



Understanding inspections  
in settings:  
a guide for parents  
and carers



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru  
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. It is independent of, but funded by, the National Assembly for Wales under Section 104 of the Government of Wales Act 1998. The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- / nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local authorities
- / primary schools
- / secondary schools
- / special schools
- / pupil referral units
- / independent schools
- / further education
- / independent specialist colleges
- / adult community learning;
- / local authority education services for children and young people
- / teacher education and training
- / Welsh for adults
- / work-based learning
- / learning in the justice sector

Estyn also provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the Welsh Government and others; and makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

Our inspection work and advice play a key part in raising standards and quality and informing policy in education and training across Wales.

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Head Office:  
Anchor Court,  
Keen Road,  
Cardiff CF24 5JW  
Tel: 029 2044 6446  
Fax: 029 2044 6448

[www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales)

### How will an inspection benefit my child?

Inspection tells you about the standards and quality at your child's setting. It tells you what the setting does well and not so well. It gives the setting an expert view on its work and helps it to improve and raise standards.

### Who inspects the setting?

There is normally only one inspector who is called the reporting inspector (RI). Most inspections will be carried out by a RI who is contracted and trained by Estyn to carry out inspections. Inspectors are people who have considerable experience of teaching and education.

Inspectors will have gained enhanced clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service. In conducting the inspection, inspectors will adhere to Estyn's code of conduct.

### How will the setting be inspected?

We inspect all settings at least once in every six-year period. The current period lasts from September 2014 to August 2020. Settings generally receive about four weeks' notice of their inspection.

All settings have the same type of inspection. Inspections are carried out in accordance with Estyn's guidance on inspection which you can find by visiting the Estyn website at [www.estyn.gov.wales](http://www.estyn.gov.wales).

Inspections start with the settings evaluation of its own work and data about its performance.

### How do inspectors take account of my views of the setting?

Estyn wants to know your views of the setting.

There are two main ways that you can do this. Firstly, you can complete a questionnaire online at <http://vir.estyn.gov.wales> by entering a five digit code provided by the setting or in hard copy and returning it to Estyn. Secondly, the RI will also meet informally with parents and/or carers during the inspection, usually at the beginning or end of sessions. The RI will use these informal discussions and questionnaires to find out more about the setting.

### How will inspectors take account of my child's view of the setting?

During the inspection, the RI will talk to children about what they are doing and what they like or dislike about the setting. Listening to learners is a very important part of the inspection process.

### How will I know the inspectors' views?

Estyn will produce an inspection report within 45 working days from the start of the inspection period. The management committee or proprietor will then be able to make available to you a copy of the inspection report upon request once they have received it. You can also read the report on our website at [estyn.gov.wales](http://estyn.gov.wales).

### The report will have:

- / an overall judgement on current performance of the setting
- / an overall judgment on the setting's prospects for improvement

### It will also have judgements on:

- / outcomes – the standards achieved by children and their wellbeing
- / provision – learning experiences, teaching, care, support and guidance, and the learning environment
- / leadership – leadership, improving quality, partnership working and resource management

All judgements will be based on a four-point scale:

**Excellent:** many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice

**Good:** many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement

**Adequate:** strengths outweigh areas for improvement

**Unsatisfactory:** important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The report will include a table summarising the responses expressed in the questionnaire. We do not publish a table if there are fewer than 10 responses.

### What happens next?

Following the inspection all settings must produce a plan for improvement in the future.

Settings which are doing well will have recognition of their performance in their inspection report. Any sector-leading practice will be written up as a case study and may be shared with other settings via Estyn's website.

During all inspections, the inspection team will consider whether the setting is underperforming and needs follow-up activity.

In most cases where a setting needs follow-up activity, this will consist of close monitoring by the local authority. This visit will focus on the recommendations in the original report.

While most settings are performing well, there is still a small number of settings where children should be doing much better than they are. In settings where children's standards are generally acceptable but there are important problems, the setting may require a follow-up visit from Estyn, about a year after the original inspection to check on progress. In very few cases where inspectors believe that the setting does not give children an acceptable standard of education and cannot improve without external support, the setting may need focused improvement. In this event, Estyn will visit the setting each term until Estyn is satisfied that they are providing a better education for children or Estyn has advised the local authority to consider withdrawing funding from the setting for education places.

### What do I do if I have concerns about the inspection?

Complaints about an inspection are rare. All complaints are treated very seriously. If you have a concern about the inspection of your child's settings, you should telephone 029 20 446446 or email [feedback@estyn.gov.wales](mailto:feedback@estyn.gov.wales) or write to:

Feedback and Complaints Manager  
Estyn  
Anchor Court  
Keen Road  
Cardiff  
CF24 5JW