

Education Committee, 5 February 2019

'Young Inspectors' consultation meeting with Education Scotland

28 January 2019, Optima, Glasgow

Background

National Officer Jenny Kemp attended a meeting at Education Scotland (ES) to discuss the Young Inspectors project. This was originally planned as an add-on to a scheduled meeting of the ES Diversity and Equality Network (DEN), to consult DEN members about diversifying participation in the project, but the Network meeting was cancelled. EIS decided to still attend the add-on consultation meeting to gain some insight into the Young Inspectors project. Only one other stakeholder/member of the Network attended, Lorraine Glass from the anti-bullying organisation Respect Me. The ES staff present were Pauline Lynch and Maxine Jolly (MJ). Maxine is the lead officer for this work.

About the Young Inspectors project

General information about the Young Inspectors work was provided, and through an update from Maxine and questions/discussion it was discerned that:

- Young Inspectors is running in Aberdeen just now, as a 'try out', which has less formal status than a pilot
- It will run in Moray next
- Moray is commencing involvement just before the Easter holidays, with training running in April and May
- In Moray ES will commence a 'training for trainers' model to enable it to be rolled out without Maxine's direct involvement, although she will go to some for quality assurance purposes
- Maxine is running the project – going on all the visits, facilitating discussions, etc.
- Secondary schools in Aberdeen are working in threes (it was felt that pairs might be too 'tribal') but primary schools are working in pairs
- One of the key aims is to develop leadership skills in the young people taking part
- ES is doing an Equality Impact Assessment of the scheme before moving forward (hence wanting to consult the DEN)
- The ES officers involved don't see the young people as 'inspectors', and are using the terminology 'Young Leaders of Learning' but they can't change the overall name of the project (reasons unclear)
- Schools identify the theme they wish the young people to focus on
- Aberdeen schools are focused on 'relationships'; the theme was chosen by Heads and DHTs, as they felt it connected all the themes in How Good is OUR School?

- Operationally, the way the scheme works is that:
 - Schools identify eight young people to take part; secondaries can involve S1-S6 but Moray is going to involve S1-3 only as the senior pupils have so little time; primaries are involving P4-6.
 - Young people take part in training, by MJ, which includes an aspect on safeguarding in case young people disclose sensitive information to each other; the young people from all the schools are trained together
 - The young people visit each others' schools (from 10am to 2:30pm for secondaries and 10am to 1pm in primaries) and the host school puts on activities e.g. a tour, focus groups to discuss the theme, facilitated discussions about the school's strengths and areas for development (facilitated by MJ)
 - MJ writes up the key findings and shares with school leadership teams
- Schools have been issued with guidance not to cherry-pick children to take part and to ensure a good mix of children, being aware of the need to involve e.g. children from different backgrounds, with disabilities, both boys and girls etc.
- Children know they need the full agreement of a class teacher to go into a classroom and ES is of the view that teachers need to opt-in to take part in any discussions with visiting young people (not clear how that's conveyed to staff)
- The staff supporting this tend to be DHTs
- So far, younger pupils seem to be engaging better with this during the try-out in Aberdeen
- Aberdeen and Moray were chosen for this initial work because MJ lives in Aberdeen
- In developing the scheme ES consulted with the children and young people in ten recently inspected schools, in Aberdeen, Moray, Edinburgh and Glasgow
- Participation is optional
- Authorities will need to free up staff time if they want to take part
- ES has been working with an organisation called SPARQS – Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland – who delivered the training to the young people.
- MJ stated that she intends to identify emerging trends over time in terms of who is participating and what they are identifying
- Glasgow and Edinburgh are both keen to take part in future
- Information about this work will go on the Improvement Hub (timing unspecified).

Discussion of draft Equality Impact Assessment

A draft EIA was tabled for comment. JK noted that the Institute does not yet have formal policy on the model of Young Inspectors but is sceptical about this approach, and has serious concerns about its appropriateness and the implications for teachers. Also shared were EIS concerns about some aspects of the HGIOS framework, such as those prompt questions which seem to invite

personal remarks being made about teachers or young people being asked inappropriately to judge learning and teaching.

With those caveats in place, some discussions took place about how, if the scheme proceeds, barriers to participation could be overcome. Aberdeen schools have reported that the pupils taking part in the try-out are not the ones usually involved in Pupil Councils etc. Issues affecting young people living in poverty, young people with learning difficulties, trans young people etc were discussed.

Respect Me took the view that young people comparing and contrasting practices in different schools in their area would be beneficial and could be especially useful in terms of identifying good practice around bullying. They see this as a possible driver of consistency which the National Approach aspires to. However, they also want to know how this work adds value.

Further comments on the EIA were invited to be sent in by email, and JK asked that DEN members also be asked to comment.

Other issues arising

JK queried the time involvement for staff, noting that in the current climate it would be hard for staff to find time to take part in a project that involved sourcing young people, organising their participation in training, taking them each on two to three visits to other schools, organising the logistics of that including parental consents, hosting visitors, addressing the findings etc. ES suggested that the schools had several volunteers to take part.

JK also noted members' 'initiative fatigue' and queried how this project intends to line up with others such as Partnership Schools; there was no clear response.

Likewise, there was limited information available about how this will sit aside other pupil voice activities such as Pupil Councils.

ES highlighted that in their view there are wider issues around young people not being aware of the outcomes of inspection activity in their schools. They noted that, although it has not yet been formally agreed that where a school has trained 'Young Leaders of Learning' that they will be consulted during inspections, this has been proposed.

Respect Me wanted to know more about how young people's participation can be recognised e.g. with Saltire awards.

ES reported that they have done some filming of early activity and will use the film in some way.