School n = 3	Inspection n = 3	Couns. services n = 4	Policy makers n = 3
Output										
Pupils' learning outcomes										
Achieving/pursuing attainment targets/development goals	3.83	4.00	3.33	4.00	4.00	3.78	4.00	3.33	4.00	3.78
Achieving goals set by the curricula	3.60	3.00	4.00	3.75	3.67	3.47	3.00	4.00	3.75	3.11
Other output										
Pupil well-being	3.21	3.67	2.67	3.50	3.00	3.09	3.22	3.11	3.25	2.78
Educational progress of pupils	3.15	3.33	2.67	3.25	3.33	3.08	3.11	2.89	3.00	3.33
Staff satisfaction	2.94	3.67	3.00	2.75	2.33	2.72	3.11	3.00	2.75	2.00
Principal satisfaction	2.85	3.67	2.67	2.75	2.33	2.60	3.11	2.67	2.75	1.89
Image of the school	2.27	3.00	2.00	1.75	2.33	2.18	2.78	1.67	2.50	1.78

rated as important. From the interviews it became evident that there was, indeed, a consensus that it is an important stated aim of the inspection that the school gains insight into, and improves, eventual deficiencies in their infrastructure, particularly when these deficiencies relate to the pupils' safety. The difference between the importance attached to the accountability-oriented Stated aim, and the development-oriented Stated aim, may be explained by the fact that adaptations to the current situation are not easily realized on short notice (e.g. building new classrooms, increasing the safety of the school building), but also because experts assume that schools are commonly already strongly aware of eventual deficiencies with regard to infrastructure.

Process-Related Stated Aims

In total, 23 school areas with regard to process features of the school were identified, including seven school areas related to the education process, four school areas related to personnel matters, and twelve areas related to the school policy. This figure resulted in 46 stated aims that needed to be assessed by the experts, as both the accountability-oriented and the development-oriented purpose were applied to each of these 23 school areas.

At first, some of the experts in the category 'counselling services' took a critical stance towards these process-related stated aims. They claimed to adhere to an output-oriented approach to inspections-meaning an inspection should only aim to fulfil the legislative obligation to monitor whether or not pupils achieve the expected learning outcomes (attainment targets and development goals). Process areas belong, according to these experts, strictly to the autonomy of the school, and therefore inspections should not pursue aims related to these process areas. However, due to the absence of an objective measure for output (there are no central examinations, for instance), these experts also admitted that inspectors inevitably have to take these process areas into consideration; however this should only be in order to judge whether or not these processes sufficiently guarantee that attainment targets and development goals are being achieved. These stated aims are therefore, according to these experts, not a goal as such, but an intermediate goal to reach a higher purpose, namely accountability and development with regard to the output of the school.

Stated Aims with Focus on the Education Process

In this section, it is important to note that four stated aims are considered by Flemish experts as being very important (see Table 11.1): an inspection should make a school account for, foster school development in the areas 'teaching methods of the teaching team', and 'pupil assessment'. Regarding the stated intention to, 'make schools account for pupil assessment', two inspectors claimed that it is important to monitor how schools deal with the available tests, which is

reflected in the maximal score in the quantitative data (4.00) given by the inspectors with regard to this purpose. Also the stated intentions (both accountability- and development-oriented) regarding 'pupil counselling' and 'education to pupils with specific needs' were, on average, considered as relatively important aims of an inspection. Both the interview data and the quantitative data show that the intention to 'make schools account for the education of pupils with specific needs' was strongly supported by experts from the category 'school'—and particularly by the parents' representative.

There was a remarkable difference between the importance attached to the two stated intentions with regard to the 'teaching methods of the teaching team' on the one hand (considered to be very important), and the two intentions regarding the 'teaching methods of individual teachers' (considered less important). The experts thought, on average, that the inspection should have less impact on individual teachers, and more impact on the teaching team as a whole. This particularly reflects the opinions of experts from the categories 'counselling services' and 'policy-makers', but also reflects those of the teachers' and parents' representatives. These experts argue that the evaluation of individual staff members falls within the remit of the school's principal. If the school has a well-functioning personnel policy, it does not need an inspection to assess individual teacher performance. Furthermore, according to these experts, allowing inspectors to make statements about individual teachers would serve as a threat to the establishment of a successful internal mechanism of teacher appraisal. Moreover, the idea of an inspector about the performance of an individual teacher is considered to be too fragmented to allow a reliable judgement:

> I wonder whether an inspection, or an inspector really has to observe individual teachers: to what extent can he get a view on a teacher in about one hour? A teacher that is suffering from stress because he's being watched or questioned, so to speak? The inspector will never see the full picture, I reckon. (Parents' representative)

In contrast, three Flemish experts (both the principals and the member of a school board) thought that inspection should pursue an important purpose concerning accountability and development with regard to the performances of individual teachers. From the point of view of the development-oriented purpose, these three experts think that teachers should receive individual feedback from the inspectors about their teaching performance, and that this would result in a larger positive development effect. Moreover, teachers have few chances to receive feedback from external professionals with educational expertise, so these experts felt that one should not allow this opportunity to pass. Regarding the accountability-oriented purpose, it was argued by these experts that it should be possible for the inspectors to comment on the performances of teachers that are blatantly substandard. The experts from the Flemish inspectorate take an intermediate position in this debate. They argue that teacher appraisal would benefit from an external contribution, but they doubt whether the Inspectorate is the most appropriate body to do this:

> A secondary school principal who has never been taught Economics, goes into the class-room of the teacher in Economics in the final grade, and he can judge from his experience on the teacher's classroom management, and on how the teacher deals with the pupils and whether this is constructive, and whether he works in the school's line of thought, but whether the content told by the teacher is right or not, cannot be assessed by that principal. (…) Whether it is the inspection that should do it, or another body… by the way in which we have received our remit and how we are operating now, we clearly cannot do this… but indeed, I think it would be a good thing if that gap is addressed. (Inspector A)

The quantitative data in Table 11.1 indicate that the experts from the category 'inspection', on average, attach lower importance particularly to the accountability-oriented purpose, but also to the development-oriented purpose with regard to the teaching of individual teachers. This may be explained by the strong conviction amongst inspectors that the inspection should not pursue judgements about the pedagogical qualities of the school.

> A school consists of teachers, a school is made by teachers. I think we absolutely need to take care that we [inspectors] give teachers the feeling that we are not judging them as a person, that we are not drafting a report about 'you as a person are doing well, or not so well' (Inspector C)

Finally, the accountability-oriented, and particularly the development-oriented aims with regard to 'parental involvement' and 'school and classroom climate' were judged to be less important. Especially related to the stated intentions with regard to 'parental involvement' the opinions of different experts strongly diverged: according to several experts from the category 'school' (and, not surprisingly, pre-eminently the parents' representative), both stated aims regarding this school area should be considered to be highly important, whereas inspectors attached lower importance to these aims.

Stated Aims with Focus on Personnel Matters

Inspections in the Flemish educational context pay a great deal of attention to the professionalization of the school team. Our data show that this practice is supported by the expert panel. The quantitative data indicate that inspectors attach even greater value to these stated aims than other experts do. The lowest score for this purpose was given by experts from the category 'school', which may be explained by the idea of these experts that the realization of these stated aims depends strongly on the stance taken by the school's policy.

> In an ideal world, there is an evaluation interview, during which the principal takes the inspection report, and he says [to the teacher], 'you have a weak score on this and that area, and these may be opportunities for improvement. Let's take a look, I'm taking my book of professionalization activities, what would be trajectories or courses that would be useful to have you join them?' (Principal B)

Furthermore, experts attached particular importance to the stated aims 'to make schools account for, and to foster development regarding the self-conception of the

principal's job' and 'to make schools account for their personnel policy', as desirable aims of an inspection. The development-oriented stated aim regarding personnel policy was considered to be less important: "*Remarks regarding the leadership and personnel policy are less effective as it mostly concerns tenured (statutory) teachers*" (School counsellor C).

Also other stated aims that had been derived from the first research phase ('make schools account for, and foster development regarding the education degrees of the staff') were supported by the expert panel but only to a lesser extent.

Stated aims with focus on the school policy. Each of the school areas of the stated aims discussed in this section is related to the schools' policy-making capacities. No consensus was reached in the discussion on whether or not inspections should pursue the goal to make schools account for their policy-making capacities or to contribute to development of their policy-making capacities as a result of an inspection. Two experts from the category 'counselling services' indicated in the first and second research phase that these are not valid aims for an inspection. Their opinion was based on schools' autonomy to determine their policy, and on the (in their view) small consensus regarding what should be understood as 'policy-making capacities'. Moreover, according to these experts there is a certain danger that policy-making capacities are quantified when they are judged by an inspection, which would inevitably bring an impoverishment to this complex concept. In contrast, the other experts thought that the policy-making capacities of the schools are such an essential component of the quality of the school, that an inspection should not overlook this school area. The third research phase showed that the two school counsellors who stood out in the first and second research phases, also valued the stated aims regarding policy-related school areas in spite of their earlier reticence.

The most important stated aims with regard to school policy, are that the inspection 'makes schools account for, and contributes to development regarding the internal quality assurance within the school'. The legislative regulation that an inspection needs to control whether or not a school monitors its own quality, is therefore broadly supported: "*Because I do really believe that whether or not a school is capable of shaping its process of internal quality assurance, that is the most important thing for a school*" (School counsellor B).

Other broadly-supported stated aims concerned the accountability for, and development of the school's educational policy: the orientation towards shared goals, the consistent approach towards school policy, the school team as a professional learning community and the innovative capacity of the school. Most of the experts also confirmed that the inspection should have a stated aim regarding accountability for, and development of the internal communication mechanisms, but this does not apply to the schools' external communication. Particularly regarding the stated aim 'to foster the development of external communication' it is remarkable that experts from the category 'inspection' thought that this stated aim carries a lower importance for an inspection, compared to experts from the categories 'counselling services' or 'school'. Furthermore, six other stated aims were found to be of medium importance, namely the accountability for and development

of the school's reflective capacity, shared leadership, and responsive capacity. In most cases very specific reasons underlay the slightly lower scores assigned in the third research phase for these stated aims. For instance, school counsellor A argued that in some cases, the best way for a principal to act is to take (temporarily) a very directive leadership style, which is not complementary to the stated aim 'to make schools account for, and to foster development related to shared leadership'. Finally, the experts generally thought that it is not a desirable purpose for inspections to make schools account for or to foster development regarding the school team's perception of the school's policy.

Output-Related Stated Aims

Seven school areas discerned with regard to school output; this implies that fourteen stated aims were formulated. We distinguished between stated aims regarding the pupils' learning output, and other output-related stated aims.

Stated aims regarding pupils' learning outcomes. There was a strong consensus between the Flemish experts that an inspection should make a school account for, as well as foster development regarding the attainment of learning outcomes. The accountability-oriented purpose regarding these learning outcomes should be-along with the above-mentioned accountability-oriented aims regarding the school infrastructure—the most prominent stated aim of an inspection. "*The remit of an inspection is the monitoring of the quality in terms of control of the pupils' results and the compliance of legislative regulations*" (School counsellor A).

As a result of the data obtained during the first research phase, the stated aims regarding pupils' learning outcomes were divided over two different school areas, namely the pursuit/achievement of attainment targets and development goals, and the achievement of the goals determined by the curricula. This is related to the Flemish educational context, in which the government sets minimal learning outcomes (attainment targets and development goals). Due to their pedagogical autonomy, schools may broaden these minimal learning outcomes in the curricula they use. The data obtained in the second and third research phases reveal that the stated aims related to achieving the attainment targets and development goals are, on average, considered to be slightly more important. This is explained by democratic support for these attainment targets and development goals, but also by the idea that each school should be judged by the same standards. Nevertheless, different arguments were also raised to support the importance of the stated aims regarding achieving the goals set by the curriculum:

> Because in the end, well (…) also these parents choose that particular school (…) because of the curriculum and the pedagogical ideas, so in that sense, I think as an authority and as Inspectorate, you are assigned to check whether these goals set by the curriculum are achieved. (Policy-maker B)

Notably, there was only a consensus in the category of experts from the 'inspection' (who were in favour of 'accountability and development of achieving the

attainment targets and development goals'), whereas in each of the other categories there were proponents of both viewpoints. However, several experts indicated that the difference between both output measures is rather small: "*In my opinion, this is a merely hypothetical discussion. I do not understand this discussion*" (Policy-maker A).

Other output-related stated aims. The four main stated aims of inspection considered important by the expert panel with regard to other output-related school areas, were 'to make schools account for, and foster development regarding pupil well-being, and regarding the educational progress of pupils (limitation of grade retention and alignment with further education/labour market)'. The quantitative data additionally indicate that the stated aims regarding 'accountability for and development in staff satisfaction and principal satisfaction' were considered to be slightly less important, while the stated aims 'making the school account for, and foster the development of the school image' were, on average, not considered to be important.

Conclusion and Discussion

In the past two decades, several descriptive studies have been conducted to examine the impact of inspections. However, only little is known about the aims inspections should pursue. The merit of the present study lies in the fact that this question has been addressed for the first time. With an explorative approach, this Delphi study has resulted in a comprehensive overview of general and stated aims that inspections in the Flemish educational context should pursue. In so doing we departed from the idea that these aims are determined by the shared expectations of different stakeholders in the field of education (Faubert 2009; Harrington and Harrington 1994).

We conclude that, according to expert stakeholders, the Flemish inspection system generally needs to address three aims, which are in line with the international literature on this subject: an accountability-oriented purpose, a development-oriented purpose, and a policy-informing purpose. However, our results bring some nuances to this general idea: (1) the accountability-oriented purpose reflects mainly "contractual accountability" and "public accountability" (towards authorities and parents/pupils, respectively) and only to a lesser extent "professional accountability" (towards internal and other stakeholders) (IIEP 2011); (2) the development-oriented purpose only minimally includes that the inspection stimulates staff members' reflection about their school, and that a stronger insight into the quality of their functioning results from the inspection (a 'conceptual' operationalisation of the development-oriented purpose). No consensus could be reached about an instrumental operationalisation of the development-oriented purpose, which would imply that inspections are explicitly challenged to foster schools' engagement in improvement activities. Underlying the lack of consensus with regard to this issue, is—amongst other reasons—the idea that an instrumental operationalisation would

imply that inspectors would provide concrete recommendations for improvement. Due to the strict distinction in Flanders between the role of school inspectors on the one hand, and school counsellors on the other hand, this is currently not the case. Moreover, it was considered to be undesirable by several experts on our panel.

The accountability-oriented and development-oriented general aims are further operationalised by the different school areas to which these aims apply. The small number of respondents impels us to treat the quantitative data cautiously, but nevertheless it may be concluded that the following three stated aims are considered to be the most important aims of an inspection: (1) to make the school account for the hygiene, safety and habitation conditions of the infrastructure; (2) to make schools account for the pursuit/achievement of the attainment targets and development goals; and (3) to contribute to development with regard to the pursuit/achievement of these attainment targets and development goals. Other major stated aims should be that the inspection makes schools account for and fosters development regarding the teaching of teaching team, pupil assessment, professionalisation of the school team and internal quality assurance.

Not every stated aim was considered to be important, and we could not reach consensus about the importance of each one. Due to the explorative nature of this study, we did not intend to provide a fully-completed set of aims supported by every expert; rather, we aimed to explore the field, to identify different aims and to assess the importance attached to them. Some notable differences deserve some attention here. It is evident from our data that the experts from the category, 'school counsellors', are more inclined to advocate points of view that deviate from the points of view of others. This concerns the abovementioned operationalisation of the inspections' development-oriented aim, and the question of whether inspections explicitly need to assess schools' policy-making capacities. It is probably not coincidental that each of these issues is closely related to the roles assigned to inspectors on the one hand, and to school counsellors on the other (the distinction between both is more carefully guarded by the school counsellors compared to other stakeholders), and to the interpretation of the constitutional principle of 'freedom of education'. Furthermore it is notable that the experts mainly advocating a more guiding and advisory role for inspections were those closely acquainted with day-to-day practice. Finally, experts related to school management (principals and school board) deviated in their opinions on the desirable function of inspections with regard to teacher evaluation. It may be that these experts feel that the current mechanisms for teacher appraisal insufficiently guarantee that an effective staff policy can be conducted. In those cases where no consensus could be reached, the present study sheds light on the various arguments used by the different experts.

The results of the present study strongly correspond with current policy and practice regarding inspections in Flanders. Indeed, inspection strongly emphasizes the control of compliance with regulations regarding the hygiene, safety and habitation conditions of the infrastructure. Additionally, the control of the schools' mechanisms for internal quality assurance is explicitly mentioned by the Decree regarding the Quality of Education as being one of the inspection's tasks. Moreover, some of the school areas mentioned by the experts closely align with the

CIPO-framework used by the inspection, and school areas such as the professionalization of the school team and pupil assessment are very often selected by inspectors as part of the inspection focus. This close alignment could be interpreted as a strong correspondence between current policy and practice on the one hand, and the expectations formulated by different experts regarding the desirable aims of inspections on the other. However, another possible explanation is that these expectations are (partly and implicitly) influenced by the current policy and practice of inspections. Particularly with regard to the expectations formulated by inspectors (who work within this current context) and by policy-makers (who share responsibility for making the current regulatory framework), but also with regard to other experts, such an influence of the current policy and practice on their expectations is not inconceivable.

Since Flanders (in 1991) was granted the authority to establish an independent education system, taking into account the constitutional principle of 'Freedom of education', this principle have always been interpreted by policy-makers and other stakeholders in a very strict manner. Schools are therefore entitled to set up their own curriculum, on condition that it is aligned with the attainment targets, set by the Flemish government. Because of the strict interpretation of the constitution by Flemish policy-makers the 'authorities'—represented by the Inspectorate—were traditionally entitled only to make a judgement on whether the school can show to a sufficient degree that its students are achieving these attainment targets. However, due to the absence of standardized tests or exit exams—another policy choice that is embedded in the strict interpretation of 'Freedom of education'—this entails by definition a task that depends to a large degree on inspector discretion. Inspectors also need to refrain from giving constructive advice to schools.

In recent days, we see that some of these policy choices have become point of discussion. Since 2009, schools are obliged to have some kind of internal quality assurance in place, and inspectors can control whether school comply with that obligation. This is a first step towards accountability for the processes in the school, rather than merely the outcomes—this study shows that this idea is supported by different stakeholders. Also the implementation of standardized tests is currently debated on, amongst others influenced by OECD recommendations (Shewbridge et al. 2011). However, granting inspectors a role that allows them to take a more advising or counselling role to contribute stronger to school development, still seems 'a bridge too far' for policy-makers (and particularly for the umbrella organisations of education providers), in spite of empirical evidence that shows that it would strengthen the positive impact of inspections on Flemish schools (e.g. Penninckx et al. 2014).

In order to be able to realize the aims of an inspection, further research is required to explore the extent to which the accountability-oriented aim can go together with the development-oriented one, as well as the conditions under which the co-existence of both may be feasible. Although it is evident from this Delphi study that the experts perceive only minor difficulties with reconciling the accountability-oriented and development-oriented inspection aims, further research into the combination of both functions seems to be warranted.

As elaborated in the conceptual framework, this co-existence has often been problematised, because (amongst other reasons) it is assumed that schools will not completely open up for an external evaluation, particularly if the inspector uses this power to take high-stakes decisions about the schools with potentially far-reaching consequences for the school image, pupil input and financing. In the words of Swaffield and Macbeath (2005) "*external inspection and honest disclosure by schools are unlikely bedfellows*" (p. 242). Further research could, for example, examine how a structural and directed cooperation between inspectors and school counsellors could be established in order to maximize the extent to which both the accountability- and development-oriented aims are addressed, without any of these partners losing their individuality. Without a doubt, an important issue in this study would be the operationalisation of the autonomy granted to schools. It is evident from the present study that this operationalisation is crucial for how one defines the role and the aims of an inspection.

Notwithstanding the embeddedness of these arguments in the Flemish educational context, the arguments mentioned in this chapter may also apply in several other educational contexts. The present study has both an academic, as well as a policy-oriented benefit. Due to the application of the Delphi technique this study contributes to the identification of the desirable aims of inspections, whilst also clarifying different the arguments of different experts which support these aims. The findings from this study create a sound basis for future descriptive and explanative research into the effects of inspections. At policy level, the results from this study offer guidelines to the Inspectorate and to policy-makers to make the aims of inspections explicit and to communicate openly about them. This study could also contribute to the robustness of the preparations made by schools and by school counsellors when given notification of a planned inspection.

Given the explorative nature of this study, the results obtained should be subject to further validation and refinement, because expectations and opinions are susceptible to changes, depending on new developments within and without the field of education. It should also be noted that these results are embedded in the Flemish educational context and culture. A critical stance towards these results should be taken when applying them to other educational contexts and cultures. In our opinion, the quest for the aims of inspection should be fundamentally addressed in every educational context, and this Delphi study may provide both methodological as well as substantive inspiration for this purpose.

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Chapter 12
School Inspectors: Shaping and Evolving Policy Understandings

Jacqueline Baxter

Abstract As Chap. 1 explained, the factors at play in the implementation of public policy are not limited to the complex, confounding and often competing values that jostle with one another when education policy is formulated, but may also variously come to light depending upon the lens through which the process is viewed. In this the final chapter I move to examine what understandings the country studies in this book reveal about the impact of policy subsystems in education and inspection policy, and the role of the inspectors within this. In so doing I examine how far the implementation of inspection policy can be said to convene to a model of ten preconditions necessary to achieve perfect implementation (Hogwood and Gunn 1984). I then move to examine the part played by inspectors in variously framing the idea of policy implementation as: evolution; learning; coalition; responsibility and trust, (see Lane in Eur J Polit Res 15: 532, 1987, in Ham and Hill 1984, p. 108), and to what extent inspectors can be said to be 'coalition workers' in influencing inspection policy. The chapter concludes that the work of inspectors is a key element within policy implementation and formation within the governance process and should be seen as central to any future research which investigates accountability from a governance perspective. It also concludes that it forms an important element within research into intended and unintended consequences of inspection policy.

Keywords Policy implementation · School inspection · Education · Education policy · Education politics

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Introduction

In the concluding chapter of this volume I argue that the cases illustrated in this volume support the role of the inspector as policy shaper and that examining evidence from these case studies, drawn as they are from differing cultures and contexts, provides a basis from which to draw particular conclusions regarding not only the ways in which cultural and political contexts influence education and inspection policy, but also a means by which inspectors and inspectorates contribute to policy learning in very particular ways. I also examine the implications of the employment of different theoretical frameworks as they converge within the inspector role, and explore what this means for the implementation of inspection policy the field of education policy implementation more broadly.

The studies in this volume emphasize that in considering inspection policy it is not enough to examine individual inspectors purely in relation to their organisations (inspectorates), but that their work must also be necessarily viewed from an interorganisational perspective, within which their 'assumptive' worlds are assumed to be colored and conditioned within a cyclical process in which they evaluate and reevaluate their work in relation not only to the inspectorate, but equally, in relation to the schools that they inspect. The original policy *intention* conveyed through recruitment and training processes not only frames the policy in a particular way, but is also coloured by both the traditions—cultural and political—within the inspectorate as well as organisations involved in the inspection process.

The case studies, in revealing that implementation is coloured by the assumptive worlds of inspectors—their values and sense of purpose, also reveal that this is further complicated by such elements as organizational culture, professional identity and conflicted professional identities—such as the case by Henry Moreton and colleagues in Chap. 7, and the conflicted and conflicting opinions around the purposes of inspection in Chap. 11.

In framing inspectorates as an institutions—relatively stable organizations which are also subject to transformation via a combination of mechanisms as in Chap. 2, Dedering and Sowada examine the role of the inspector through the triad of regulative, normative and cultural cognitive elements. These frames resonate throughout the volume, reflected in the cognitive, situative and affective elements involved in inspectors' work: the ways in which they frame their tasks, the context in which they carry out their work and the values that they attribute to it.

School inspectors, as this volume reflects, are not a homogenous group. They have different backgrounds and have been recruited for diverse and very particular skills. Although there appears to be an element of coalescence with regard to the work that they carry out, the ways in which they approach this work and the understandings they bring to it, differ according to the policy context in which they work. What is clear from the cases in this volume, is that in each case the policy subsystem (Fig. 12.1) has responded directly to external system events driven by changes in socio economic conditions, public opinion (as influenced by the media and government), along with changes to the systemic governing coalition and as a
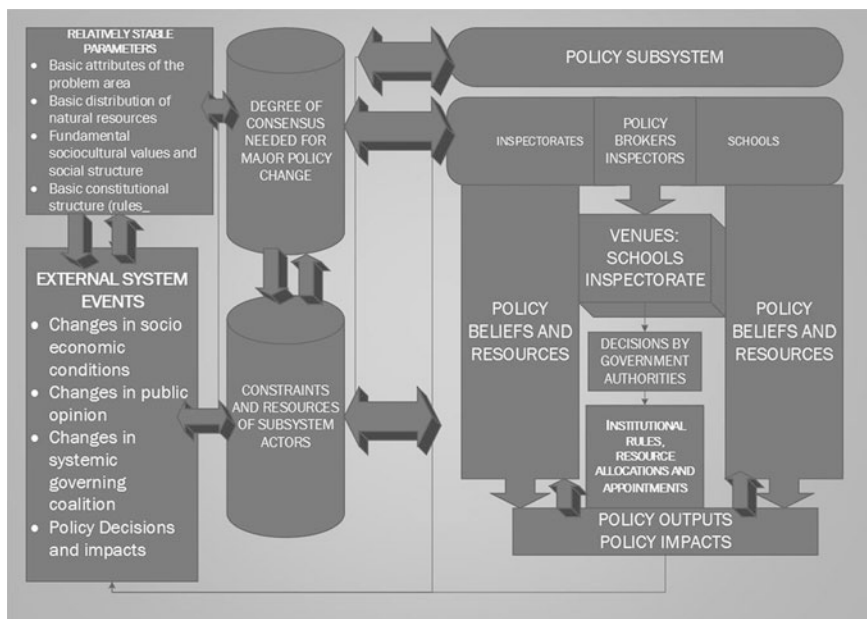
Fig. 12.1 An Adaptation of the Advocacy Coalition Model: Adapted from Weible and Sabatier (2006, p. 124 taken from the original model as seen in Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1999)

result of policy decisions. These drivers have not only filtered downwards through the policy implementation chain, but have also travelled horizontally due to the governance mechanisms at play within the policy system, as policy brokers (some of them inspectors) work across the implementation sphere, both influencing and influenced by policy drivers and 'bottom up' revelations and insights provided by inspectors.

Returning once again to Hogwood and Gunn's ten preconditions to achieve perfect implementation (Fig. 12.2), the country studies have revealed that whether inspection policy can be said to be well implemented depends largely upon what is understood to be the function of inspection, and whether successful implementation is seen as getting something done, or whether it is more a matter of regulatory compliance: As Barrett and Fudge (1981, p. 258), put it, if performance rather than conformance is the main objective, and compromise a means by which to achieve it, then it is possible to conclude from the studies carried out within this volume, that implantation of inspection policy is successful if viewed as a governance tool. This is largely because of inspectorates' apparent ability to adapt and change in order to fit with government agendas and policy plans. This chameleon like ability to adapt and transcend the electoral cycle has also been noted in other studies, (see for example Ozga et al. 2013; Grek and Lindgren 2014). But some research also indicates that inspectorates or regulatory bodies can outlive their usefulness to government: Examining the work of similar regulatory agencies Döhler (2013),

Fig. 12.2 Ten preconditions necessary to achieve perfect implementation (adapted from text by Hogwood and Gunn 1984, pp. 123–136)

points to Bernstein, who proposes a four stage life cycle of regulatory agencies (Bernstein 1955): gestation, youth, maturity and old age,

> during this life cycle an agency is transformed from hopeful expectations of serving the public interest to a passive, underperforming bureaucracy that is losing political support and thus triggering a new drive for regulation (Bernstein 1955, p. 74 in Döhler 2013, p. 518).

During the final phase of the agency, 'regulators are pressured by external groups until they move away from their original role and please the industry they were supposed to regulate in the first place' (Döhler 2013, p. 519). Although these observations emanated from private sector regulation, they are useful to this study in examining the challenges posed by changing socio, economic and political environments and inspectorates' need to remain responsive and agile in the face of such change. Although these studies do not indicate that governments are tiring of inspectorates, they do illustrate the inherent challenges posing as policy problems that require a 'fresh start' approach to inspection. This 'rejuvenation' of inspection in many cases, arises in response to a 'policy problem' framed in such a way as to link lack of state intervention with 'low standards' (see in particular Chaps. 2, 6 and 8).

In England the evolution of the inspectorate Ofsted, appears to have followed the lifecycle suggested by Bernstein—in reaching the final phase it has in many ways returned to the 'old style' of inspection it was originally designed to counteract (Maclure 2000): moving towards appeasing the teaching profession by the adoption

of a workforce largely made up from practicing headteachers; veering dangerously towards the type of inspector capture described by Boyne and colleagues (Boyne et al. 2002). In Altricher's account in Chap. 10, he points out that the cyclical nature of inspection policy is due to governments' wish to achieve 'the best of both worlds', an inspectorate which satisfies the governments' need for adequate accountability yet which also fulfills a developmental purpose. The changing form and shape of the English inspectorates is mirrored by that of Sweden which appears to have rejected the more ostensibly developmental focus in the search for a more rigid and 'impartial' form of inspection. Yet in its determination to avoid all of the classic issues around inspector capture—too great a proximity between inspectors and inspectees—the Swedish inspectorate appears to be coming full circle; finding that inspectors have a deep and abiding wish to influence schools and school improvement. Whether the legal and research experts employed in the present system of inspection are able to tap into the discourse of school improvement is highly questionable given their lack of credible background in education.

In terms of Hogwood and Gunn's ten preconditions necessary for 'perfect implementation,' the studies reveal a number of issues. The first arises in relation to the widespread confusion and lack of agreement as to what inspection is for. The studies revealed a distinct lack of consensus on the part of both policy makers and inspectors about what purpose inspection serves. The most obvious example appears in Chap. 11 in which the study reveals the true extent of the issue in the very different conceptualisations of the role of inspection according to policy makers, inspectors and practitioners. Penninckx and Vanhoof point out that expectations of the function of inspection focuses on three main functions: inspection as: accountability; inspection as 'development and inspection as a policy informing activity' (Chap. 11, this volume). But even this interpretation is conflicted, as each particular category contains nuance that further complicates the issue. This nuance arises in relation to the language of inspection articulated through conflicting understandings of inspection terminology. The accountability function is problematic in that it tends to refer mainly to contractual and public accountability, whilst taking little heed of professional accountabilities directed at internal and other stakeholders. The developmental viewpoint is conflicted in the sense that the term itself is open wide to various interpretations—it may mean that inspectors offer advice to schools on how to improve, or it may mean that inspection is in itself a driver for schools to take the initiative and improve. This conflicted interpretation of exactly how inspection affects school improvement is by no means confined to this study: it appears throughout the volume in one form or another, raising issues about the shared language of inspection and whether one exists. I will return to this later in the chapter.

In terms of preconditions necessary to achieve perfect implementation (see Fig. 12.2)—inspection policy falls very far short of that ideal on several counts, namely: *4*: *that the policy to be implemented is based on a valid theory of cause and effect; point 5*: *that the relationship between cause and effect is direct and that there are few if any, intervening links; point 7: That there is complete understanding of and agreement upon the objectives to be achieved, and that this continues*

throughout the implementation process; point 8: That in moving towards agreed objectives it is possible to specify in complete detail and perfect sequence, the tasks to be performed by each implementer and finally, point 9: that there is perfect communication among and coordination of the various elements involved in the programme (Hogwood and Gunn 1984, p. 122).

If inspection is designed to be effective in terms of policy learning then it is vital that initial objectives are not only agreed by inspectors, but implemented in a relatively homogenous way: a common criticism of inspectorates in many countries (not only within the context of education), is a perceptible lack of consistency in approach and judgements. In systems in which levels of inspector discretion are relatively high and where professional judgement is core to the task at hand, it is difficult to see how any level of consistency could possibly be reached if the inspectors themselves are unaware of, or disagree about intended policy outcomes. The challenge is even greater where powerful policy coalitions within the inspectorate and outside of it, strive constantly to form and shape public and government opinion of inspectors and their work. One form of this his illustrated in Chap. 9: Press and media clearly play a vital role in informing the public and policy makers of the results of inspection policy and bad news consistently sells better than good (see Baxter and Rönnberg 2014; Wallace 1997, 2007). This influence on inspection is powerful in a number of ways: The media create a 'black and white' view of inspection, simplifying it for public consumption. As research indicates, through their own values and ideologies—and those of their readership—they tend to work with a particular view of where inspection fits within the national educational accountability system. Through polarizing narratives they form and shape not only the work of the inspectorate, but also colour the ways in which inspectees imagine inspectors. This then works with inspector professional identities to co create a version of the role that fits with the values and expectations of both parties—facets well documented in the literature on formation of professional identities (see for example Apesoa-Varano 2007; Fagermoen 1997; Beijaard et al. 2004).

Inspector Contribution to Inspection Policy as a Learning and Evolutionary Process

There is ample evidence that external system events within the case studies influence the practices of inspection within the policy subsystem affecting 'traditions' within inspectorates (Bevir and Rhodes 2006, p. 6), and causing dilemmas for inspectors. Changes to socio economic conditions and systemic changes to national and international governing coalitions, appear throughout the book to act as justification for enhanced government intervention in education and 'creation' of policy problems that, in turn, must be solved by acts and outcomes of inspection. They in turn act as catalysts within the policy subsystem.

One of these effects is the way in which knowledge has been re classified and reified by government projects, 'creating governance narratives that legitimize the work of inspectors' whilst also creating ongoing rationale for the existence of inspectorates (Bevir 2010). The influence is far from being top down, as the original model suggested. Inspectors appear to be highly influential in shaping inspection policy although how they achieve this is less clear.

The policy belief system within the Advocacy Coalition Model is modelled on Lakstos (1971) theory of knowledge and is:

> Conceived as being hierarchically organized around a deep core of fundamental empirical and normative axioms, a secondary policy core that contains information about basic policy practices, and a range of instrumental considerations pertinent to the implementation of the policy core (Lakstos 1971 in Fischer 2003, p. 95).

There is considerable evidence within the accounts in this volume to support the role of the inspector as central to policy learning, therefore implying a strong bottom up element to inspection policy evolution. As mentioned earlier, and also as a focus in Chap. 11, the conflicts and tensions surrounding the purpose of inspection—the tensions between hard regulatory approaches and purportedly 'softer' developmental inspection frameworks are in part due to different perceptions of what inspection should be for and in part due to inspectors' ability to adapt to dilemas placed upon them by both the policy and conflicting ideas surrounding it. The evidence from other policy implementation studies which take an interpretative perspective of policy implementation (Grin and Van De Graaf 1996), suggest that a constructivist view of policy learning convenes most to the learning that occurs during policy implementation. The work of Grin and Van De Graaf (1996, p. 304), proposes three guiding levels of action in the work of implementers:

> The evaluation of solutions (empirical analytical arguments), problem definitions and the meaning of solutions (phenomenological arguments), empirical and normative background theories (hermeneutic-interpretative arguments), and normative ontological preferences (philosophical arguments).

Within this process inspectors are supported by guidance and extensive documentary support material, in the shape of inspection schedules; handbooks and lists of criteria which feature in the work of all of the inspectorates under scrutiny. But this is far from the only source of information for inspectors. Apart from initial training—which is often very short and focused on documentary procedures-a good part of their development is in employing the policy on site and, as Grin and Van De Graf suggest, in skillfully maneuvering their way around the policy dilemmas that form a good part of their everyday practice. As policy actors their agency and discretionary powers are also situated within the particular traditions of their inspectorate (Bevir 2011; Bevir and Rhodes 2006), and are necessarily limited in scope and reach. However in forming policy coalitions, sometimes in relation to schools, their ambit for change and policy interpretation is broadened considerably, as they work with schools to negotiate shared understandings of the elements under inspection. This role is very much underplayed in the literature on inspection, much of which tends to view inspectors purely as process implementers.

But as this volume illustrates, a leitmotif throughout appears as the need to employ sagacious judgement within a role that appears almost quixotic, as inspectors as policy actors' strive to attain a somewhat visionary ideal of themselves as crusaders—their mission, 'to drag schools from the mire', in order to achieve some type of school self-actualization—fulfillment of their (latent) potential, regardless of school actual capacity to improve. They must also learn to negotiate the vicissitudes of politics and the mercurial approach to their work taken by the press and media: who apotheosize and oppugne their practices—sometimes within the same report. Their work is further complicated by previous, outdated understandings of inspection, which still exert powerful influences on the policy subsystem. These are often present in the form of school improvement advisers operating on a consultancy basis, and who offer advice on what inspectorates are looking for from schools (Baxter 2014b). These consultants have often been out of education for some time and are blissfully unaware of changes to regulatory practices. Their approach is marketed on provision of 'The perfect inspection' and often involves teaching schools how to 'jump through hoops' rather than being focused on real development (see for example England, in Baxter and Clarke 2013; Baxter and Ozga 2013). This approach has also been noted in terms of local government intervention, whose interpretation of what inspection represents and how it acts on the schools within their jurisdiction is mediated (some may say controlled) by support services which reinterpret or re-frame inspection to suit local needs (see for example Moos and Paulsen 2014).

If policy change is viewed as a cycle of reflection on action, revision and implementation, such as for example in the Kolb model of learning and reflection (Kolb 1984), then the changes to inspection policy would be relatively straightforward: Involving a cycle beginning with policy theory (criteria and intended outcomes), moving to implementation, reflection on the implementation and finally change of practices fed back into the inspectorate as recommendations, which would at some stage feed into the formulation of policy. But in reality the process is more complex and conflicted than this. This is in part due to the conflicted nature of the aims of inspection, partly due to the lack of clarity over what constitutes success in inspection, and in part due to a powerful policy coalition that sees the only useful function of inspection as one of school development. According to the evidence in this book, inspectors do influence the inspection process and the outcomes of inspection, what is less clear is whether this is largely through their sense making activities, in terms of the practice of inspection, or rather the imposition of their own particular sets of values in order to bring the policy more in line with their own modes of thinking. In order to provide clarification, we need to find out more about formal mechanisms for this to occur, as well as researching what opportunities inspectors have to engage in professional dialogue about the practices of inspection and how far those practices go towards achieving a specific aim.

What is clear is that in learning within their workplace and in realizing and making sense of the sources of knowledge within their practices, inspectors create working clarity out of what is essentially a nebulous and enigmatic practice. Their

learning in practice and reflection in action that appear to negotiate the practice and the framing of that practice in relation to those they inspect, is instrumental in creating a congruency of meaning between policy intentions—as articulated through documentation and initial training/directives from the inspectorate, and influences that permeate horizontally through the policy subsystem (media reports, conversations with teaching staff, governors and local municipalities).

However, this learning, which begins well before they take up the role of inspector, is coloured and conditioned by their own assumptions about the nature of the work—these may vary greatly depending upon their background: for example a legal professional, employed to ensure compliance (as in the case of Sweden), may base their work upon very different values to an individual who has spent their entire career in schools. There is evidence in the professional identity research, as well as in the chapters in this volume, that these assumptions color not only what individuals do and why they do it, but equally who they are and the images they choose to project as they go about their work (Maclure 1992; Satterthwaite et al. 2006; Baxter 2011, 2013). As Chap. 8 reports, it is not only the practices of inspection that are coloured by this process but equally the weighing given to different forms of embodied, inscribed and enacted knowledge through the processes of inspection. Statistical data that has become the hallmark of most inspection systems, is understood in relation to the other forms of data; documentation, artefacts and qualitative observations and interviews that form part of the inspection project. The act of bringing together this data in the form of a coherent judgement is in effect a complex interplay of inspector discretion and negotiation in relation to both the inspectorate (who oversee the project) and the schools themselves. Success or failure of an inspection is also dependent on the extent to which the act of inspection is perceived to be legitimate. A concept which also includes the perceptual credibility of inspectors.

Inspectors and Communities of Practice

Returning to inspection as policy learning, the work of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger permits investigation of inspector learning as part of a community of practice. If inspectors are to be viewed as a community of practitioners (or practice), (Lave and Wenger 1991), within an organisation (the inspectorate) with the most experienced inspectors at its core, then attaining expertise as an inspector may be assumed to be for inspectors, the apotheosis of that practice. As many inspectors work in teams led by a senior team member, then their practices may well be assumed to colour and shape the work of more junior inspectors. In so doing the discourses and narratives around inspection concomitantly change or remain relatively static depending upon the assumed position of lead inspectors. In this respect they form the kind of 'discourse coalition' that Fischer refers to in his analysis of discourse versus advocacy coalitions (Fischer 2003, p. 103). If, as it appears from

the case studies in this book, inspectors learn their 'trade' from being part of a community of inspectors, then they not only learn in relation to that community, its influences, traditions and discourses, but equally according to the narratives and discourses that they create in the course of their sense making activities and their position in the hierarchy of inspectors within the organisation. These assumptions are supported by the work of Weik who argues that many of the strongest and most binding professional decisions are often formed in a retrospective manner: A decision is taken and then in arguing for its justification the decision is solidified, becoming part of the learned practice (Weik 2001), see also (Baxter 2016, Chap. 6). Inspector discretion must therefore be considered to be partly a sense making activity carried out in relation to senior inspectors within the organisation.

However, inspectors may well draw their identity and form their assumptions because of a greater affiliation with another community of practice; Henry Moreton and colleagues focus on this element in Chap. 7, in their work on inspector head teachers. In this case they may form part of a powerful policy coalition that exists outside of the inspectorate, drawing on head teacher and school communities whose discourse and narratives around inspection may be very different to those operating within the inspectorate itself.

In order to learn more about the ways that inspector learning shapes inspection policy, we need far greater exploration into how inspectors learn; which communities of practice they are most influenced by Lave and Wenger (1991). We also need to know the routes via which interpretation of inspection policy feeds into the inspectorate and back to policy makers. Equally as important to ascertain is knowledge relating to how much of their working practices derive from tacit knowledge. These accounts indicate that there is ample evidence to suggest that much of what inspectors do is tacit—and that successful inspection largely rests on this type of knowledge in order to achieve basic functionality. Turning to Polanyi's interpretation of tacit knowledge and its relevance for communication skills, much of the work of inspectors is indeed tacit, in that it is founded on communication skills, (written and verbal), which are in turn formed from tacit knowledge that is both phenomenological and ontological in nature (Polanyi 2009). In attempts to quantify this knowledge through training and professional development, it too may become integrated into inspection practices, and over time form part of the discourse of inspection.

Inspection processes are not straightforward due to the background of inspectors and their contractual obligations. New inspectors or those drawn from the ranks of practitioners, either in the field of education or other fields, bring learning and skills that are equally valid into the implementation of policy; begging the question as to where exactly in the implementation chain the policy learning occurs. This question returns once again to what constitutes successful implementation. If the answer to this is laid down in very concrete terms then deviation—for whatever reason—will lead policy analysts to conclude that the policy has failed. But if the ways and means by which inspector interpretation of the role is seen to add to the learning and subsequent evaluation and re-evaluation of policy then their contextual

adaptations could well be viewed as positive. It also taps into the idea proposed by Majone and Wildavsky (1978), that, 'implementation is the continuation of politics with different means (p. 175).

The politicization of implementation at the level of the inspector and inspectorate, is key to understanding how much of inspectorates' work and crucially is imagined seen to be a continuation of government agendas. There is no doubt that it is essentially political in the wider sense of the term: a constant series of negotiations and resolution of policy conflict. However, it is in the resistance to inscribed policy goals that the real policy learning may well occur, as inspectors craft new narratives and discourses of inspection which tap into the many other actors and institutions within the policy subsystem.

Inspectors as Advocacy Coalition Workers: Responsibility and Inter-organisational Trust

If as Sabatier suggests, advocacy coalitions are based on shared values (Sabatier 1988; Weible and Sabatier 2006), then the alignment of inspectorate values and policy goals with school interpretations of inspection policy goals, creates potential for a powerful joint policy coalition. This is very likely to be why inspectorates are adopting ostensibly 'softer' approaches to implementation based on professional dialogue and a focus on school improvement. Tapping into these core educational values implies shared goals and trust: collaboration between school and inspectors. It implies a certain degree of trust on the part of both parties; trust that the school will have the capacity to self-evaluate and trust in the inspectorate to be able to facilitate a professional dialogue on improvement and support. Within this relationship, policy coalition workers join together to promote particular understandings of inspection policy, promote trust within institutions and create coherence outcomes of inspection policy and intended outcomes.

The role of trust in policy making has long been recognized as a core element within the policy process (Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1993; Avis 2003). But Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's extensive review into the nature, meaning and measurement of trust, revealed numerous interpretations of the term and how it is understood (Tschannen-Moran and Hoy 2000). In terms of education and inspection policy, trust is key not only to the implementation of the policy but to the way in which it is designed. Chapter 4 gives account of an inspection process that is based around trust in schools to be able to offer an honest self-evaluation, along with trust in inspectors to be able to unpick whether this self-evaluation is indeed an honest account of school capability.

Trust in the ability of inspectors to be able to convey inspection judgements in such a way as to promote school improvement is pivotal to most systems; so too is their ability to remain disinterested, yet collaborative in their approach. A tricky

balance to achieve. Distrust between parties tends to provoke feelings of anxiety and insecurity at institutional as well as personal level, as the literature on change management reflects (Lane 1987).Trust between regulators and the regulated is well documented in the literature on regulation and inspection (Pautz 2009), and is not only founded in the ways in which regulators go about their work, but their professional credibility within this work: the trust invested in them to go about their work with integrity and a highly sensitized and nuanced understanding of the contexts in which they operate.

The performative nature of teaching, engendered largely by belief in market principles, combined with a concerted push by western governments for policies in line with the economics of Milton Friedman and the Chicago School (Friedman 2009) has led to a lack of trust in teachers and the profession more generally (McNamara and O'Hara 2008; Groundwater-Smith and Sachs 2002; Avis 2003). This is not confined to education but permeates all professions within the public services. Founded on the belief that so called producer interests, instigated by professionals working within the realm exert far too much dominance in terms of both the services they offer and the extent to which they are withheld. As a result of this belief, one which goes hand in hand with free market principles, the professional is viewed with suspicion: their motives and indeed their motivation, highly suspect. This mode of thinking, premised on rational choice theory, believes in a discerning and highly rational service user: one capable of choosing providers as they would choose any product available in the free market. This belief has eroded and undermined the role of teacher as professional portraying the profession instead, as a technical rational occupation (Ozga 2000), a view which all but denies the altruistic reasons why individuals enter and remain working in conditions that are at best demanding. Governing by inspection is a reflection of this lack of trust—a narrative that permeates and is implicit within much of inspection documentation, yet one that is wholeheartedly denied by politicians who on one hand argue for more trust in teachers whilst on the other, bay for more rigorous systems of regulation (Ball 1993, 1998). Inspectors themselves are landed with the unenviable task of creating trust in political accountability whilst they work in climates and cultures that are riddled with suspicion and doubt. Their work must be seen to be transparent with punctilious attention to criteria, yet must also be characterized by high levels of professional judgement and integrity. Fulfilling both functions is imperative in order to make judgement in a fair and ostensibly disinterested manner, whilst also having the skills to be able to convey those judgements in ways that convince inspectees that the judgement is a valued and valuable pointer in how to go about the business of improving. To do this they must be able to create a coherent narrative that both convinces and contrives.

An essential part of putting together such a narrative, involves storying and sequencing inspection events, from initial inception—preschool visits and documentation, to final judgements-reports and feedback to the school. It is in this act of storifying that trust—making activities occur most. In order for the narrative to work, the trust building activities must occur at every stage in the process—failure

at any level will cause an abrupt break in the narrative, giving cause for suspicion, doubt and possible formal complaints or lack of compliance on the part of the schools.

In creating narratives of trust, inspectors themselves become policy coalitions which act to create particular narratives of inspection These narratives are colored and complemented by interactions with inspectorate and inspectees to produce a final draft that will articulate narrative and contribute to wider conceptualization of what constitutes 'successful inspection.' It is within these narratives that the beliefs, values and actions of inspectors are woven into a complex tapestry of policy documents, official reports and political necessities in order to create change. It is within these narratives I believe to most influence the bottom up changes that most powerfully influence inspection policy. One of the reasons for this is that they also have the power to respond to particular views on what inspection is for. By largely negating or focusing on a particular area, the narratives (not just the inspection reports), have the power to effect change, becoming effective policy coalitions which advocate for particular understandings of the inspection process and its aims. They are then picked up by inspectorates and woven into the policy fabric, changing and evolving policies. As reflected by the chapters in this book, these narratives are as telling for what they leave out as for what they include in their storifying of the process.

The very particular approach used in the Republic of Eire requires practitioners with very particular communication skills in order to hone with the ideal of the 'self-improving school', a facet also reflected in the chapter by Dobbelaer (Chap. 5). In each case inspectors, during the processes of inspection, create an idealized narrative of what a self-improving school looks like. Within a very different system, Swedish inspectors work with artefacts and extensive lists of criteria which not only create a narrative of inspection, but one in which the inspector features centrally as an agent for compliance. In England the hard regulatory approach is narratitivised as a developmental approach through the prism of in service head teachers who know what's what and can create a powerful coalition with inspectees—jointly creating the inspection process via the use of shared language; shared traditions of education and shared values.

In creating and shaping these narrative inspectors and their teams bring together the regulative, normative and cultural cognitive elements of inspection into one convincing narrative that forms and shapes the traditions of inspection and contributes to its evolving nature. For this reason it is important for future research into inspection, both as a governing/accountability mechanism and a school improvement driver, to consider the important role of trust, and to identify, or go some way to being able to identify systemically, where breaches may occur within policy implementation processes. Research that moves in this direction may be helpful in identifying why and how inspection appears to have so many unintended consequences and why it so often appears to be in constant evolution in order to avoid the 'policy paradoxes' that occur when resolution to policy problems only serves to give rise to different dilemmas and policy problems (Clarke 2008; Baxter 2014a).

Conclusions: Inspectors as Policy Implementers Within the Governance Process Intended and Unintended Consequences

Colleagues within this volume (and elsewhere) have done much to investigate not only the outcomes of inspection, but the unintended consequences provoked by education and inspection policies. A recent case in point developed by Ehren et al. (2015), proposes a framework of causal mechanisms of school inspections (p. 379). The framework looks as both processes and outcomes of school inspection and concludes that, to make inspection work in a way that is beneficial to the overall system, improvement of educational quality is better thought of as a culture change rather than the 'implementation of an inspection instrument,' (p. 394). This, the authors argue, will go some way to preventing the unintended consequences that occur as a result of inspections, for example, gaming the system, putting systems in place purely during inspection periods and seeing inspection as a tick box exercise. If, as the authors of this study conclude, and which is also supported by other work (Ehren and Visscher 2006), one of the key drivers for school improvement via inspection is the expectations it creates in terms of school self-evaluations and pre inspection activity, it is vital that any effective policy relating to school inspection is able to create a discourse of inspection which is focused around school improvement. As this study has revealed, inspectors are instrumental in effecting this, forming powerful policy coalitions that are capable of colouring and conditioning inspection policy. The model proposed by Ehren and colleagues includes accepting feedback and setting expectations as core elements in the inspection process: these are both areas in which the skill and knowledge of inspectors is pivotal in order to create dialogues and spaces for schools to be able to discuss their improvement needs in a safe space (Cordingley et al. 2005; Clark et al. 1996; Baumfield and Butterworth 2005). In order to do this effectively inspectorates need to draw on the dialogues and narratives of their inspectors to create a culture change, one that focuses on the potentiality of the work of inspectors as individuals capable of harvesting and synthesizing good practices in order for inspection policy to work in harmony with other accountability mechanisms in the system.

But in order for this to happen, inspection policy needs to be implemented using a whole system approach, one that creates powerful policy coalitions that buy into the idea of inspection as improvement. In order to do this, as the chapters in this volume have pointed out, there needs to be public consensus on what inspection is for, so that policy can be implemented clearly. As this chapter has pointed out, trust is a key element in policy implementation and a combination of politicization of inspectorates, constantly changing frameworks (which the public assume to be rigid), and soft combined with hard regulatory mechanisms, serve only to undermine this trust, in the eyes of both public and profession.

In addition to the points above; the book has pointed out that we need to better understand what knowledge is most useful in promoting this culture shift in

inspection; which of the elements and actors within the implementation process undermine trust, and which have the power to enhance it. We also need to better understand inspector learning and how this is used argumentatively and dialogically to promote improvement, and how this learning contributes to establishing trust in relationships with the profession and also with the public.

If inspection is to remain a useful tool by which to govern education, it needs to prove that within the regulatory agency lifecycle it does not cease to be useful to government, in becoming a passive, underperforming bureaucracy that is losing political support and thus 'triggering a new drive for regulation' (Bernstein 1955, p. 74 in Döhler 2013, p. 518). In this sense it needs to ask whether its regulatory function is competing with a powerful policy coalition within and outside of inspectorates; one which recognises a true function as one of improvement. This is a difficult area for governments who have become very fond of the idea of development in terms of a form of 'soft regulation'. But development and regulation are very different beasts; the former reliant upon trust and confidence in the implementer, the latter very often based on fear of sanctions. While both exist in tension with one another within the inspector role, and whilst neither inspectors nor policy makers can fundamentally agree on the real purpose of inspection the implementation procedure will without a doubt be compromised. This may mean that rather than fighting against them, the system merely acknowledges these tensions and works with them within inspector development that acknowledges the inspector as a key shaper of inspection policy. This may well involve a rethink of the inspector role and what it is designed to accomplish in the longer term future of the implementation of education and inspection policy in the complex and evolving national education systems of OECD member states.

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