

# Message from Chief Inspector to Post-Primary Schools and Centres for Education

[School Year 2021-22]

As another extraordinary school year draws to a close, I am getting in touch to let you know about the arrangements for inspectors' work with schools from September. I must, however, firstly acknowledge how much we have learned about the work of school communities over the past year and indeed since the pandemic began.

During that time, inspectors were really struck by the outstanding efforts of many school leaders, teachers, boards, and staff to keep schools operating safely and effectively for children and young people and to support them at home when schools had to close.

Things have changed since this time last year. We have witnessed new ways of teaching, learning, and connecting within and across school communities. Inspectors became and continue to be acutely aware of the impact of COVID on all involved in education – most especially children and young people with special educational needs. And we know there were many others – both staff and learners – who were affected by the pandemic.

As an Inspectorate, we also learned in a new and more immediate way the importance of voice – of listening to the experiences of all in our school communities – students, parents, teachers, principals, boards – and of taking due account of all those voices in our evaluation and advisory work.

As we look ahead with optimism to the new school year, I want to let you know that we are publishing a circular with details of our plans. Essentially, these are:

- To extend the second cycle of school self-evaluation (SSE) until June 2022; this will allow us to consult with you and the other education stakeholders on the third SSE cycle which will begin in September 2022
- To extend the three-year DEIS planning cycle by another year
- To carry out surveys of school leaders, teachers and parents in the September – December term as part of our consultation on the next cycle of SSE
- To continue our phased implementation of our inspection programme – with the emphasis for the first term being on advice and support through the incidental inspection model – we greatly value the flexibilities that this inspection approach gives us to connect with the individual contexts of schools



- To continue our research and development work; we especially look forward to working with school principals/deputy principals in a sample of schools with a view to assisting them to develop their SSE processes
- To work with the coordinators in a sample of centres for education with a view to assisting them in their self-evaluation work
- To advise on how schools are implementing anti-bullying measures
- To continue to carry out child protection checks including Child Protection and Safeguarding Inspections.

For now, I want to thank you for your support during this school year and I look forward with hope to a safe, successful and happy 2021-22 for all.

Harold Hislop



**An Roinn Oideachais**  
Department of Education