

Inspectorate Profile

Qualitätsanalyse Nordrhein Westfalen Quality Analysis North Rhine-Westphalia September 2024

1. Overview of the Inspectorate

Age of inspectorate

Following an initial pilot phase with 96 voluntary schools, Quality Analysis in North Rhine-Westphalia started in 2006. During the development phase, we were fortunate to benefit from the input of the Inspectorate of the Netherlands, whose extensive experience proved to be a great asset.

Structure of inspectorate

Quality Analysis is a division of the Ministry of Schools and Education. The Ministry's Quality Analysis Unit is responsible for management and development of the inspectorate, with the Unit's head office located at the Ministry's headquarters in Düsseldorf.

Inspectors are based in the five district governments. Their divisions within the district governments are each headed by a Chief Inspector. Each regional unit is responsible for planning and carrying out inspections in all public schools in their region. Under a special agreement with the churches, inspections are also carried out in church schools.

Size

The five district governments employ around 100 inspectors, and the regional teams are structured in such a way that appropriate expertise is available for every type of school. The specialist unit in the ministry is supported by a consultant for content-related work and two administrative employees. Pedagogical and administrative staff provide support in the regional teams, the number of which mainly depends on the number of schools to be supported.

Remits

The school inspectorate visits primary and secondary schools, including special schools, and vocational colleges. Two inspectors work on a part-time basis for the Federal Office for Schools Abroad and support the evaluation of German schools abroad.

Unit of inspection

Quality Analysis evaluates the quality of the educational programme in each individual school. The framework for school inspection defines core criteria on which each school receives feedback. In addition, each school, together with its stakeholders, decides on its specific/individual inspection framework, with each group defining questions and issues on which it wishes to receive feedback from the quality analysis.

Purpose of inspectorate

External evaluation provides schools with data-based feedback. It provides the necessary impetus for school and teaching development.

What is your strapline/motto?

The stated objective is to eliminate the correlation between educational outcomes and social background.

Relationship with government

The Ministry of Education is responsible for school inspection in NRW and decides on regulations and standards.

Accountability

The Quality Analysis in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) is based on the Schools Act of 2005. The Quality Analysis Unit is accountable to the Ministry of Education. The Chief Inspectors in the regional departments are accountable to the Head of the Unit in the Ministry.

Quality assurance of inspections

The Inspectorate uses a range of mechanisms to ensure that its work is conducted to the highest professional standards and that its judgements are valid and reliable. These internal quality assurance mechanisms are used:

- publication of standards and procedures to which the school inspectorate is committed in its work,
- recruitment of inspectors from among highly qualified, experienced school leaders conducted through a multi-stage recruitment and interview process,
- a comprehensive qualification and on-the-job training programme provided to prepare inspectors for their new role and to develop their assessment skills,
- further development of quality analysis is conducted in cooperation with school and institution stakeholders and takes into account research findings, practices of other inspections and the results of trials in schools and institutions.

2. Evaluation process

Self-evaluation

The Inspection Framework of North Rhine-Westphalia contains criteria which refer to self-evaluation as a potential basis for quality development.

Focus of inspection

The following areas are explored:

- Teaching and learning
- School culture
- Professionalisation, Human Resource Development
- Leadership and Quality Assurance

Inspection framework

The quality analysis is based on the framework referred to above, which is closely connected to the Framework for School Quality in North Rhine-Westphalia. It explains and defines the key components of teaching and school quality.

As mentioned above, each school has a significant influence on its own specific framework for inspection.

Inspection time and resources

The Quality Analysis procedure comprises three distinct phases: a preliminary phase, a main phase and a final phase. Schools play an active role in organising and designing their own inspection process in the preliminary phase. The main phase will commence within a maximum of two years following the meeting. The main phase of the Quality Analysis procedure typically involves two inspectors conducting a three-day school visit. However, depending on the school's size and staffing structure, the visit may extend to four days, with the option of an

additional inspector for one or two days. In the final phase, the school receives the quality report, which is discussed with the school and the school supervisor in a handover meeting. Leadership experience is a prerequisite for becoming a school inspector. Newly-appointed inspectors must complete a series of theoretical and practical training modules.

Frequency of inspections

School visits are scheduled to be carried out on a five-year cycle. However, due to the number of schools and the limited number of inspectors, this is currently not feasible.

Non-inspection activities

- Support of the aptitude assessment process for prospective school leaders
- Participation in working groups within the district governments

3. Consequences of inspection

Reporting

The quality report gives each school feedback on their quality profile based on the Framework for School Quality. Its purpose is to facilitate internal processes of quality assurance. It is sent to each school, local council and School Supervisory Board.

Grading

As the objective is for each institution to undergo a process of improvement, no ranking is provided. For each quality criterion, schools receive feedback on the extent to which associated processes are developed in the school. As processes are started at different times and develop differently, process status assessment is not linked to any judgement.

For any given index criterion, associated processes can have the following statuses:

The characteristics of the index criterion are not yet in the focus of school development processes.

School development processes to implement the characteristics of the index criterion are recognisably initiated.

The school has reached a sustainable level of development with regard to the characteristics of the index criterion.

The status of school development is characterised by a secure implementation of the characteristics of the index criterion.

The characteristics of the index criterion are fully and sustainably established in school practice.

Assessments are explained in the quality analysis report.

What happens following an inspection?

The quality report is analysed by various panels of each school, who decide whether the report (or parts thereof, or a summary) will be published. The panels then agree on priorities for improvement and measures to achieve these as a basis for a target agreement with the School Supervisory Board. The inspection team is involved in this preparatory discussion. Each school and its school supervisor then agree on targets based on the strengths and development potentials identified. The school supervisor is responsible for monitoring in accordance with the target agreement.