

# Unit 2: Supervision

## AIM

The aim of this unit is to enable inspectors to understand the concept of supervision and what it entails.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit inspectors should be able to:

- Define 'supervision'
- Justify the purpose of supervision
- Identify and use appropriate types of supervision
- Decide on what aspects of the school and which officers are to be supervised
- Undertake school supervision
- Define and justify the different types of feedback to teachers and school managers
- Decide on appropriate follow-up activities.

## CONTENT SUMMARY

- 2.1 Definition of Supervision
- 2.2 Purpose of Supervision
- 2.3 Types of Supervision
- 2.4 Target Areas/Groups for Supervision
- 2.5 Conduct of Supervision
- 2.6 Feedback on Supervision
- 2.7 Follow-up Activities

### 2.1 DEFINITION OF SUPERVISION

#### Activity 2a

Individually, and later in groups, define the term 'supervision' and report back to the plenary session.

#### *Trainer's Note*

Supervision is a process of providing professional guidance and advice to teachers and school managers to improve classroom instruction and class management.

#### *Key Information*

One of the functions of inspectors is to supervise teachers and school managers through the provision of professional guidance and advice. This involves working with headteachers and teachers to improve school management and classroom instruction with a view to enhancing learning. This relates to the building and maintenance of long term relationships between inspectors and schools, and not the one-off or drop-in inspection visits.

## 2.2 PURPOSE OF SUPERVISION

### *Key Information*

Before setting out on a supervision mission, inspectors must decide on the purpose of the mission.

There are many reasons inspectors might have for undertaking supervision. These include problem solving and the promotion of school personnel.

#### **Activity 2b**

In groups, list ten more purposes for conducting school supervision.

### *Trainer's Note*

Below is a list of additional purposes for conducting school supervision.

- ensuring the implementation of educational policies
- identification of the needs of schools
- evaluation of the performance of teachers and schools
- monitoring instruction to enhance the quality of learner achievement
- collecting data to facilitate planning and decision making
- promoting change and development in the light of curricular innovations
- creation of opportunities for staff development
- capacity building for heads to enable them to undertake in-school and school-based supervision
- quality assurance
- encouraging school accountability.

## 2.3 TYPES OF SUPERVISION

### *Key Information*

There is a range of types of supervision with, on one extreme, the critical friendship type and, on the other, the hard accountability type. Between these two extremes you will find other types of supervision including mentor, advisor, monitor and clinical supervision.

#### **Activity 2c**

One of your schools is highly successful. It is well led with full enrolment, well resourced, with high standards, but is seeking assistance in raising standards even further.

In groups decide on which of the above supervision types you would use to help the school.

### *Trainer's Note*

For definitions of the types of supervision, see Module Four Unit 2.

### **Activity 2d**

You now have a school which is highly ineffective, terribly over-enrolled, under-resourced, under-staffed and therefore has a demotivated staff.

In groups decide on the appropriate supervision type you would use to assist the school.

### ***Trainer's Note***

Each different situation will demand a different and appropriate supervision type from those cited above. Inspectors will have to make informed decisions on which type of supervision to employ in given situations.

## **2.4 TARGET AREAS/GROUPS FOR SUPERVISION**

### ***Key Information***

If undertaking a supervision mission, inspectors should decide on what aspects of the school and which officers are to be supervised. The aspects of the school to be supervised could include school management and classroom instruction. Inspectors may also want to supervise subject heads or the school headteacher.

### **Activity 2e**

Assuming the inspector has decided to focus on management style, in groups decide on who should be seen and what should be looked at in the school.

### ***Trainer's Note***

The intention of this activity is to enable inspectors to see the need to consult beyond the headteacher, including teachers and support staff.

## **2.5 CONDUCT OF SUPERVISION**

### ***Key Information***

Having decided on the purpose, type of supervision, the aspects of the school and officers to be supervised, inspectors have to undertake a supervision tour. For the tour to be successful careful planning of the supervision programme for each school visited is very important. The supervision programme will highlight who to see, what to look at, and where to go in the school. An estimated time-frame is advisable.

### **Activity 2f**

In small groups, develop a supervision programme for a named school. Put your programme on a flip-chart and share your ideas with other groups.

## 2.6 FEEDBACK ON SUPERVISION

### *Key Information*

For the supervision exercise to achieve the desired outcome, inspectors should provide immediate and clear feedback to the school. Ofsted (1995:35) states that “The quality of feedback is an important factor in influencing how the school responds to the inspection findings, particularly in drawing up its action plan, to improve any areas of weakness.” There are also a range of types of feedback that an inspector might use, such as oral briefing and written reports.

#### **Activity 2g**

In small groups, discuss the types of feedback available for the inspector to use at the end of the supervision exercise. In what circumstances would each of these be appropriate.

### *Trainer's Note*

Additional types of feedback may include:

- appraisal forms
- lesson observation reports
- checklist
- written reports to the inspectors' supervisors and other stakeholders.

Trainees may come up with other types of feedback.

#### **Activity 2h**

In groups of three refer to Activity 2d and provide oral feedback to the headteacher of a named school advising on possible intervention. The roles in this activity will include headteacher, inspector and observer who will comment on the feedback. Reverse the roles to allow for varied participation.

## 2.7 FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

### *Key Information*

After every supervision exercise, the inspectors should plan for appropriate follow-up activities to either reward good performance or improve on poor performance. There are a whole range of follow-up activities which could include recommendation for in-service training, and in the last resort, termination of employment.

#### **Activity 2i**

In groups, refer to the situation in Activity 2c and propose the appropriate follow-up activities to meet the school's request.

## **SUMMARY**

Having worked through this unit, it is expected that the inspectors will have developed a number of necessary skills for supervision, including:

- planning
- decision-making
- communication
- analysis
- management

## **REFLECTION**

Reflect on how you have supervised school managers in the past, and develop strategies by which you would improve after studying this unit.

## **REFERENCES**

Beach, M.D. (1989) *Supervision Focus in Instruction*, Harper & Row, New York

OFSTED (1995) *Guidance on the Inspection of Nursery and Primary Schools*, HMSO, London