
THE FRENCH INSPECTORATE

FROM THE INDIVIDUAL TO TEAMWORK

Elisabeth Jardon

Education inspector.

Creteil, France

Deputy General Secretary for The National Education Union of Inspectors

ABSTRACT

The French inspectorate is different from most other European inspectorate as inspectors take part in the individual evaluation of teachers. It is made of different bodies of inspectors, mirroring the different sorts of schools.

In 2015, a circular assigned them the evaluation of schools. Our missions are still evolving and we are considering them. However, we demand the upholding of individual support and evaluation, alongside the evaluation of schools.

Keywords: Inspectors, evaluation, teachers, schools, authority, career

The French National Education Inspectorate consists of three distinct bodies, corresponding to the different categories of public and private schools under contract (primary schools, colleges, high schools):

- National Education Inspectors in charge of a primary school district (IEN-CCPD),
- National Education Inspectors for secondary schools:
 - o IEN in charge of information and orientation (IEN-IO),
 - o IEN in charge of vocational education for academic subjects (IEN-EG),
 - o IEN in charge of vocational education for technical subjects (IEN-ET).
- Academy inspectors-Regional pedagogical inspectors (IA-IPR) in charge of junior high schools and academic high schools.

Before discussing the missions of the inspectors, let us look at the history of this inspectorate.

A BRIEF HISTORY

In 1802, under the leadership of Emperor Napoleon 1st, the General Inspectorate of National Education (IGEN) was born. The same year, the principle of the state monopoly on education was adopted.

Originally, the three general inspectors who made up this body of management had the mission of reporting on schools and high schools' operation to the government: "They will go through the high schools, will visit them with great care and will enlighten the government on their condition, on their successes or their faults".

In 1835, an inspection of primary education was added to IGEN, to which preschool inspectors (women...) were added. Both merged in 1972 in the new body of departmental inspectors for national education.

At the same time as the creation of departmental inspectors, a new decree established the status of technical education inspectors.

The information and guidance inspectors stem from the vocational guidance inspectors set up in 1956.

In 1962, under the effect of decentralization of power, Chancellors of Academies (regional educational authorities) were given responsibility for the inspection of schools and teachers. In collaboration with IGEN, they coordinate the action of the various inspection bodies.

In 1982 and 1983, laws on decentralization increased the role of local educational authorities by entrusting them with responsibility for the operation of schools: high schools for regions, junior high schools for counties, primary schools for towns.

Since 1989, IGEN, the keystone of National Education, has no longer been solely responsible for the individual rating of teachers, but they ensure permanent monitoring of the functioning of educational system by visiting a representative sample of schools and services.

Individual support and inspection have since been carried out by regional pedagogical inspectors (IPR) and national education inspectors (IEN). IGEN

can nevertheless intervene directly in the inspection of teachers, at the request of the minister, in difficult cases.

WHAT ARE THE MISSIONS OF INSPECTORS TODAY?

Inspectors are the main actors in the evaluation of teachers. They all have the function of implementing the national educational policy. Primary education has approximately one inspector for 350 teachers. In secondary education, an inspector is in charge of 400 teachers in the best of cases - this figure varies according to the subject.

The December 11, 2015, law specifies their missions, into three chapters:

- The mission of inspection, evaluation and training of teachers, educators and school monitors

In order to ensure the quality of the lessons provided, individual inspection is carried out with reference to teamwork. When combined with the evaluation of schools, it can highlight skills and suggest areas for improvement as well as suitable proposals in terms of training.

Inspectors contribute to the initial and continuous training of the personnel. They take part in the design of continuing education plans, with regard to proven needs.

Their role in human resource management is undeniable.

- The contribution to the management of the regional education

As advisers to the Chancellor, inspectors participate in the definition of the regional strategy in its pedagogical dimension. They boost reforms, lead

teams and bring their expertise in the specific subject they manage. Whatever their specificity, they act jointly to guarantee the continuity of teaching.

They contribute to the evaluation of teaching units, by promoting the development of collective self-evaluation approaches.

- Advisers and experts

Inspectors can be advisers to the Chancellor, in various specific missions (digital, orientation, special needs, etc.). They may also manage national or territorial missions, in terms of training maps, professional integration or else. They can bring their expertise to the definition of territorial educational projects, in collaboration with partners.

Our Union is now working on redefining the missions, which are ours. We are claiming for one and only single inspection body, which would lead to the identification of a new unified and redesigned professional identity, open to pedagogical and didactic inter- degrees continuities. "Working together" as a team of inspectors is mentioned, without exception or line of demarcation. There is therefore an urgent need for a decompartmentalization favoring cooperation and complementarity among inspectors.

The single body of inspection is certainly likely to induce productive changes and posture adjustments. Concretely, this presupposes the idea of a less individualistic and collective functioning. Inspectors must work together, in conjunction with head teachers and school principals, this Inspector/Director couple being one of the key elements of this new governance.

In order to allow a better articulation between all the levels of territorial administration, the missions of educational steering, management of the territorial inspectors have to be reinforced. Alongside the heads of institutions, this management must also take into account human interactions with the aim of promoting a school climate that is conducive to learning, better pedagogical consultation, as well as greater sharing of practices and, finally, an evolution of the pedagogical relationship.

It is still a question of considering how this governance will be put in place, how we can enroll in it, all modes which, we are convinced, will in the short term have a substantial influence on the success of all students.

WHAT DOES THE EVALUATION OF TEACHERS CONSIST OF?

When teachers reach a specific scale in their career, they have what is called a career meeting. They have three such main specific meetings, after five years, seven years and fifteen years. The teacher is informed about them at least fifteen days in advance. The meeting consists in a lesson observation by the inspector or by the inspector and the headmaster. Afterwards, the inspector spends a one-hour interview so as to talk about the teacher's practices, in terms of pedagogy and didactics, about his/her involvement in projects and on a global scale in the school. We also talk about the past career and the teacher's projects, as a matter of career development.

Within the limit of six weeks, the teacher meets the headmaster for another one-hour interview.

The teacher then gets online feedback*, with an assesment in eleven skills – five are evaluated by the inspector, three by the headmaster and other three by both of them. This positioning (from « to be strengthened » to « satisfactory », « very satisfactory » and « excellent ») is made complete by two written judgments, one from the inspector and the other one from the headmaster. Both of these judgments should not exceed 2,048 signs.

Finally, the teacher has a delay of one month to write observations. In the end, a global assessment is made from the eleven skills, after a harmonization between all academic subjects, corresponding to quotas, which is not satisfactory to our Union. Indeed, we claim each teacher should be assessed not following quotas but corresponding to their worth.

Between these three main meetings, the inspector and/or his-her policy officer observes lessons for a guidance.

We also organize collective guidance. Each inspector being in charge of a subject gathers the whole team of teachers (for instance all Literature teachers or all Language teachers), so as to exchange for two hours on the way they work together, on their questions, etc.

Two or more inspectors may also organize grouped meetings, for the whole team of teachers or for the teachers of two or three different subjects, depending on specific questions they want to accompany and support them.

HOW DO YOU BECOME AN INSPECTOR IN FRANCE?

All inspectors are recruited via open competition among teachers, guidance or management staff with at least a five-year experience. The competition is open in each specialty (Literature, Math and Physics, History-Geography, Languages, Arts but also vocational subjects). Candidates are first selected on the basis of a report on their activities and professional experience. If selected, they have to pass an oral admission test. At the start of the following academic year, the laureates are assigned to a regional authority as trainees and at the same time follow training at the national training center for management staff in Poitiers (IH2EF). At the end of this year, they are established in their post after the agreement of the Chancellor of the Academy.

HOW ARE INSPECTORS EVALUATED?

The French inspectors' career follows a three-grade scale, linked to their years of experience and expertise.

There have been no defined criteria so far but they are evaluated by the Chancellor.

The salaries correspond to the scale they reached.

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| entretien professionnel | A remplir par l'inspecteur | |
| | Maîtriser les savoirs disciplinaires et leur didactique * | -- Choisir une appréciation -- |
| | Utiliser un langage clair et adapté et intégrer dans son activité la maîtrise de la langue écrite et orale par les élèves * | -- Choisir une appréciation -- |
| | Construire, mettre en oeuvre et animer des situations d'enseignement et d'apprentissage prenant en compte la diversité des élèves * | -- Choisir une appréciation -- |
| | Organiser et assurer un mode de fonctionnement du groupe favorisant l'apprentissage et la socialisation des élèves * | -- Choisir une appréciation -- |
| | Évaluer les progrès et les acquisitions des élèves * | -- Choisir une appréciation -- |
| | A remplir par le chef d'établissement | |
| | Coopérer au sein d'une équipe * | |
| | Contribuer à l'action de la communauté éducative et coopérer avec les parents d'élèves et les partenaires de l'école/l'établissement * | |
| | Installer et maintenir un climat propice aux apprentissages * | |
| | A remplir par l'inspecteur et le chef d'établissement | |
| | Agir en éducateur responsable et selon des principes éthiques * | -- Choisir une appréciation -- |
| | Accompagner les élèves dans leur parcours de formation * | -- Choisir une appréciation -- |
| | S'engager dans une démarche individuelle et collective de développement professionnel * | -- Choisir une appréciation -- |
| | Appréciation générale de l'évaluateur | |
| inspecteur * | | |
| chef d'établissement * | | |