

PRIME MINISTER

RAYNER SCRUTINY OF HMI IN ENGLAND AND WALES

I am sorry that it has taken me longer than I would have wished to finalise the draft of what I believe we should now say in public as a result of this Scrutiny.

My consultations with Lord Rayner have brought out even more clearly than before that we are concerned here with getting across the right message about an instrument of great importance for our policies on standards in education. In part this is independent of the Scrutiny and it is important not to confuse the limited action following the Scrutiny with a simple statement of our policies for education and HM Inspectorate's part in advancing them.

We must also take account of two audiences - the education system and those who use it. The public, and in particular parents, may think that HMI can do more than the law allows them to do. We must not raise expectations that cannot be fulfilled. But we need to give the public a clarion call. Those in education, on the other hand, and particularly the local education authorities, do know how the Inspectorate's functions relate to their own. Unless our message respects that, we will not make the Inspectorate as effective as we could do. In any case, the most important thing to do is to demonstrate, for all to see, our policies for improvement and the role of all in achieving them.

I have concluded that the right way to follow up the Rayner Scrutiny of HMI is to make first a short statement, in answer to an arranged written PQ, which describes our policies for standards and shows how these are supported by the Inspectorate's work, in clear simple language; and very soon thereafter to issue a longer policy document, addressed mainly to the education system in the language which it is used to and taking as its point of departure the outcome of the Scrutiny. The longer document would also

contain the earlier Parliamentary Answer, so that they were on the record together. The Scrutiny itself would be published subsequently and be available on sale.

To press home our message about the importance of the Inspectorate in relation to standards and to explain how parents can benefit from its work I also intend to publish, and distribute widely, a brief explanatory booklet for the public, particularly parents.

The Secretary of State for Wales is content with this modus operandi and with the attached draft texts for the policy document and Parliamentary Answer. A draft of the booklet for parents is also attached, but we hope that with a little more work it can be shorter. If you are content, I shall publish them all in a few weeks, after showing the policy document to the Trade Union Side here in accordance with the normal Scrutiny drill.

I am copying this minute and the enclosures to the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales, and Lord Rayner.

KJ

8 FEBRUARY 1983

EDUCATION: POLICY ON EXPENDITURE: P-3

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

14 February, 1983

The Prime Minister has now seen your Secretary of State's minute of 8 February together with the accompanying drafts of a Written Answer, a Policy Statement and a booklet. Mrs. Thatcher thinks that these papers take the matter a good way towards completion and is grateful for the work which has clearly been put into them.

The Prime Minister wholly agrees with your Secretary of State that the Government needs "to give the public a clarion call" but in a realistic way. She also recalls her desire (see Willie Rickett's letter to you of 14 June, 1982) that the national inspectorates should be seen to be working on behalf of families and that, because their work must be selective, considerable efforts should be put into such problems as the inspection of particular institutions and the standard of provision of particular local authorities; prompt publication of the full reports of such institutions (which the Prime Minister is very glad are in train); the education of the children of immigrants; the management of large institutions; and the follow-up to national reports.

Against that background the Prime Minister thinks that the Written Answer is broadly on the right lines although she believes that it should be considerably shortened. I have passed on to you the Prime Minister's reservations about a number of phrases in the Written Answer; other references with which she is not entirely happy are to "those essential values for which the Inspectorate must stand" (paragraph 5) the meaning of which is not immediately apparent or to the inspectorates as one of a "multitude of change agents" (paragraph 2).

Mrs. Thatcher considers also that the message of the explanatory booklet for the public and also the policy statement could be put more clearly in fewer words and, for example, that the booklet should be about "Standards in Schools" rather than "HMI-Today" which will mean little or nothing to most parents. As they stand,

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these drafts do not give a sharp enough image of how the work of the inspectors helps to improve what actually happens in schools and elsewhere.

The Prime Minister would be grateful if these points could be considered in finalising the texts of the Written Answer, Policy State and the booklet. She would be grateful to see the text of the Written Answer again in draft but she is content not to see again the Policy Statement and booklet until they are published.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Muir Russell (Scottish Office), Adam Peat (Welsh Office) and Christopher Joubert (Rayner Unit).

Y
Lus ever,
Tim F.

(Timothy Flesher)

Mrs. Imogen Wilde,
Department of Education and Science

PRIME MINISTER

HMI: RAYNER SCRUTINY

I am sorry to burden you with such a collection of papers. Sir Keith Joseph's minute (Flag A) reports on his conclusions following the Rayner Scrutiny of HMI. He proposes that he should issue a long policy statement on HMI accompanied by a shorter and punchier Written Answer. The Written Answer is at Flag B and the policy statement at Flag C. Some time later he proposes to issue a booklet on the work of the Inspectorate as a guide to parents. This is attached at Flag D.

I have sought the advice of the Rayner Unit (Flag E). Broadly, Mr. Priestly urges that we should commend the Written Answer as a considerable improvement on previous drafts. He has considerable reservations, however, about the style of the policy statement and the booklet. I share his reservations about their tone but I do not think that we can do more than indicate one or two ways in which they could be improved. Do you agree, therefore, that I should write to the Department of Education and Science as proposed by Mr. Priestly at Flag F?

The Written Statement is much too long - it is more like a speech than a statement. I suggest it be substantially redrafted

11 February 1983

redrafted

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Mrs Imogen Wilde
Department of Education and Science

SCRUTINY OF HM INSPECTORATE OF SCHOOLS

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 8 February and for the accompanying drafts of a Written Answer, a policy statement and a booklet for the public. Mrs Thatcher thinks that these papers take the matter a good way towards completion and is grateful for the work that has been put into them.

2. The Prime Minister wholly agrees with Sir Keith Joseph that the Government needs "to give the public a clarion call" which is realistic; to demonstrate its policies for improvement and the job of all in achieving ^{them} and that the explanatory booklet should be shorter. The Prime Minister also recalls her desire (Willie Rickett's letter to you of 14 June 1982) that the national inspectorates should be seen to be working on behalf of families and that, because their work must be selective, considerable effort should be put into such problems as the inspection of particular institutions and the standard of provision of particular local authorities; prompt publication of the full reports of such institutions (which Mrs Thatcher is very glad is now in train); the education of the children of immigrants; the management of large institutions; and follow-up to national reports.

3. Against that background the Prime Minister thinks that the policy statement is broadly on the right lines, although she

believes that it might be shortened somewhat with advantage. She welcomes the emphasis on the nation's aims for pupils and the need of families (paras. 3 and 5); reducing the imbalance between the people's interest and that of the professions (para. 4) although in this text the phrase "bureaucratized professionals" might wound those doing their best in difficult circumstances; the selection of priorities (para. 5), although she thinks that more might be made of the education of immigrants than the rather throw-away reference at the end of para. 5; and value for money (para. 6).

4. Mrs Thatcher is less happy with the references to "those essential values for which the Inspectorate must stand" (para. 5), the meaning of which is not immediately apparent, or to the inspectorates as one of a "multitude of change agents" (para. 2). She thinks that the message here, as elsewhere in the text, should be that the Government employs a cadre of several hundred high-grade people to provide them with particular services and to do particular things in the field, including auditing and stimulating others: if the impression is given that the inspectorate is submerged in the educational system, parents may reasonably ask what value it is adding.

5. The Prime Minister thinks that the message of the explanatory booklet for the public and also the policy statement could be put more clearly in fewer words and that the booklet should be about (for instance) "Standards in Schools" rather than "HMI - Today" which will mean little or nothing to most parents. As they stand, these drafts do not give a sharp enough image of how the work of inspectors helps to improve

what actually happens in schools and elsewhere: the reasoning parent might well ask herself whether a powerless inspectorate is worth having. For example, the booklet says in the last paragraph on page 2 that inspectors "use no blueprints, wave no magic wands", whereas parents will want to know who is responsible for standards in their children's schools and what the Government does to help ensure that they are observed. Similarly, Mrs Thatcher thinks that while the policy statement is right to emphasise the professional independence of inspectors' judgment, it gives the impression that they exist independently of the Education Ministers without giving a corresponding impression of their impact, or^{of} the impact that is now desired they should achieve, on what takes place in schools and colleges.

6. The Prime Minister would be grateful if these points could be considered in finalising the texts [which she is now content not to see again in draft?]. I am copying this to Muir Russell (Scottish Office), Adam Peat (Welsh Office) and Christopher Joubert (Rayner Unit).

T J FLESHER

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Mr FLESHER

SCRUTINY OF HM INSPECTORATE OF SCHOOLS

1. The Prime Minister has now had a submission from Sir Keith Joseph covering a draft Written Answer, policy statement and explanatory booklet for the public. It is agreed with the Welsh Secretary. Mrs Thatcher has also had a minute from Mr George Younger, covering just a Written Answer for Scotland.
2. This note offers advice on the submission for England and Wales. I will deal with Scotland (which follows the line south of the border) when I know how the Prime Minister wishes to tackle England and Wales.
3. The background is very briefly that the Prime Minister launched these scrutinies in October 1980; that they reported in June and July 1981; and that it has taken until now to get to a conclusion, although the Prime Minister agreed last November to action in all three territories to publish inspectors' reports on institutions. Throughout she has taken a keen interest in the rights of parents and children, in which she has been strongly supported by Lord Rayner. What follows is fully consistent with earlier advice from Lord Rayner.
4. The drafts are better than we might have hoped for some months ago. Although the Answers and Statement are not written in heroic or even memorable prose, they do begin to restore what has been lost for several generations, the emphasis by central government on the interest of parents/pupils in standards and of the taxpayer in, additionally, value for money. Whether they do so convincingly is another matter. Given the importance of the issues, the Prime Minister may wish to seek another opinion, particularly on the explanatory booklet, whether from her own Press Office or elsewhere.
5. I have already supplied you with independent comments by two people here, Messrs Calder and Stubbs, which they wrote

in their capacity as parents. I commend these to the Prime Minister's attention. (flag 6)

6. A draft reply to Mrs Wilde is attached. It is self-explanatory. The Prime Minister may think (as I do) that the drafts are not the "clarion call" the Secretary of State speaks of in his minute, but she may also think that - beyond the sort of points may in the draft letter - she does not wish to pursue the DES/VO any further. If she did press again, there would undoubtedly be further delay.

7. Equally, the Prime Minister may decide that the draft booklet and policy statement just will not do. These are essentially documents written by officials for officials, even the explanatory booklet. They are the product of an officer whom the Prime Minister will recall, Miss Sheila Browne, the present Senior Chief Inspector. Miss Browne has enormous analytical and other gifts, but she has taken an unfailingly donnish view of her own and the inspectorate's function. A former academic, she has never taught in a school and leaves the Service to become Principal of Newnham shortly. She is a stalwart defender of the "separateness" of the inspectorate, which I regard as largely irrelevant to the needs of families; moreover, the theory of "separateness" neglects the fact that inspectors are civil servants, paid for by the taxpayer. The emphasis which appears in the policy statement on appointment by The Queen disguises the fact that inspectors are actually appointed by inspectors. The public interest is not in an apologia for the inspectorate but in standards, their preservation and enlargement. There would be little point in pressing such an officer, for all her real and acknowledged merits, to rewrite the text. If the Prime Minister wanted substantially different drafts they would have to be written outside DES, either in the secretariat or here.

8. Given her great interest in the matter it would not be unreasonable for the Prime Minister to send Sir Keith Joseph alternative texts of the booklet and the policy statement, but



highly unusual and perhaps deeply wounding to him. If she decided against that, the draft letter should aim to close the matter in a manner which secured better texts; she might wish, for example, to ask that her Press Office was associated with the redrafting.

Sp

C PRIESTLEY

10 February 1983

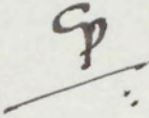
Enc: Draft letter to Mrs Wilde

CONQUEROR
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Mr FLESHER

HMI SCRUTINY

I shall be sending you advice tomorrow on the minutes from Sir Keith Joseph and Mr George Younger. In the meantime, you may like to see the attached copies of notes I have requested from two of the staff here in their capacity as parents. One of them our chief information officer, Mr Stubbs, also happens to have been a school governor. I thought it might be useful to us both - and I think to the PM - to obtain the views of two people who have not had the association with this scrutiny that you and I have had.


C PRIESTLEY
10 February 1983

Encs: As indicated

10/2
MR PRIESTLEY

Openness, clarity and availability of information is the key to consensus acceptance of any policy.

In many places, this report is either vague or only plays lip service in its direction to those responsible for implementation.

The policy document for example, to the profession should be written 'in the language which it is used to' Why? There are plenty of interested parents who if they knew it existed would be keen to read it as an adjunct to the booklet for parents, the draft of which is turgid. It is also for most people, far too long. Present that draft to a parent who is not particularly concerned with a problem, and it will be consigned to the bookshelf or worse. The drafting I think may be clearer and even shorter but in addition, a much simpler publicity document is needed, bringing out the main education policies of the government, the place of HMI and answer such questions of How, Why, When, What and Where. This should be available for all parents. Size should govern the amount of information and direct the mind to the main points. Two sides of A4 paper with good design should be the guiding light.

I would also be concerned about one apparent omission in the objectives - The management of large schools. Headteachers are increasingly managers of large undertakings using considerable resources. Training for this task and financial management of it is not given any prominence. The Lord Privy Seal raised this in her speech in Hampshire to the Association of Head Teachers. It is I suppose FMI in some form or other.

I feel also that there is a lack of awareness in the need to point the way to openness and availability, for instance,

- *How do parents know when an Inspection is to take place?
- *Do they know if it is to be a note for the file or a major report?
- *Can parents make representation to demand an inspection?
- *How easy is it for them to see the note or report?
- *Do they indeed know when it is to be published?
- *Are their views to be sought by inspectors during the visit?
- *What about feed-back on action documents and progress on them?
- *How do they obtain the booklet for parents?

Parent governors may help on this, but the lack of training and awareness of their rights could inhibit their ability. PTA meetings could assist but there seems to be little direction or suggestions, and is it possible that lack of this could be interpreted by some LEA's as a negative instruction.

Another possible omission is a point to cover an interchange of good practise. A report on school 'A' may well benefit school 'B' in another part of the country for which no inspection is planned in the immediate future. How do parents and governors know of its existence so that it can be considered.

Another consideration could be the publication of the schedule of visits so that an impending visit can be prepared for. This would make the task harder - perhaps longer, but possibly less 'establishment' orientated and the report must then be very balanced and not need 'careful reading' (page 8, Secretary of State Statement) but would be fairly obvious as to the strengths and shortcomings of a school.

Perhaps an HMI report should follow scrutiny lines and techniques which would also speed up publication (page 5 of S of S Statement).

John Tubbs
10/2/83.

Reading this quickly again, it seems very negative as far as the report is concerned, but it is more concerned with the presentational aspects which would enable all those involved in the educational system, including parents, -and pupils - where appropriate, to appreciate what is going on and being planned.



MR PRIESTLEY

HMI - DRAFT INFORMATION BOOKLET FOR PARENTS

1. As a parent of children going through the state education system I find little in this document to give me confidence that HMI are an effective force in protecting my interests.
2. It is full of bland defensiveness that will only succeed in irritating the critical parent. And only the most critical will have the patience to wade through a document of this length and turgidity. It needs to be shorter, far more direct and to avoid introspection.
3. Parental concerns can be expected to include the following points:
 - a. why does our local school have such a poor reputation and what is being done about it?
 - b. why are some of our teachers so poor at their job and why do we have to suffer them? (The poor teachers will be well known to parents and headmasters but heaven help your child if he has one in 'C' or 'A' level year.)
 - c. why is discipline so poor at our local school? (Will my child fall into bad company?)
 - d. are education standards generally what they were in 'our day'?
 - e. are modern teaching methods effective?
 - f. are modern curricula relevant to life after school?
 - g. do examination standards vary ("AEB 'C' levels are easier than.....") etc.

Parents expect HMI to be the audit body watching over these issues.

The booklet should show clearly how HMI is working on the governments and parents behalf to tackle them. (Many of these issues are covered at some point but not at all clearly.)

4. Parents may feel only a bureaucrat would see the issue of a policy statement and the publication of reports as an earnest of the governments stated intents, however dramatic the latter step may appear to be to those concerned.
5. Parents will expect deeds to be a truer test and that government will see that the HMI job is carried out properly. If as the draft implies there are not enough HMIs parents would expect government to carry out its commitment by employing more. But there is no indication that more HMIs are in fact needed. Much better for the booklet to say "There are x HMIs. They work selectively, directing their effort to problem areas. Priorities are determined by" That will seem sensible to most people.

6. There are many other points that rankle in the text. A few examples are below:

Page 1

- the opening is obscure to the uninformed. The booklet should start as at x:

"This booklet sets out 'Responsibility for seeing ...' could come next. (This is on the assumption that the booklet is primarily intended as an explanation to parents of HMI and their works and not as an announcement about the publication of reports.)

snack - the bits about the government link the booklet to this administration and of a party political broadcast. Should the booklet not seek to be valid whatever government is in office

- it is realistic to suggest that parents will ever 'deal on equal terms'? The best that might be hoped for is that they might be 'in a better position to deal with'

Page 2

- parents do not want to know about the support arrangements for HMI.

- parents don't want apologies about 'the total number of HMIs being patently small', they expect the number to be right for what their elected government want HMIs to do.

- parents don't want to know that HMI don't use 'blueprints' or 'magic wands'! Say what they do use.

Page 4

- 'Leaving aside etc' more apologies. Why not say 'The programme of inspection is based on priorities'.

- last paragraph, what computer?

Page 5

- Standards etc 'such standards as exist' makes the heckles rise. Parents are entitled to ask 'Is this good enough'.

Page 7

- 'acknowledging the judgments and demands made by the world outside' and

- 'comparisons between institutions' are both left hanging. What is done and how is it done?

Page 9

- 'There may be matters to put right but there will often be good practice ...' etc gives the impression of the establishment defending itself. Why not say 'There will be matters to put right . There will also often be good practice...' only a small change but it makes a lot of difference to the reader.

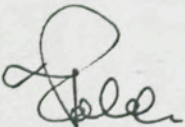
- the section on local advisors confuses and raises some questions than it answers. Two sets of inspectors comparing results with each other, what for? It sounds like too much bureaucracy.

Page 10

- I would be puzzled to learn that 'the routes by which reports reach those involved in education' are only 'fairly clear'. If that is known why isn't something being done to make them very clear.

- it doesn't seem too difficult to envisage routes for reaching parents. Can not copies go to PTAs and local libraries. What about each report having a free standing summary of its main findings for release to local press, councillors etc.

7. These are only a few examples of many points that suggest to me that a lot more work needs to be done on this booklet, including testing on parents. I hope this is of some value.



R J CALDER
ME2
10 February 1983

REC'D FEB 20 1966



PRIME MINISTER

RAYNER SCRUTINY OF HMI IN ENGLAND AND WALES

I am sorry that it has taken me longer than I would have wished to finalise the draft of what I believe we should now say in public as a result of this Scrutiny.

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contain the earlier Parliamentary Answer, so that they were on the record together. The Scrutiny itself would be published subsequently and be available on sale.

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KJ

8 FEBRUARY 1983

EDUCATION: POLICY ON EXPENDITURE: P-3

18 FEB 1967



DRAFT WRITTEN ANSWER TO ACCOMPANY PUBLICATION OF DETAILED POLICY STATEMENT ON HMI

1. My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for Wales and I are today publishing a policy statement on the functions and future operations of HM Inspectorate. This follows the completion earlier this year of a Scrutiny of the Inspectorate within the programme coordinated by Sir Derek Rayner, the report of which will also be published. Copies of the statement and the Scrutiny report are available in the [library/vote office].

2. The Inspectorate exists to assess by inspection standards throughout almost all the education system - in schools (including the independent sector), in teacher training and in further education in all its forms. On the basis of inspection which takes into account the legitimate expectations of the consumers - pupils, parents and employers - it advises the Secretaries of State on the state of the system nationally and helps all those concerned in or with education to improve its performance. Among the multitude of change agents, the Inspectorate plays an important and effective role which this Government intends to strengthen.

3. The nation's aim in education is that each pupil should receive education appropriate to his or her needs, both as an individual and in relation to the society he or she will live in. This is an ambitious goal. We are all aware that we are a long way from achieving it. In part this is because efforts to achieve it have over the last two decades had to contend with continuous turbulence affecting the education system - dramatic changes in pupil and teacher numbers; rapid expansion and equally rapid contraction of the teacher training system; wholesale changes, some forced, in school organisation; raising of the school leaving age; far reaching revisions of attitudes on how schools and colleges should provide for pupils and students of different ability levels; experiments with fashionable teaching methods;

the introduction of new examinations in schools and further education; rapid increases in the number of ethnic minority children; the reorganisation of local government; the decay of inner city areas; general increases in crime and violence in society.

4. But much can and is being done to improve the performance of the education system and its ability to achieve the nation's aim. This government has given a vigorous lead. We have sought to redress the balance between the people's interests and those of bureaucratised professionals by increasing parental choice and involvement sharply through the 1980 Education Act and the Assisted Places Scheme, and are looking to see what more we can do. We have made a start on the necessary reshaping of initial teacher training and have encouraged LEAs to take steps to improve the performance of existing teachers and of head teachers. We have asked LEAs to review their policies for the curriculum to make them more relevant to today's needs. We are promoting the development of better ways of teaching key subjects and have launched a programme of development projects to improve secondary education for the 40% for which external examinations are not generally appropriate. We are taking steps to improve the system of examinations, at 16+ and 18+, and are creating new opportunities for pre-vocational education for those over compulsory school age. Most recently we have announced a new initiative in the provision of technical education in which we look to LEAs to play a leading part.

5. The first aim of these policies and initiatives is an education system which fully serves the needs of families. HM Inspectorate makes a crucial contribution by the advice it gives to us and the help it gives to the rest of the education system and those who use it. The effectiveness of that contribution depends on its being based on a sound and up to date knowledge of the education system as a whole and those essential values for which the Inspectorate must stand. But at the same time

effectiveness requires a choice of priority targets to direct inspection not only towards current policy concerns but more particularly to the safeguarding of children's educational opportunities wherever they appear to be most at risk. Thus for example the Inspectorate is at present giving priority to education in Liverpool. More generally, it is involved in the issues arising from the impact of sharply falling rolls and the need for the education service to manage efficiently within its means. It continues to be much occupied in its inspection and short course programmes with the problems of managing large educational institutions. It is engaged in a wide range of activities concerned with improving the effectiveness of the initial training of teachers and their induction into the service. It is involved in the changes needed in non advanced further education courses to meet new demands arising from technological change and youth unemployment. And it is looking into the effective education of ethnic minority pupils and of children with special educational needs.

6. But none of the Inspectorate's activities can have ~~its~~ full effect on the education system without the understanding and action of those who have responsibility for providing education - in government, in LEAs and in individual institutions. To this end the Inspectorate's audit function will be more sharply focussed, through the recently introduced programme of whole LEA inspections as well as the inspections of individual institutions; this will give all concerned with the provision of education a clear understanding of the extent to which the system on the ground matches the legitimate aspirations of the community and provides value for money. The production of the Inspectorate's written reports and other publications, which are central to its effectiveness in influencing practices and standards in the education service at large, will be speeded up. Formal inspections will continue at the current rate, which results in the issue of some 260 or more reports each year in England and Wales. And most importantly of all, as we announced in November, from January 1983 the public will have access to these reports and more systematic arrangements for

ensuring that there is effective follow-up action to them will come into operation:
the education service will see the lessons of each case and be able to apply them
elsewhere.

7. Copies of the policy statement are being sent to each LEA and to a wide range of
other bodies concerned with the provision and use of education.

A POLICY STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SCIENCE AND THE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WALES ON THE WORK OF HM INSPECTORATE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

1. This policy statement follows a scrutiny of the Inspectorate within the programme co-ordinated by Sir Derek Rayner completed in July 1981 and published in 1983. In order that HMI's role, with its strengths and statutory limitations, may be better understood and therefore more effective, it describes in some detail the functions of the Inspectorate. Appendix A gives the text of a written answer made by the Secretary of State on [1983] which illuminates the present context of HMI's work and the way its functions are currently translated into priorities for action. While much of this programme of work is explicitly policy related, the overall thrust of the Inspectorate's work is towards achieving an education system more actively concerned with the standards of its products and more cost conscious. The Scrutiny necessarily reflected developments in progress within the Inspectorate. Other developments were stimulated by the process of scrutiny or followed the report. Yet others have arisen and will arise from the need for the Inspectorate to adapt its work to current needs in education and government. This statement is not concerned with the work undertaken by the Inspectorate in the European Schools, abroad or in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, or in establishments or services for which the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Health and Social Security or the Department of Employment are responsible.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE INSPECTORATE

2. The Inspectorate's work relates to the whole of the education system in England and Wales, and includes the independent as well as the maintained sector, except for

the universities (other than parts of the adult education and teacher training undertaken by them) and independent further education colleges. From its origins in 1839 the function of the Inspectorate has been to inspect and report in order to assist the Government in the exercise of its responsibilities in relation to education, including the financial aspects, and in the process to contribute to the improvement of what lies within the purview of such inspection. The Inspectorate has an unfettered right of access to any institution which it may inspect.

3. The present statutory basis for the Inspectorate's work is section 77 of the Education Act 1944. This requires the Secretary of State to cause inspections to be made of primary, secondary, special and independent schools, establishments of further and higher education and of teacher training and adult education; and provides that the inspections should be carried out by inspectors appointed by HM The Queen for this purpose.

4. Thus the Inspectorate's work derives from the service it gives to the Secretary of State in connection with his statutory responsibilities for the education system. On the basis of inspection throughout the system by Inspectors each working across the whole country the Inspectorate:

- a. assesses standards and trends and advises the Secretary of State on the performance of the system nationally;
- b. identifies and makes known more widely good practice and promising developments and draws attention to weaknesses requiring attention;
- c. provides advice and assistance to those with responsibilities for or in the institutions in the system through its day-to-day contacts, its contributions to training and its publications.

The informed and independent evidence and judgments arising from these activities form a basis for the policies and decisions of the Secretary of State, LEAs, teachers, governors and teacher trainers. The Inspectorate pays special attention to the teacher training system since the Secretary of State has a statutory responsibility for the supply of an adequate teaching force.

5. Less directly, but increasingly, the public availability of HMI reports enables parents and others in society at large to become better informed about the education system and its institutions and provides an independent body of information and judgment upon which they too can draw when faced with the need for action and decision about educational issues, whether these relate to national, local or family questions.

6. The Inspectorate has no executive power. But it exercises a control function, delegated to it by the Secretary of State, in respect of advanced (ie higher education) courses in further education; and advises the Secretary of State in the exercise of his supervisory functions in relation to independent schools. The Scrutiny noted developments in the overall management of public sector higher education and advised reduction in the involvement of the Inspectorate in the detailed administration of course approval. First steps have been taken to this end. Further progress depends on policy decisions and the working of the National Advisory Body for Local Authority Higher Education. But, whatever the changes, as the Scrutiny records, the continuing responsibility of central government needs to be underpinned by the independent professional advice based upon detailed acquaintance with the system which the Inspectorate provides.

7. The Management Review of the Department of Education and Science, published in 1979, noted the importance attached throughout the education system to the independence of the Inspectorate; and the extent to which its effectiveness was bound up with

this. The Scrutiny recommended that the Inspectorate's professional independence of judgement was essential and must be preserved and protected. The Secretaries of State endorse this recommendation and the present arrangements for securing the independence of the Inspectorate. The Senior Chief Inspector and the Chief Inspector for Wales will continue to have the right of direct access to their respective Secretaries of State. While the decision to publish what HM Inspectors write rests with the Secretaries of State, any of their work which the Secretaries of State decide should be published is published as the Inspectorate wrote it.

8. The Secretary of State for Education and Science has reviewed the size of the Inspectorate in England in the light of the Scrutiny. He has concluded that having regard to both the Government's manpower policy and to the effective discharge of the Inspectorate's essential functions the present complement of 430 should be sustained. Numbers in post will be brought up to complement as a matter of urgency. The Secretary of State for Wales is considering the size of the Inspectorate in Wales in the context of reviews of staffing within the Welsh Office.

INSPECTION AND AUDIT

9. Inspection, which takes a variety of forms according to its target and purpose, is the tool by which the Inspectorate audits the system to assess the extent to which nationally, locally or in individual institutions it offers an adequate service and

secures value for money. In particular, inspection seeks to reduce the element of local chance which can put parents and pupils at a disadvantage within the national education service. Inspection is also the means for assessing the capacity of the system at any given time to undertake new tasks which the Secretaries of State may require. By inspection the Inspectorate builds up a national view of what is possible and what is commonly achieved. In its assessments, it takes account of the range of current expectations of the Government, employers, parents, students and the public as to what the system should be achieving, and has regard to the system's professional vitality and commitment.

10. The Inspectorate's remit extends to over 32,000 maintained and independent schools, some 580 establishments of further and higher education, about 5,400 evening institutions and some 14,000 courses run by Responsible Bodies in adult education, and the youth service (as well as the education provision made by the education service in over 100 penal establishments, together with a range of community facilities with an education component). In choosing targets for inspection the Inspectorate has to give priority to those matters which by reason of performance or policy are of most urgent concern, and at the same time achieve a coverage sufficient to keep the Inspectorate informed of the state of all parts of the system and allow prompt advice to be given to the Secretaries of State on any aspect of it. The building up of the Inspectorate's audit function in recent years has led to a scale of inspection visits which, with the present complement, enables one-fifth of primary schools, three-quarters of secondary schools and one-fifth of independent schools to be visited in the course of a year; and the great majority of FHE institutions and all initial teacher training establishments to be visited each year. The Scrutiny identified apparent differences between the conduct of inspection visits in schools and those in FHE. In line with its findings, it is now a clear requirement that general inspectors of FHE colleges assemble and act upon the various reports of

specialist inspectors as they affect either the individual institution or its role within the authority. The practice of assessment is common to schools and FHE. After every inspection visit the Inspectorate discusses its assessments of what it has seen with those concerned with the institution and, where appropriate, the LEA or other providing body, and records them for the Inspectorate's file on the institution.

11. A proportion of inspection time leads to reports to the Secretaries of State which are issued to the institutions and LEAs concerned, thus providing a formal record of the Inspectorate's findings and an agenda for action. This formal reporting is necessarily time-consuming and therefore used particularly either where institutions provide an exemplar of type, style or achievement, or where the written record is judged the best means of achieving change of direction or improvement. Some 260 such reports (over 200 on schools) were issued in England and Wales in 1981. This level of productivity is planned to continue and, as the Scrutiny suggested, the time of Inspectors working mainly in further and higher education will be shifted towards this type of formal inspection.

12. Each LEA has a general responsibility for the delivery of educational services to its population. The Inspectorate has recently reported on all aspects of education in two LEAs and on one district of another. The reports were based on recent inspections of all kinds in the LEAs' institutions. Further reports of this kind will be on whole LEAs or some part, as appropriate to the individual case. Full reports on three LEAs will be completed during the academic year 1982-3.

As in the case of inspection leading to formal reports on institutions, authorities will be chosen for report on a basis of perceived need or exemplification.

USE OF THE FINDINGS OF INSPECTIONS

13. The value of the Inspectorate's work to the nation depends in large part on the use the Government and the rest of the education system make of its findings, communicated both formally and informally. The Secretaries of State regard the Inspectorate's work as indispensable to the process of making educational policy. The Inspectorate's findings are of immediate interest to those responsible for the work of the institution inspected. They are also relevant to others in the system whose tasks are similar, and are likely to interest many others in education and those who are its clients or interested in its standards.

14. To meet this range of interest a variety of publications based on inspection has, as the Scrutiny recorded, been put on the market. But the potential benefit of issued reports on formal inspections of institutions has been limited by the fact that, for the last 30 years or so, they have normally been made available to the LEA, governors, and head or principal of the institution concerned (and through them to other staff) on an "in confidence" basis. The Secretary of State for Education and Science announced on 16 November 1982 that from 1 January 1983 such reports, written on the same basis as at present, would be publicly available.

15. In the majority of cases action on reports of formal inspections is taken by the institutions and LEAs directly concerned. The Secretaries of State consider that still more effective use could be made of such reports. They announced on 16 November 1982 that from 1 January 1983 the Department would ask LEAs to indicate to him within three months of the issue of reports of formal inspections of maintained schools or further education institutions providing for full-time students aged 16-18 inclusive the action to be taken in the light of the report's findings. This procedure will shortly be extended to reports on other institutions. There may be occasions when the Secretary of State will himself wish to call the attention of LEAs to matters of particular concern or of wider national interest which are revealed through such a report.

16. The Inspectorate will continue to publish consolidated inspection reports on national aspects of the system, to enable those within it to see how their work measures up against what is done elsewhere; to spread good practice; to promote a better understanding of problems and weaknesses; to stimulate the discussion and implementation of remedies; and to encourage fresh thinking and development.

17. The Inspectorate will also continue to play a part in securing an appropriate response from the system to its reports and publications to the extent compatible with the need for further inspections elsewhere. Its programmes reflect the Scrutiny's recommendation that the need in particular is to fuel and prime LEAs and their advisory services and to focus as clearly as possible the Inspectorate's various contributions to in-service training. Going beyond the Scrutiny, the Inspectorate will give particular attention to discussing with institutions providing initial teacher training the relevance to their work of its findings. In all some 10% of inspection visits will continue to be follow-up visits. Time will also be allocated to discussing the implication of reports with the examining and validating bodies and key professional associations.

18. In order to increase the impact of publications by the Inspectorate, more copies will, as the Scrutiny recommended, in future be distributed free in appropriate cases. The Inspectorate will also take suitable opportunities to work alongside local authorities, their advisers, institutions and teachers on selected and pressing development work, as currently for example in respect of the secondary curriculum or the implementation of the 1981 Act.

MANAGEMENT AND USE OF INSPECTORS' TIME

19. The Secretaries of State agree with the Scrutiny on the nature of the problem of managing and using Inspectors' time to the best advantage, and on what the arrangements

to this end should achieve. It is this desired outcome which will determine the further action to be taken and the use made of the detailed suggestions offered by the Scrutiny, all of which have been considered and are being kept under review. The effectiveness of the Inspectorate requires a timely, selective programme of inspection consistent with policy needs and the skills of the Inspectors in post; clear and speedy communication within the Inspectorate, with the education system and with its clients; and efficient relationships with the rest of DES and the Welsh Office, with the LEAs and other providers, with the teacher training system and the many validating and change agencies. All these require time, as does the regular review of the Inspectorate's effectiveness. But inspection will continue to take the largest share of all. In particular the Inspectorate will, as the Scrutiny suggests, keep its committee structure under review to reduce the time spent in meetings, while preserving their role in communication and management within a field force. The size and mode of operation of the recently formed Policy Group for Inspection, criticised for unwieldiness by the Scrutiny, will be kept under review by its chairman and the Policy Steering Group.

20. As education and the demands made on it change, so must inspection targets; and not only the management of time but also the staffing of the Inspectorate must continually adapt without putting at risk the values for which the Inspectorate must stand. The education system requires of Inspectors, whatever their position in the Inspectorate, credibility based on qualification, experience and performance. It follows that Inspectors must have opportunities for specific personal achievement and these will be provided, subject to the needs of the Inspectorate's total programme of work. It is particularly important that the Inspectorate is flexible enough to bring in teachers and others who are leaders in their field, not only as now for half a lifetime's service, but for shorter periods. Within its present complement, the Inspectorate cannot cover all aspects of the education system in equal depth, and uses occasional professional assistance for single inspections or longer periods.

Experience of inspection can be shown to have been of value to those so attached when they return to their jobs. It is proposed, as the Scrutiny suggests, to increase the number of such short-term attachments for specific tasks, particularly in areas of rapid obsolescence like information technology or to match an initial spurt of development or to tackle an acute problem. The aim is to arrange, as a first step, within the next six months for perhaps six such attachments for periods of up to three years. Either secondment of, or exchange of post with, teachers, advisers or educational administrators might be the means used and these will be discussed with the local authority associations.

21. The planning of the necessary programmes of inspection, in-service training of teachers and foreign travel is the collective responsibility of the six Chief Inspectors under the Senior Chief Inspector in England and of the seven Staff Inspectors with the Chief Inspector in Wales. Decisions about each term's programme, the continuation or cessation of existing elements and the introduction of new ones, together with longer-term planning, will continue to reflect:

- i. Government policy and the routine needs of DES and the Welsh Office, whether transmitted through existing planning mechanisms or through day-to-day contact with the Secretaries of State and their other advisers.
- ii. The Inspectorate's knowledge (from inspection and contact with the LEAs) of performance on the ground which identifies growth points and areas of concern.

The implementation of these decisions falls to Divisional Inspectors, Staff Inspectors and individual HMI, who have both specific assignments and interlocking responsibilities. Individual inspectors are kept informed of priorities within their special assignments. HMI check with administrators, and their other direct clients,

the value to them and to the system of different programmed activities. Various means of making such checks are likely to be appropriate.

22. All inspection informs the providers. As the Scrutiny suggests, the two Inspectors who in each LEA form the link with that Authority have a special importance in creating relationships of confidence and respect which enable inspection to bear fruit. Account will be taken of this in planning future programmes and assignments, due allowance made for each Inspector's limitations of time and expertise and the overall demand for Inspectors' time.

23. As the Scrutiny suggests, one of the six Chief Inspectors has the responsibility of overseeing the central programmes and the load on the Inspectorate and individuals within it. When the outcome of present developments in the education and training of 16-19 year olds is clearer, fresh consideration will be given to the Scrutiny's recommendation that a Chief Inspector should be appointed to co-ordinate inspection in this important area, now shared by the Chief Inspectors for Further Education and Secondary Education, and, where necessary, co-ordinated by the Senior Chief Inspector. As regards the Scrutiny's recommendation about increased cross-border inspection in England and Wales, every attempt will be made to extend present working arrangements to the advantage of both parts of the Inspectorate.

24. Procedures for publishing inspectors' findings and ordering their information in a readily accessible way are, as the Scrutiny suggests, less well advanced, particularly for further and higher education, than those for planning inspection. The Inspectorate's aim will be to issue reports on individual institutions within six months of the inspection and to accelerate procedures for the bringing together of information and for publication. To facilitate this, it will be essential to maintain the present levels of support staff, though no increase can currently be contemplated. Further analysis will be made by HMI and the Department's Establishment

Branch of the benefits of electronic typewriters, distant conference facilities, facsimile transmission and word processors. There is scope for the introduction of modern technology into the work of the Inspectorate and a modest start will shortly be permitted with the computerised register of visits, which was planned at the time of the Scrutiny. With no immediate prospect of increasing either support services or the data support unit, special consideration will be given to the supply of efficient modern equipment for essential tasks such as the standing record of inspectors' qualifications and experience and the construction of the inspection programme. In the light of such developments attention will be given to the Scrutiny's recommendation that the Inspectorate and the Department should jointly consider the division of tasks between Inspectors and support staff with a view to providing more guidance and training for both groups on what is expected of them.

25. Such innovations would enable Inspectors to spend more time on tasks which make best use of their professional skills and build relationships which lead to action on the ground. If the Inspectorate's findings are to have an impact upon policy formation and execution, sufficient time must be given to good liaison with the Secretaries of States' other advisers. The Inspectorate's impact on the rest of the system similarly requires sufficient time. There is no set formula for the effective use of time for either purpose. As regards the former, the Inspectorate will continue to participate in both the permanent and the ad hoc machinery set up within the DES and Welsh Office for the consideration and formulation of policy advice to the Secretaries of State; and its members, like their generalist and specialist colleagues in the DES and Welsh Office, will continue to foster the good informal working relationships which are the Inspectors' most effective tool in this context. As regards relations with those outside the DES and Welsh Office and the LEAs, the Inspectorate must, within the limits of available time, maintain links with a wide range of validating and advisory bodies, educational agencies and representative

groups with great collective power to shape education. Priority will be given to those organisations, like the National Advisory Body for Local Authority Higher Education and the Manpower Services Commission and the validating and examining bodies, who are most actively involved in the development and implementation of the Government's current policies.

LEA ADVISERS AND INSPECTORS

26. The agency best placed to influence the institutions maintained by a LEA is the local advisory service which it appoints. All LEAs appoint a number of advisers, mainly in relation to schools, who in some cases act also as inspectors. The functions of local advisers or inspectors vary widely, as do the scale and scope of their work; they may include administrative tasks concerned with such matters as the employment, redeployment and promotion of teachers. A local advisory service which inspects helps its LEA to be well informed about the institutions it maintains and to devise sound policies for assisting it in the discharge of its responsibilities; it also helps those who work in the institutions to improve their professional performance. This locally based work is complemented by that of HM Inspectorate in its national role. Whatever their locally assigned duties, a strong cadre of advisers and inspectors greatly enhances the contribution which the work of the Inspectorate makes in any local authority. The Secretaries of State intend shortly to explore with the local authority associations whether there is a need for them to offer guidance on the role of local advisory services and the most effective co-operation between them and the Inspectorate. The recommendations of the Scrutiny will form part of the agenda.

CONCLUSION

27. The policy set out in this statement preserves the essential attributes of the

Inspectorate which have stood the test of time but strengthens and sharpens its capacity to serve the cause of quality in the education system. It is the continuing duty of those with responsibility for the education system - Government, LEAs, individual institutions and those who work in them - to assess the adequacy of the educational standards achieved and the effectiveness and efficiency with which resources are being used. The new policy of wider publication of HMI's evidence will make the education system and its clients better informed and enable both to play their proper part in achieving effectiveness.

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DRAFT INFORMATION BOOKLET FOR PARENTS

HMI - TODAY

From January 1983 the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Wales have made the formal reports by HM Inspectors (HMI) publicly available. They have also published a policy statement on the work of HM Inspectorate following a scrutiny in Lord Rayner's programme of studies into Civil Service management. Those actions illustrate the Government's continuing intention to strengthen the Inspectorate.

The Government set store by the family, its responsibilities and the exercise of its influence: they seek to offer parents good standards of education, and need their help in achieving them. If parents are to deal on equal terms with local education authorities, heads and teachers, in seeking to influence the education of their children, they need to be well informed about the education service and the parts played by the many people involved including HM Inspectors.

The policy statement on the work of HMI is freely available but is addressed mainly to those directly involved in and knowledgeable about education. This booklet sets out to tell the ordinary reader, and particularly parents, something about HM Inspectors, their reports and the main features of their current work.

Responsibility for seeing that education is available in England and Wales rests mainly with the local authorities. Teachers, governors and the various examining and professional bodies all have great influence upon what is learnt. But everyone concerned with education works within a national framework of law and policies aimed at offering all pupils and students broadly the same opportunities to reach their full potential. Among the different groups of people working on behalf of education, HM Inspectors have particular importance in this national context. They work nationally and report to the Secretaries of State, whose responsibilities extend over the whole of England and Wales.

There are 480 HM Inspectors for England and Wales. They have a small clerical support staff who, using modern technology where possible, ensure that information gathered by inspectors is well handled. The Inspectorate's total size is patently small compared with the whole education service. But the nature of its work gives it a view of education that is available to few, if any, other groups of people, and its working relationships enable it to put this knowledge at the disposal of all concerned with education, to use when they need to make a decision on national, local, family or personal matters. The Inspectorate's messages to families have in the past been largely indirect. The public availability of reports and this booklet seek to make them more directly accessible.

What do HMI do?

HMI have to tell the Government about the health of education. On the basis of systematic and wideranging inspection, they give the Government much of the information needed to take stock and to shape new policies. For example, the recently announced initiatives, for improving the education of the 40 per cent of pupils for whom examinations at 16 plus are not designed, and for developments in the learning of science in primary and secondary schools, are in part responses to the perceptions of HMI.

HMI also tell teachers and others directly responsible for providing education, how they judge what they have seen of their work, its good points and how it might be different or better. They do this in a number of ways: through discussions with heads and teachers during inspections, at their regular meetings with chief education officers and their advisers, and through formal inspection reports which the Secretary of State has always made available to the institution, governors and education authorities involved. It is these inspection reports that are now published for all to see.

In their reports and advice HMI use no blueprints, wave no magic wands. They offer the best professional judgements they can about what they see when, singly or in groups, they visit education institutions, administrative offices or professional bodies and associations. They have no powers. They have to earn attention by what they are and what they do. Their effectiveness depends on relationships which have to be worked at. Perhaps their most significant characteristics are their professional independence from Government, local authorities and teachers and their obligation to report as they find without fear or favour.

Who are they?

The men and women who become HMI are recruited in their 30s and 40s on the basis of successful experience as teachers or lecturers. Some have been advisers with local education authorities and many, particularly those involved in inspections of post-school education, have worked in industry or commerce. All of them are specialists. There are inspectors whose knowledge and experience is of primary, secondary or further education. There are teacher training specialists, and others whose particular knowledge is of the teaching of specific subjects in schools or further education. There are also HMI whose experience and knowledge is of teaching children with physical, mental or emotional disabilities, or of working with particular groups of children or young people such as the most or least able, those living in inner urban or in rural areas, or the very young. Most HMI combine two of these specialisms in their work, which always requires them also to look at education in the round.

What can be inspected at any given time is limited by the number of HMI available with the specialisms required. Since the Inspectorate cannot contain a limitless range of skills, from time to time it calls upon people from outside the Inspectorate who can offer the special knowledge and experience required for particular tasks. The recent policy statement advocates an increase in the number of such attachments so that, where necessary, educational leaders of the day may take part in HM Inspectorate's work without being committed to a complete change of career.

What do HMI inspect?

HMI have a right in law to inspect almost all education, public and private. They do not inspect further education provided outside the state sector, most university education, and religious education in some denominational schools. HMI do inspect all schools, independent as well as maintained, special education for children with disabilities, maintained further education in all its forms, the youth service, adult education and the initial and inservice training of teachers

HMI also have duties in relation to a

surprisingly large number of other bodies. They inspect and report on education provided, for instance, in the European Schools, in hospitals, in prisons and Borstals, for children whose parents are in the armed services, and for children in care.

Leaving aside these other commitments, there are over 32,000 schools and more than 5,000 further education establishments in England and Wales, not to mention youth groups and adult education classes. With a maximum of 480 HMI, the Inspectorate cannot hope to carry out regular inspections of each institution and of the various services which support schools and colleges. The programme of inspection must therefore be based on priorities. But, at the same time it must not lose sight of the ordinary run of education in all its variety or fail to support the day to day casework of the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office.

In any year the overall programme of inspectors' visits is likely to involve almost all secondary schools and FE colleges and nearly 5,000 of the 23,000 primary schools. Slightly more than half of these visits are devoted to keeping an up-to-date view of what is being done in schools and colleges. There must therefore be a reasonable distribution of visits to various types of institution so that the provision they make across all aspects of education and for pupils and students of all ages and abilities can be constantly reviewed. About a tenth of all the visits arise from previous ones which have shown either valuable new developments it is important to follow up or performance needing to be improved.

The rest of the inspectors' time is given formally to priority work. Priorities for inspection are basically of two kinds: those which reflect the Government's policies; and those which stem from the need for change or improvement, in an institution or part of it, or more broadly. The two overlap but not entirely.

Each year perhaps 20 institutions, mainly schools, have a formal inspection because the Secretary of State or HMI or the local education authority believe this sort of help is necessary. The other 250 or so institutions formally inspected each year are either chosen to illustrate particular aspects of education or ways of doing things or are suggested by the computer as part of a sample. In each year the overall provision of 2 or 3 local educational authorities (LEAs) is considered as the subject for a report. Again the choice of an LEA may be made for some reason connected with education or financial performance, but is more likely to be related to the usefulness to the Government and the local education authority of understanding better its educational performance.

This priority work is not separate. The same priority issues remain in inspectors' minds as they go about their other visits. So, for example, the proper matching of teacher training to the needs of schools is part of the current priority programme of inspection in institutions of higher education, but it is also a constant concern as inspectors visit schools of all kinds. Improvement of educational performance is always in their minds, not least when they inspect the best practice which, well described, may serve as an encouragement and model for others.

How do they inspect?

Forms of Inspection

Inspection looks at the work done where it is done: in schools, colleges, youth groups and other places. It varies in form according to the job to be done and so does any report that follows. Many visits are made by individual inspectors or by small teams. Some of these visits are to single institutions, some to several in the same area, and some to institutions in several areas. Most such visits are informal and lead to a record in the Inspectorate's working file kept on each school and college rather than a formal report to the Secretary of State.

Inspections leading to a report to the Secretary of State tend to be larger and longer. They include inspections of single institutions where a team of inspectors spends a week or so in the school or college; surveys by a team of inspectors of particular subjects, sections or aspects of education across a number of institutions or education authorities; inspection of the range of education within one LEA or of education across the country in particular types of schools, further education or teacher training institutions. These larger inspections involve considerable numbers of HMI for some part of their time over periods of time varying from a few months to two or three years.

Standards in Institutions

HMI's main concern is with standards of learning. In judging these, along with the evidence of their own eyes about the work done and in progress, they make use of such measures as exist, including levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy and the proportion of pupils or students entering for, and successful in, public examinations. HMI have to judge whether or not what is taught is what pupils and students need to know; how well it increases their grasp of a subject; if it equips them for jobs and future careers; and whether it contributes to a better understanding of themselves and the world in which they live.

Inspection is not confined to class and lecture rooms. For example, inspection of the training of teachers includes their practical training in schools, and Pupils' involvement in community service and work experience may be looked at as part of the inspection of secondary schools. In schools and colleges and in these other places of learning, inspectors try to keep in mind the requirements, academic and other, of the workplace. In recent years they have also increased their contacts with the world of employment in order to improve such judgements.

HMI do not report on individual teachers, but they do assess the quality of teaching because of its direct influence upon standards of learning. In coming to their judgement, HMI comment on the match between the qualifications and experience of teachers and the teaching they are given to do. They judge whether or not teaching methods are appropriate to the age, aptitudes and abilities of the pupils or students. But more than that, they look at how well the teaching stimulates interest, curiosity and enthusiasm, helps with the mastery of the subject matter, and fosters pupils' ability to organise their own studies or follow-up their own ideas. They consider whether teachers' expectations of pupils seem right; that is, neither unrealistically demanding nor pitched too low, and if there is a recognisable progression in the work.

Standards of work are also influenced by the state and suitability of the accommodation, the availability and quality of equipment and materials and, to a varying degree, the amount of money provided for education. HMI give their judgement about these in their reports and where there are shortcomings they indicate how they think these could be overcome and at what cost.

The extent to which pupils, students and teachers feel themselves to be valued in an institution bears closely on standards of work and behaviour. HMI therefore attempt to examine and comment upon the relationships between teachers and taught, the quality of the academic and personal record keeping, the levels of responsibility encouraged among pupils, behaviour and discipline, attendance, the number and range of clubs and societies, the willingness of pupils to stay on at school or in college, and the quality and nature of links between teachers and parents.

These concerns about standards of work and behaviour are not the exclusive domain of teachers and others in education. They are of direct interest to parents, employers and society. Teachers in their work and HMI in their inspections have to acknowledge the judgements and demands made by the world outside.

Comparisons between Institutions

Although some aspects of general education are absolutely basic and common to all, there is not one way of doing things, nor a generally agreed order of priorities for many of the things schools and colleges seek, or are expected to do. Differences between schools or colleges also arise because of their history, location, the staff and other resources available and the communities they serve.

But if young people and their parents are to get good standards of education wherever they happen to live, the variations from institution to institution or from one part of the country to the next must not be too great. Consequently inspections must compare what is being done in any school or college with what is known to be achieved elsewhere. An institution may be performing well, given its particular circumstances, yet be found wanting in some respects by comparison with others elsewhere. For example, a small, rural primary school with some particular strengths and no serious problems may be found to have limitations in, for example, science or physical education when compared with other similar, but larger, primary schools. Similarly an inner-city secondary school that is well ordered and generally effective, may be providing a good education for its pupils but have lower overall levels of academic attainments than schools in more favoured areas.

Since schools and colleges can never do everything they might wish for all their pupils, they have continually to balance gains and losses as they decide what to do and for whom. Almost inevitably majority needs and aspirations tend to displace those of minorities. Decisions to concentrate on certain developments mean that others have to be postponed or reduced in scope. In some schools and colleges the quality of work for the most able may be good while that for the ^{less}academically able is not so good, or vice-versa. Within the whole range of subjects in a school, some such as science or mathematics may be strong and well provided for whereas modern languages may be weak in provision and standards achieved. Inspection reports attempt to give this balanced picture. Careful reading will reveal not only strengths and shortcomings but also the reasons why things are as they are and the implications for the whole of changes in any one part, or the cost of evening up.

Who receives HMI reports?

HMI report to the Secretaries of State but first they will have reported informally to those inspected. The reports they write on schools and colleges are now published for all to read, but are specifically sent to the institutions and LEAs concerned. There is therefore no secret reporting and all who need to take action are promptly informed.

The Inspectorate also acts as a catalyst. To increase its impact, HMI produce each year a range of publications about education. The majority of these are published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office and are available through bookshops. These publications are based on inspection and tend to be about large parts of education such as "Aspects of Secondary Education" based on a survey of the final two years of compulsory schooling in some 10 per cent of English secondary schools; about particular subjects such as "Technology in Schools"; about teachers and teaching as in "The New Teacher in School"; on matters of general concern like "Truancy and Behaviour in Some Urban Secondary Schools" or on examples of good practice such as that reported in "Ten Good Schools".

What follows a formal report?

From the beginning of this year when an inspection report on a maintained school or college is published it is accompanied by a letter from the Department of Education and Science or the Welsh Office. This letter asks the LEA to indicate,

within three months, what action it proposes to take in response to the report's findings. There may be matters to be put right, but often there will be good practice that requires support and encouragement if it is to spread to other institutions.

Local education authorities, institutions and their teachers are free to challenge the findings of inspection reports or to say what help or support they would require, if they are to respond to the findings.

HMI also have their part to play in the action following a formal inspection report. During and after inspection they put their findings to those responsible, such as the heads and teachers, and shortly after that, and before publication, they offer to meet the governors of the institution. HMI also discuss their findings with LEA officers and local advisers, who have a key role to play in the improvement of education. A strong team of local advisers is often the agency best placed to influence the institutions maintained by an LEA, to foster good ideas, to see the early signs of things going wrong and to give the help ^{needed to put things} _{right.} ^{needed to put things} _{right.}

All LEAs appoint a number of advisers, mainly related to schools. In some authorities these advisers make their own inspections. But the functions of local advisers vary widely. Much of their time may be taken up by administrative work related to the employment, redeployment and promotion of teachers. There is also great variation in the size of local advisory teams and in the range of specialisms they contain. Where there are suitably qualified and experienced local advisers who make inspections their judgements and findings can be related to, and compared with, the nationally based judgements and findings of HMI: the national and local findings complement each other. In the policy statement the Secretaries of State indicated their intention to explore with the local authority associations whether there is a need for guidance about the role of local advisory services and the most effective relationships between them and HMI.

Where HMI are able to raise issues arising from their inspections with all the people who need to know, teachers, governors, local education officers and advisers, action is often taken to put right shortcomings and to support and extend good practice well in advance of the publication of the inspection report. In many cases these close links between HMI, teachers

and local authorities lead to the Inspectorate's helping to plan and take part in courses for local teachers that are intended to make inspection findings more widely known and to help teachers to work out how to bring change or improvement. HMI also provide a programme of about 100 national, short courses for teachers each year. Most of these are influenced by the findings of inspection and therefore relevant to many teachers. Copies of the programme are circulated annually to all schools and colleges.

The procedures following inspection reports on independent schools are similar. The Department of Education and Science or the Welsh Office writes to the proprietors of the school highlighting the main conclusions and recommendations of the published report and asking to be told what action they have taken in response. Independent schools do not have the support of a local education authority and its advisory service but HM Inspectors, in their informal discussions with headteachers and proprietors following inspections and in subsequent visits, are pleased to advise on how improvements might be effected. Teachers from independent schools are welcome to attend the short courses run by HMI.

How are parents involved?

The routes by which inspection reports reach those directly involved in education are fairly clear, though the process of making sure that all teachers and lecturers see the report on their institution could be improved.

The routes to parents, the wider community and local councillors are less developed. Local councillors are becoming more involved particularly through the annual HMI report on the effects of local authority expenditure policies and the increasing number of inspections of education within one local authority, such as those in the Inner London Education Authority, Dudley and the Toxteth area of Liverpool.

It is more difficult to envisage direct routes of communication between HMI and parents. At any one time relatively few parents will be able to read a recent published report about their own children's school or college. But many more parents will be able to read inspection reports on institutions similar to those attended by their children, whether those are in the area in which they live or elsewhere.

Parents who wish to contact HMI may do so at the Inspectorate offices listed at the end of this booklet. They may also, as previously, write to the Senior Chief Inspector at the Department of Education and Science. Normally, however, where parents wish to discuss aspects of their children's education, their first move should be to talk to the head and teachers of the school. After that, if need be, the next step is to speak to the LEA (or proprietors, in the case of an independent school). If they wish, parents can raise matters with their local councillors or Members of Parliament or make a formal complaint to the Secretaries of State. The public availability of HMI inspection reports does not change this pattern, but it may help parents to be better informed than at present about education generally and the particular bit of it with which they are concerned.

Parents can obtain copies of published inspection reports on request from the appropriate local education authority, the independent school reported on, or from the Department of Education and Science at the Publications Despatch Centre, Honeypot Lane, Stanmore, Middlesex HA1 1AZ and the Welsh Office Education Department, Cathays Park, Cardiff. Other HMI publications are also available from those addresses if free, or from Her Majesty's Stationery Office and bookshops if priced. Some recent general publications are listed at the end of this booklet.

As a further aid to all who have an interest in HMI's reports, the Inspectorate plans to publish reviews of the inspection reports published during the previous six months indicating the overall trends and the most important issues that arise from them. These reviews will be obtainable from the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office at the addresses given above.

What is HMI doing in 1983?

To know the special targets of HM Inspectorate's work at any time, one looks to the Government's policies and initiatives. So at present inspectors are deeply involved in work to make the curriculum more relevant to today's needs and better able to enlist the interest and develop the full potential of all pupils, both boys and girls and including those with special needs. In this connection, they are looking particularly at the relationship between the education offered and different sizes of schools and different structures, like first, middle and upper schools. They are also considering the way in which money is spent in institutions or local education authorities to illuminate what policies cost and which patterns of expenditure give best value.

Inspectors are concerned in the work designed to improve examinations and other forms of assessment so that all pupils receive a more accurate passport from schools to working life. Much time is being devoted to the development of new opportunities for pre-vocational, vocational and technical education, both before and during working life. The re-shaping of teacher training is a particular concern, as is the rationalisation of higher education in the maintained and voluntary sectors.

All this work is developmental across a broad front and taps the best work and thinking of those in education and, in many cases, outside. Inspectors are ^{also} engaged with more specialised concerns such as the education of ethnic minorities, including mother-tongue teaching, provision for the gifted, the education of travellers' children, the possible solutions to truancy, and the daunting problems of education in inner-city areas.

New needs arise constantly and the Inspectorate's work is kept under review to ensure that time is spent on those cases where the availability of information about existing good practice and informed intervention are most likely to herald improvement.