



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

Guidance for schools / providers: the factual accuracy check

September 2018

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
- ▲ all-age 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 National Assembly for Wales and others
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence

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What is the purpose?

To provide guidance to schools / providers on checking the factual accuracy of the inspection report following inspection.

For whom is it intended?

All maintained and independent schools and post-16 education and training providers.

From when should the guidance be used?

From September 2018.

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Background

This document offers guidance to schools on the specific focus of the factual accuracy check. It also clarifies how Estyn will respond to any issues raised by the school through this process.

Estyn expects all inspection reports to be factually accurate and to set out inspection findings and narrative explaining judgements clearly and unambiguously.

Usually, Estyn reports set out their findings accurately. However, on occasions, a factual inaccuracy may occur in a draft report or the school/provider may perceive that the report does not convey the findings clearly. We liaise with schools/providers through the process of the factual accuracy check to address these issues.

What happens after the inspection

After each core inspection and follow-up visit, the inspection findings go through a rigorous process of edit, moderation and validation within Estyn (the quality assurance of reports (QAR) process). Further information on the QAR process is available in the QA Policy and QA Toolkit on Estyn's website.

Before Estyn publishes a core inspection report, we send a late draft of the inspection report to the school/provider by email. The school/provider then has five working days to read the report and to let us know if there are any factual mistakes in the report.

What the school/provider should do

On receipt of the report, the school/provider needs to read the report closely and to focus on identifying any factual inaccuracies.

Commonly, schools/providers pick up instances where numerical facts are incorrect, for example the proportion of pupils/learners that the school/provider has identified as having additional learning needs. On occasions, the report may use a term that is not entirely correct, for example it may use 'learning support assistant' when the provider uses 'classroom support assistant'.

In their response to Estyn, schools/providers should list any factual inaccuracy and provide the correct piece of alternative information for the RI to consider including in the final draft of the inspection report.

Schools/providers should also ensure that their response to the factual accuracy check focuses on factual matters rather than matters relating to judgements. Estyn's [complaints handling policy](#) says that Estyn will investigate complaints about 'the conduct of Estyn staff or others working with them, such as peer inspectors or additional inspectors working for Estyn. We will also investigate complaints about

'administrative actions', for example administrative decisions, provision of information or other issues. However, the policy makes it clear that 'we cannot accept complaints or challenges to judgements made about an establishment as part of inspection or review'.

What Estyn will do

When we receive a response to the factual check from the school/provider, the Inspection Co-ordinator (IC) will acknowledge receipt by email. We are always grateful when schools/providers take the time to check over the draft report.

The RI will consider the response carefully and provide an email response to the IC, who will forward the text to the school/provider.

Addressing factual inaccuracies

The precise focus of the check is on factual accuracy. Where the suggested changes from the school/provider are straightforward and uncontroversial, the RI will often be able to accept the suggestions and make appropriate changes to the final draft of the report that Estyn will then publish on its website.

This process ensures that the report reflects the individual school/provider as accurately as possible.

Clarifying misunderstandings

Schools/providers sometimes raise issues in their response that suggest to the RI that there is a misunderstanding or a lack of clarity in the communication of the report's findings. Where the RI agrees with the school/provider, the RI may be able to provide some quick clarification to explain the findings further. Where the RI considers it appropriate, the RI may also be able to revise the text of the report to clear up any misunderstanding without altering the essence of any findings or the inspection judgements.

Responding where the factual check strays into challenging inspection findings or judgements

Schools/providers sometimes try to use the opportunity provided by the factual check to challenge other elements of the report, for example the judgements or the findings.

Where schools/providers raise issues that are not strictly factual and not simply the result of misunderstandings or a lack of clarity in the report, the RI will not be in a position to address these issues.

Where the response does not relate to factual accuracy or cannot be dealt with as a misunderstanding then it falls outside of the scope of the factual check process. These other issues may sit more appropriately within Estyn's procedures for handling feedback and complaints.

Responding to a combination of issues

Occasionally, a school/provider raises a combination of issues. It may be possible for the RI to respond to some of these (eg factual inaccuracies or misunderstandings), but it may be inappropriate for the RI to respond to others (eg where the response has strayed into matters that relate more to the judgements or the findings).

In these cases, the RI will consider the response from the school/provider and try to identify those that relate to factual inaccuracy, those that relate to a misunderstanding and those that go beyond both those considerations and thus fall outside the scope of the factual accuracy check.

The RI will then try to address the factual inaccuracies and any misunderstandings in their response to the school/provider.

Where the misunderstandings are contentious, RIs can always consult with sector lead inspectors, the lead officers for inspection policy and for quality assurance and the relevant Assistant Director.

The RI will also direct the school/provider to Estyn's guidance on complaints handling procedures and suggest that they take any unresolved issues forward through that route.

For all factual accuracy check responses

When Estyn receives a factual check response from a provider, the RI should always reply with an appropriate response.

The RI should send a response to the relevant IC for them to email to the school/provider.

It is important that RIs use the IC as the contact point with schools/providers after inspections so that we can keep a clear record of the post-inspection process.

The end of the factual check process

The school/provider normally receives the draft report for the factual check a week or two before the statutory publication date for the report. The RI will attempt to address any factual inaccuracy or misunderstanding as quickly as possible so that Estyn can publish the inspection report on its website on the due date.

If we do not receive a response from a school/provider within five days, we will assume that the school/provider has not identified any factual inaccuracies in the report and will move the report through to publication on the statutory publication date on that basis.

We will usually continue to publish the inspection report on the statutory date even if there are unresolved issues that are going forward through the complaints handling procedures.

The final decision on what to include in any inspection report remains with Her Majesty's Chief Inspector.