

Estyn to be in schools more often as curriculum preparations continue

The change is just one of a series of measures designed to improve standards in schools – turning the focus to teaching and learning, the well-being of pupils and teachers and reducing unnecessary bureaucracy.

Under proposals for revised inspection arrangements – to be phased in from September 2021 – Estyn would be in schools more than once within a seven year cycle, providing more frequent assurances to parents and the wider community about the standards being achieved and priorities for improvement.

In the shorter-term, Estyn will play a greater role in supporting schools to prepare for the new curriculum.

In order to allow for these changes to take place, the Welsh Government will be consulting on extending the current inspection cycle from 7 to 8 years.

This would mean there would be a partial suspension in school inspections from September 2020- August 2021 but inspections of schools causing concern, local authorities and independent schools will still continue.

Revised inspection arrangements will start to be phased in from September 2021 but this will be a gradual process over a period of years – helping schools to adapt to the new curriculum whilst maintaining and raising standards.

Kirsty Williams said:

“An effective Inspectorate is one that provides assurance that standards are being met, whilst also supporting schools to maintain improvement.

“The proposed changes are part of a broader culture change that we need to see in our schools – and culture change always takes time. There is no big-bang approach when it comes to an issue like this.

“We are moving to a model of evaluation and improvement more in line with high performing education systems across the world. What remains constant is our focus on raising standards and attainment for all.

“Estyn will have a crucial role in making this happen and that’s why they should have a greater role in supporting schools both prior to and following the roll out of the new curriculum.”

The Chief Inspector of Estyn, the education and training inspectorate in Wales, Meilyr Rowlands, said:

“I welcome today’s announcement and look forward to continuing to work closely with headteachers and schools on curriculum reform. We will soon be launching a consultation to gather views on all of today’s proposals before we implement any changes.”