

15 May 2025

Dear Parents, Carers and Guardians,

PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO PROTECT INSPECTION

I am writing to inform you that today the Department of Education launched a public consultation on the school inspection process in Northern Ireland entitled *Strengthening Inspection Legislation for Schools and Other Education and Training Establishments*.

In Northern Ireland, school inspections are conducted by the Education and Training Inspectorate. Inspections involve a thorough evaluation of each school, including the quality of teaching, learning, leadership and pupil outcomes. Inspectors observe lessons, review school policies, examine pupil work and gather feedback through confidential staff and parent questionnaires. The process results in a report that highlights strengths and areas for improvement and which is publicly available to parents and communities.

School inspection is extremely important and inspections play a critical role in maintaining and improving educational standards. They provide an objective assessment of how well a school is supporting your child's learning and well-being. By identifying what schools are doing well and where they can improve, inspections help to ensure every pupil receives a high-quality education.

For parents, inspection reports offer valuable insights into the school's performance, helping you make informed decisions about your child's education. Additionally, inspections promote accountability, ensuring schools meet the needs of pupils and the wider community.

You may be aware that inspection of schools in Northern Ireland has been significantly disrupted for almost a decade as teaching unions here have directed their members to refuse to cooperate with inspectors as part of Action Short of Strike.

This means that the Department has not been in a position to provide assurances to parents and children and young people that the school that serves them is a good school, that basic legal requirements such as minimum teaching hours and curriculum content are being met and, importantly, that correct child protection procedures are in place and being followed. It also carries a risk that many schools have not been identified for the support they need..

In the rest of the United Kingdom and in Ireland, the law sets out a clear requirement for schools to co-operate with inspections. Today's consultation sets out the Department's proposals to introduce the same legal requirements in Northern Ireland

This public consultation on these proposals will run from **15 May 2025 until 10 July 2025**. The consultation proposals and all other information is available on the [Department's website](#). You can provide an online response to the consultation by clicking on this [link](#) or by using the QR code below:



Your views as parents and carers on the proposed changes are extremely important and I encourage all those with an interest in this important area to contribute to the consultation and thank you for taking the time to do so.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suzanne Kingon". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'S' being particularly large and stylized.

Suzanne Kingon (Dr)

Director of Teaching and Learning Excellence

Department of Education