

# Unit 4: Fire Fighting: Some Common Issues Encountered by Inspectors

## AIM

To enable inspectors to understand some of the problems and issues they are likely to encounter when supervising or inspecting schools and to discuss some strategies which can assist in overcoming them.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- describe the administrative structures of different types of schools and relate them to curriculum management requirements
- list main types of culture groups found in the immediate community
- identify cultural norms prevailing in different types of schools and how these influence teaching and learning programmes in a school
- describe how inspectors facilitate and implement curricular policy change
- list common causes of stress in schools and devise methods of reducing it in the work environment
- use effective methods of resolving conflicts.

## CONTENT SUMMARY

- 4.1 Administrative Structures
- 4.2 Cultural Norms
- 4.3 Management of Curriculum Change
- 4.4 Management of Stress
- 4.5 Conflict Resolution

### 4.1 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES

#### *Key Information*

Various schools have different administrative structures depending on the level of education provided, size of school and type of proprietorship. These structures should facilitate the achievement of the pupils in the school. Unfortunately some structures have not changed to meet the demands of delivering the present curricula and thus contribute to conflict in schools.

#### **Activity 4a**

- (a) Working individually, draw an organizational chart of a typical primary or secondary school in your district.
- (b) How does this structure help in the improvement of the teaching and learning of the pupils?

**NOTE:** In any organizational structure all members should have well defined roles so that there is no duplication of functions. The structure should include people with roles of leadership on curriculum development, monitoring of standards, staff development and pupil welfare.

## 4.2 CULTURAL NORMS

### ***Key Information***

For the purpose of this unit, culture is defined as the way of life, beliefs and traditions observed by a particular community.

- meaning of cultural norms: expected standards of behaviour, beliefs and ways of life of a particular community
- elements of culture in a community: language, dress, beliefs and traditions
- elements of school culture: language, dress, school regulations, routine, school mission and motto
- influence of culture on teaching and learning e.g. influence on communication style, class management and curriculum.

### **Activity 4b**

- (a) In groups, list the different cultural practices found in your district.
- (b) How are these cultural practices likely to influence the teaching and learning activities?
- (c) Which of these cultural practices would you promote and which ones would you discourage?

## 4.3 MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM CHANGE

### ***Key Information***

From time to time, most governments decide that change in education is necessary because of the need to:

- improve the education system
- respond to changes in society or technology

One of the roles of inspectors is to assist schools to introduce new curricula as directed by government.

### **Activity 4c**

- (a) In groups: share experiences of curricular changes which are taking place in your district.
- (b) What is your role in these changes?
- (c) What problems are you encountering?
- (d) What steps are you taking to overcome these problems?

### ***Key Information***

There is a need to follow certain steps when introducing curriculum change. Such steps are:

- interact with curriculum developers to change the curriculum.
- sensitize teachers

- trial material if appropriate
- evaluate and review the material
- disseminate the material to schools
- train the teachers
- monitor and evaluate implementation
- report on findings.

#### **Activity 4d**

In groups discuss the following:

The Ministry of Education has identified the need to change the content and methods of teaching geography in schools. What steps should the inspectors take in order to introduce the change?

#### **Activity 4e**

In groups discuss and resolve the following:

- As inspectors you have identified the need to introduce computer science in schools. However, you are aware that the schools lack a relevant syllabus and equipment.
- Discuss how you, as inspectors would respond in order to assist schools to introduce computer science.

### **4.4 MANAGEMENT OF STRESS**

As an inspector, you will encounter schools where stress levels in teachers are excessively high.

#### ***Key Information***

Some common causes of stress among heads and teachers are:

- poor planning
- poor time management
- shortage of support resources
- poor management structures
- poor human relations among workmates
- inability to cope with changes in roles
- poor school environment
- poor relations between the school and the community.

#### **Activity 4f**

In groups, discuss how as inspectors you can help alleviate the causes of stress listed above.

#### **Activity 4g**

- (a) In your groups list the physical signs of stress that you see in teachers and forms of behaviour that indicate stress.
- (b) From your own experience identify a typical school situation that caused anger and unpleasantness among staff members.
- (c) How did you as an inspector, assist members of staff to cope with this situation?
- (d) Would you still do it the same way today?

- overdrinking and oversmoking
- sweating easily
- lack of concentration and interest
- indecision
- feeling helpless
- being resentful
- giving up easily
- being moody
- holding grudges.

#### **Activity 4h**

In your groups, give examples from your experience of effective strategies to relieve stress.

### **4.5 RESOLVING CONFLICTS**

#### ***Key Information***

Examples of causes of conflicts:

- clash of personalities
- lack of management skills
- poor communication
- clash of cultural norms
- clash of professional expectations
- tribal prejudices.

#### **Activity 4i**

In groups, discuss and list common conflicts in schools, and explain the common causes of these conflicts.

#### ***Key Information***

Inspectors require strategies for resolving conflicts. These will include:

- use of clear communication
- consultation with adversaries
- transparency in dealing with all parties
- separate conflicting parties
- identify and isolate the causes of the particular conflict
- use of available regulations
- use of arbitration methods.

### **Activity 4j**

In groups study the following case study carefully and resolve the conflict using role play methods.

A new headteacher posted to a school makes new rules and regulations which are very unpopular with teachers, pupils and parents. Eventually, both teachers and students boycott classes while parents call for the removal of the headteacher. The matter is reported to the inspector. How could the conflict be resolved?

### **SUMMARY**

This unit should enable inspectors to become conversant with some of the common management issues encountered in schools and how to approach them. This aspect of the inspectors work is often called 'fire-fighting'. It normally requires tact, resourcefulness, transparency, respect for all parties and their opinions, impartiality and above all good human relations.

### **REFLECTION**

Having gone through the strategies on fire-fighting, do you think that given an unexpected crisis, you would be able to select appropriate strategies to deal with the situation?

### **REFERENCE**

*Management of Stress for Teachers*, Longman, London