

Unit 1: Inspection

INTRODUCTION

The service of the inspectorate is committed to maintaining and improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The SADC countries are changing fast and the inspectorate reshaping themselves to the new needs. The re-shaping process has important objectives of ensuring quality assessment, quality control and quality audit. Accordingly, this unit has been prepared to assist serving inspectors in their multi-faceted task of inspection in order to improve education standards in schools. This unit will provide advice, procedures and suggestions that will be useful to those who have formal training and those who do not.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit, the serving inspectors will be able to:

- define inspection
- list purposes of inspection
- list down types and styles of inspection
- describe the roles and responsibilities of inspectors and how they influence teaching and learning
- identify inspectors' professional and personal skills

DEFINITION OF INSPECTION

Inspection may be defined as a specific occasion when an educational institution is examined and evaluated as a place of learning in such a way that advice may be given for its improvement. The advice is given in an evaluation report (Kachama 1992).

Activity 1a

- (a) In your own words, define the term 'inspection'.
- (b) Relate your definition to the text information and restructure it.

Comment

- Did Activity 1a, assist your understanding of the definition of inspection?
- If yes, proceed to the next item. If no, revisit the definition.

PURPOSES OF INSPECTION

An inspection must have a definite objective. Whenever inspectors are planning an inspection, they must know why they are undertaking it.

Some purposes of inspection are to:

- identify strengths and weaknesses so that schools may improve the quality of education they provide
- ensure effective administration and management of education in schools
- assess the teaching and learning in schools

- improve feedback in the education system
- create a climate for constructive change to facilitate curriculum development and its implementation
- ensure that schools are provided with adequate resources
- provide guidance and counselling on general professional matters
- conduct needs assessment and address the needs appropriately.

Activity 1b

Given the purposes of inspection above, reflect on each one of them.
Which do you think is the core purpose of inspection and why?

COMMENT

Activity 1b should assist you to find out whether you have achieved the purpose of inspection or not and thereafter make the necessary adjustments. Assessing the teaching and learning in schools should form the core of the purpose of inspection. This is because it aims at assessing standards in order to improve learning outcomes.

TYPES OF INSPECTION

There are four different types of inspection

(a) Full Inspection

Definition: It is an occasion when a school is examined and evaluated as a place of learning in all aspects of its work so that advice may be given in an evaluation report for its improvement. Aspects of the school inspected include standards of achievement, curriculum, administration, buildings, grounds and equipment.

Objectives:

- to examine
- to evaluate
- to give advice
- to provide feedback in written form to the school, government and other stakeholders.

(b) Follow-up Inspection

Definition: Inspectors may think a subsequent visit is needed to evaluate the extent to which recommendations made in the report have been implemented and to assess any action taken to achieve the desired results. This becomes a follow-up inspection.

Objectives:

- to follow up previous report(s)
- to facilitate the implementation of previous recommendations
- to assess whether recommendations have been implemented
- to assess and evaluate the implementation process
- to give advice

(c) Partial Inspection

Definition: Sometimes, inspectors examine and evaluate a limited number of aspects of school life, such as teaching, with no regard paid to the other aspects. This is a partial inspection.

Objectives:

- to examine specific aspects of school life
- to evaluate specific areas of a school
- to pass information from and to higher authorities

(d) Special Inspection

Definition: This is an inspection looking at special areas of school life e.g.

- a strike at a school
- an anonymous letter directed to Head Office
- an act of misconduct by a teacher

Objectives:

- to examine the facts given
- to collect information in order to establish the truth
- to sift and evaluate evidence
- to pass on recommendations and findings from and to higher authorities.

Activity 1c

After you have studied each type of inspection, decide on the appropriate type of inspection for the following circumstances:

- checking whether the teaching materials you found lying in the storeroom have been distributed appropriately
- checking on school buildings, grounds, teaching and learning
- checking schemes of work and lesson plans for a specific subject
- child molesting and abuse by a teacher
- school enrolment and staff/school establishment
- a strike at a school.

COMMENT

Activity 1c should assist you in appreciating the different types of inspection. This will also assist you in the prior planning for any type of inspection. However, all these types of inspections are aimed at improving pupils' achievement.

STYLES OF INSPECTION

There are three different styles of inspection:

- directive style
- collaborative style
- non-directive style

(a) Directive Inspection Style

The inspector guides the teacher in what will be done, sets the time and criteria for inspection, determines the actions for the teacher to follow.

Assumptions of the Directive Inspection Style**Directive Inspection**

- The inspectors have greater knowledge and expertise than the teacher about the issue or concern at hand.

- The inspector knows better than the teacher what needs to be done to improve teaching.

When to use directive inspection

- When the standard of learning is low.
- When the teacher has less knowledge than the inspector about the issue.
- When the teacher lacks expertise.
- When the inspector is accountable for the success/failure of the issue.
- When the inspector cares intensely about the issue and the teacher does not.
- When the issue is urgent and needs immediate action and the inspector has the expertise.

(b) Collaborative Inspection Style

In this type, the inspectors present their own ideas, ask the teacher to propose possible solutions, and 'negotiate' with the teacher to find a common course of action. The final decision concerning the plan of action is shared by both the teacher and the inspector.

(c) Assumptions of the Collaborative Inspection

It is:

- based on democratic principles
- based on the principle of accepting others as 'equals'
- aimed at solving problems through a meeting of equal minds
- based on the understanding that the agreed decision to improve teaching is satisfactory to both the teacher and the inspectors.

When to Use Collaborative Inspection

- When both the teacher and inspector are involved in carrying out a decision.
- When both the teacher and inspector care intensely about the problem.
- When both the teacher and inspector have approximately the same degree of knowledge and expertise.

Non-Directive Inspection Style

The inspector 'listens' to the teacher, 'clarifies' what the teacher says, 'encourages' the teacher to speak more about the issue or concern, and verifies the teacher's perceptions. The inspector helps the teacher to formulate a decision about the future.

Assumptions of the Non-Directive inspection

- The teachers to be inspected know best what teaching changes need to be made, and have the ability to think and act on their own plan of action.

When to Use Non-Directive Inspection

- When the teacher possesses most of the knowledge, and the expertise of the inspector is minimal.
- When the teacher has full responsibility for carrying out the decision, and the inspector is little involved.
- When the teacher cares about solving the problem.

Activity 1d

After studying the different styles of inspection, decide on the appropriate style(s) of inspection for each one of the problems listed below:

- informed trained teachers present their lessons illogically
- a teacher conducting a lesson with inadequate content
- inspections of a subject with which an inspector is not familiar.

COMMENT

When inspectors observe lessons in which they have little subject knowledge the following may assist:

- involvement of a subject specialist
- reading extensively on the subject area
- inservice training

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF INSPECTORS

The roles and responsibilities of inspectors are to:

- assess standards of teaching and learning
- conduct regular inspection visits
- provide feedback to the Ministry of Education and to the schools on all professional matters
- ensure that policies and provisions laid down in the Education Act are adhered to in all types of schools
- provide encouragement and constructive evaluation in promoting acceptable curricular changes
- guide, advise, mediate and support the teacher in a spirit of encouragement and not condemnation of the teacher's work
- give support to all teachers
- continuously re-appraise, adapt and modify the curriculum through inspectors and syllabus committees and panels
- ensure that pupils are learning effectively under conducive conditions
- ensure that public funds administered by the school committees are properly accounted for
- check on the availability of instructional materials, deployment of teachers and other resources
- ensure that the Ministry of Education provides schools with suitable classrooms, adequate furniture, stationery, books, auditory and visual technical aids and materials
- advise the authorities on the establishment of a new school
- inspect a school before it is registered and established
- investigate and recommend cases of misconduct by teachers to the appropriate authorities
- deal with cases of misconduct of teachers.

INSPECTION ROLES SHOULD INCLUDE:

(a) Inspecting Standards (Quality Control)

- check standards of learning

- check on and assess schemes and record of work
- classroom observation
- check on and assess lesson preparations, presentation and pupils' participation
- examine pupils' work
- check on classroom inventory e.g. attendance register, timetable, furniture, displays and equipment, textbook inventory.

(b) Assessment of School Organisation and Management

- assess school mission statement and/or school objectives
- school development plan - mission statement translated into Action Plan.
- check on the role of the head in monitoring standards
- check on the school inventory
- admission register
- staff and pupil files
- check on historical and achievement display boards
- check examination records
- check availability of statutory regulations and procedures
- check financial records
- check specialised rooms
- check school routine and assemblies
- check general learning atmosphere
- check projects in operation
- check administration external relationships.

(c) Assessment of the School Environment

- safety and cleanliness of buildings
- sanitation - adequacy and cleanliness of toilets and ablution blocks and clean water
- grounds - playing fields, pathways
- check on boarding facilities
- check on provision of the handicapped.

(d) Subject and Department Inspection

- check on availability of teaching materials, access, storage and suitability
- records of department and staff meetings
- management style in the department e.g. delegation, staff appraisal, staff development
- check scholastic records including examination results.

(e) Advisory Roles

- dissemination of good practice and innovation
- guidance and counselling
- curriculum development
- policy formulation
- coordination of examinations
- liaising with other stakeholders
- identifying needs and running INSET
- action research
- advise on procedures of doing things
- advise on current trends in education
- advise on new schools

Activity 1e

- (a) Imagine that you have gone for inspection and you find a school of fifteen classes but with only six classrooms. What measures would you take to assist the school to address the problem?
- (b) As an inspector of schools you have analysed the results of your area of inspection and have identified mathematics as the weakest subject. What steps would you take to address the situation?
- (c) How do you ensure that in your area of inspection, government policies and regulations are correctly interpreted and implemented.

COMMENT

In Activity 1e item (a), an inspector could make use of:

- double shift/session
- inform the relevant authorities about the need for the construction of additional classrooms.

In Activity 1e item (b), the inspector should check on the following aspects:

- syllabus content
- syllabus interpretations
- teacher qualifications
- availability of resources
- teaching methods applied
- time allocation
- teaching materials orientation

NB: The solutions to the above mentioned problems are inexhaustible but inservice training might be a priority.

In Activity 1e item (c), the following suggestions are given:

- holding meetings with headteachers/teachers
- check on policies operating within the school
e.g. admission policy, teacher qualification, language policy.

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Professional skills are abilities or expertise which can enable inspectors to perform their work efficiently, effectively and can facilitate their assistance of teachers, with the purpose of improving teaching and learning.

Some of these skills are:

- evaluation
- note taking
- reporting
- data collection and analysis
- interviewing
- record keeping
- planning
- project management
- training
- guidance and counselling

- management
- conflict resolution
- trouble shooting
- research
- computer literacy
- interpreting regulations

Activity 1f

Now that you are informed about the professional qualities required of inspectors of schools, do you think these skills are all of equal importance in your role as an inspector? Are there some you think are more important? If so, rank them in order of importance.

COMMENT

The duties of inspectors of schools are situational such that the skills discussed above are applicable in different situations and circumstances.

INTERPERSONAL / HUMAN RELATIONSHIP SKILLS REQUIRED BY THE INSPECTORS

The success or failure of inspectors will depend among other things, on their qualities and the relationships they develop with the people they meet in their area of operation. In order to succeed, the inspector's relationship with all people should be built upon confidence and mutual respect.

Some of these personal qualities are:

- honesty
- integrity
- helpfulness
- frankness
- enthusiasm
- reliability
- determination
- patience
- desire to learn
- approachability
- fairness
- firmness
- sympathy
- empathy
- politeness
- impartiality
- positive attitude towards work
- competency
- flexibility
- communication
- respect
- sensitivity to gender issues
- awareness of the constraints in the work environment

Activity 1g

As an inspector why is it difficult to inspect relatives, friends and people to whom you are familiar? What interpersonal skills can you apply to solve this problem?

COMMENT

Remember to be impartial, frank and fair in performing your duties.

SUMMARY

This unit aims at providing common ways of assisting inspectors in their roles and functions of inspection. It provides advice, procedures and suggestions for the inspectors. It is hoped that it will also be useful to those responsible for organising the inservice education and training of inspectors, to challenge the inspectors who have begun their work or those who have been doing their work without any training to work harder and reach greater heights of achievement.

REFLECTION

Having gone through this unit, reflect on your past experience as an inspector and identify some aspects of school inspection that the unit has helped you to re-examine.

REFERENCES

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- Tait, D. (1996) *Educational Inspection and Supervision: Project on a Pattern of School Inspection in Namibia*, Institute of Education, University of London