

## FUNCIONES Y COMPETENCIAS PROFESIONALES DE LA INSPECCIÓN EDUCATIVA

## FUNCTIONS AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OF THE EDUCATIONAL INSPECTION

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### Resumen

Este artículo describe, en su primera parte, la evolución de las funciones de la Inspección de Educación, desde su creación en 1849 hasta 2024, es decir, a lo largo de sus 175 años de existencia.

En la segunda, se enumeran y justifican las competencias profesionales (técnicas y transversales) en relación con las funciones de la Inspección de Educación, a partir de las emergentes competencias profesionales que contempla el borrador de Real Decreto (RD) sobre la Inspección de Educación, que está elaborando el Ministerio de Educación, Formación Profesional y Deportes para sustituir al vigente RD 2193/1995, de 28 de diciembre.

Se sugiere, además, el avance de las competencias profesionales dentro del desarrollo profesional de los inspectores, a través de la propuesta de Jesús Manso en el XXIII Encuentro Nacional de Inspectores de Educación (Granada, octubre, 2023).

Por último, se plantean unos puntos de reflexión para el avance y mejora de la práctica profesional de los inspectores de educación.

Palabras clave: *Funciones, competencias profesionales, desarrollo profesional, inspección educativa, inspección de educación primaria, historia de la inspección de educación*

### Abstract

This article describes, in its first part, the evolution of the functions of the Education Inspectorate, from its creation in 1849 to 2024, that is, throughout its 175 years of existence.

In the second, the professional competencies (technical and transversal) are listed and justified in relation to the functions of the Education Inspection, based on the emerging professional competencies contemplated in the draft Royal Decree (RD) on the Education Inspection, which is being prepared. the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sports to replace the current RD 2193/1995, of December 28.

The advancement of professional competencies within the professional development of inspectors is also suggested, through the proposal of Jesús Manso at the XXIII National Meeting of Education Inspectors (Granada, October 2023).

Finally, some points of reflection are raised for the advancement and improvement of the professional practice of education inspectors.

Keywords: *Functions, professional competencies, professional development, educational inspection, primary education inspection, history of education inspection.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This work develops the evolution of the functions of the Education Inspectorate and its relationship with the emerging professional competences, present in the draft Royal Decree (RD) that the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sport is drafting to replace the current RD 2193/1995, of 28 December, which establishes the basic rules for access and the provision of jobs in the Corps of Education Inspectors (CIE). The inspector associations ADIDE and ISNOVAE, the trade union USIE and other professionals have participated in this draft.

The Inspectorate created in 1849 was that of primary education; for secondary education and vocational training, it was not until the second half of the 20th century. For this reason, there is a pre-eminence of the primary education inspectorate, successively called: Primary Instruction Inspectorate (Royal Decree of 30 March 1849), Primary Education Inspectorate (Law of Public Instruction of 1857, known as the Moyano Law), Professional Primary Education Inspectorate (Royal Decree of 2 December 1932), Professional Primary Education Inspectorate (Law 1945 on Primary Education), State Basic Education Inspectorate (Royal Decree 1296/1980, of 19 May), Inspection Function (Law 30 of 1984, on measures for the reform of the Civil Service), Education Inspectorate (LOPEGCE, 1995).

A profession as established as that of education inspectors has not remained stagnant, without adapting or evolving according to the times and circumstances experienced throughout its trajectory, which has been fundamentally marked by three interdependent factors:

**1) The evolution of Spain's political system.** With the ups and downs of the 19th century, from the monarchy to the second republic at the end of the first third of the 20th century, then to the dictatorship and from this to the establishment of democracy in 1978, with a parliamentary monarchy, which continues into the 21st century.

**2) The evolution and reforms of the educational subsystem.** From the creation of a public education system for basic knowledge —reading, writing, counting— with the Moyano Law of 1857, to the important reform of the General Education Law (LGE, 1970) a century later, and no less important reforms of subsequent laws, especially the current one of 2020, modifying the Organic Law of Education (LOE, 2006).

**3) Scientific and technological advances.** In a concise manner, we can imagine what the **evolution of the means of transport** has meant for the inspection profession, having gone from access to schools on foot or on the back of horses or animal-drawn carts to the current access with motorised and electric vehicles; **advances in medicine and industrialisation, which led to the exodus of the rural population to the cities**, which have influenced the inspection profession through schooling, school buildings and the organisation of schools, or **the evolution of technological inventions** related first to the school book, then to audiovisual media and, at the present time, to digitalisation and the challenges of artificial intelligence.

For the development of this work, I have started on the one hand, from the functions that have been assigned to the Inspectorate throughout its 175 years of existence (1849-2024). On the other hand, the main point of reference for the approach to the professional competences of the inspectorate has been the draft Royal Decree on Education Inspection (January 2024 version) and, also, the General Plans of Action of the Inspectorate. The treatment of the professional competences of inspectors is now being addressed in our professional scenario, hence the reflection made at the XXIII National Meeting of Education Inspectors, held in Granada in October 2024, and in this article.

The following sections or blocks will be considered:

- **Differentiation** of related concepts: function, attribution, capacity, competence, competence, key competences and professional competences.
- The evolution of the **functions assigned** to the Education Inspectorate.
- A **proposal for the professional competences** required in the training and performance of the inspection function.

## 2. DIFFERENTIATING CLOSE CONCEPTS: FUNCTION, ATTRIBUTION, CAPACITY, CAPABILITY, COMPETENCE

We are well aware of what the established **functions and attributions** refer to, since we are used to reading about them in different legal texts and discussing them. The term **competence** has reached us in the field of education through vocational training curricula and, especially since 2006, as part of the key competences, as an element of the curricula of non-university education, in accordance with the *Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of the European Union of 18 December 2006* and, later, the *Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018*, on key competences for lifelong learning. The term **ability** has almost always been present, but it is now necessary to differentiate between what it is to be capable and what it is to be competent.

**Function.** The Royal Spanish Academy (RAE) defines a function as a **task** that corresponds to an institution or entity, or to its organs or persons. It is, therefore, the set of tasks and activities assigned and necessary to carry out a specific job. In our case: control, advise, evaluate.

**Attribution.** According to the RAE, it is the **faculty or power** that corresponds to each part of a public or private organisation. In our case, these are the powers given, the instruments that the legal texts grant to the Inspectorate to exercise its functions. Thus, in order to carry out the function

of controlling/evaluating/advising, inspectors can know, supervise and observe all the activities of the centre; examine and check the documentation or be considered as a public authority.

**Capacity.** To have capacity is to be **able to do** something, to have the knowledge, skills and attitudes in an integrated way that make an individual suitable to carry out an activity. To be capable is to have a potential (as a consequence of education, training, attitude...) for action.

**Competence.** It is having capacity (knowledge, skills, attitudes) but also applying and **mobilising** knowledge and qualities to specific and contextualised situations with guarantees of success. According to one of the **meanings of the RAE, the** closest to this concept, it is "expertise, aptitude or suitability to do something or to intervene in a specific matter". In the field of Vocational Training, professional competence is defined as "the set of knowledge and skills that allow the exercise of professional activity in accordance with the requirements of production and employment" (Organic Law 3 of 2022, of 31 March, on the organisation and integration of vocational training, article 2, point 5).

In trying to exemplify the difference between these two terms, capacity and competence, I visualise the concepts of potential energy and kinetic energy from physics. Potential energy (capacity) is the energy of the object that makes it possible for it to move. Kinetic energy (competence) is the object in motion. Capacity is the potentiality to do something, while competence implies an action that, in addition, is shown to be successful in a task or professional field.

There is another meaning of the term *competence*, which is different from the previous one. It occurs in legal texts, when the **competences of a body or institution** are mentioned, and which come to express what that body or institution "can" do, what it is competent and responsible for, its framework of action, differentiating it from what other bodies of the same institution can do. It is a concept closer to capacity and function (function,

**what it must and has** to do legally; capacity, **what it can** do legally, not something else). According to the RAE, the meaning of competence in these legal texts would be " legal scope of attributions that correspond to a public entity or to a judicial or administrative authority".

**Key competences.** According to the definitions given in the Royal Decrees on minimum education, which develop the LOMLOE (2020), these are " performances that are considered **essential** for students to **progress with guarantees of success** in their educational itinerary, and to face the main global and local challenges " .

Taking into account the differentiation of the above terms, we will define what is understood in this work as professional competence.

**Professional competence.** After the analysis and reflection on the theoretical constructs on professional competence by authors such as Veliz (2016), Bunk (1994), Echevarría (2002), González and Wagenaar (2003), González Maura (2006) and Soler Fierrez (2015), the definition proposed in this paper is:

To have professional competence is to **mobilise** the repertoire of knowledge, skills and attitudes that the professional possesses, using them in a given situation and **context**, applying the precise and appropriate ones, in a **dynamic process** that, in turn, builds competence.

It is constructed to the extent that it is used in different situations and contexts, becoming at the same time a factor of flexibility, adaptation and continuous learning in the development of the profession, and can be acquired and further enriched throughout life.

As González Maura points out, on the formation of professional competences (2006):

The conception of professional development as a process of permanent training of the person in a given historical and social

context allows us to understand how professional competence is built and developed gradually and continuously during the training process and subsequent performance of the subject in the profession and leads to an autonomous, ethical, responsible and efficient professional performance (p. 184).

Having made these clarifications, we turn to the functions of the inspectors.

### **3. EVOLUTION OF THE FUNCTIONS ASSIGNED TO INSPECTORS (1849-2024)**

The Inspectorate is an institution with 175 years of life, without counting the valuable antecedents it had in the visitors, overseers and other figures who exercised control over the schools, temporarily and punctually, often without specific training, under royal, ecclesiastical or trade union authority (López del Castillo, 2013; Montero, 2020; Soler, 1995).

Since its creation in 1849, legal texts (laws, decrees, orders, resolutions or instructions) have been establishing its functions, the tasks it had to carry out. The time periods that we can consider in this evolution are:

**1) The beginnings of the Inspectorate (1849-1900).** The institution of inspectors of primary education was created with the Royal Decree of 30 March 1849 and endorsed with the Law of Public Instruction of 1857 (Moyano Law). During this period, the profession was built up, documented for both female inspectors (López del Castillo, 2003) and male inspectors (Alcalá, 2015; Jiménez Eguizábal, 2001).

This construction of the profession coincides with that of public education. This is how Pérez Jiménez and García Ballesteros (2022) put it:



The relationship (...) between the Inspectorate and public education is genetic and umbilical, the former was not only born with the latter, but for it, to establish it in the first place, and then to defend its virtues and social and cultural benefits. In short, to be the guarantor of education as a right (p. 7).

**2. The first third of the 20th century (1900-1936/1939).** The selection of inspectors by competitive examination was ordered and made a reality (1907), followed by the creation of the Women's Inspectorate (1913). Two important decrees regulating the organisation of the Inspectorate were promulgated: that of Altamira in 1913 and that of the Second Republic in 1932. They represent the development and consolidation of the inspection profession.

**3. Franco's dictatorship (1939-1978).** On the one hand, there was a purge of very valuable inspectors, and on the other, the regulation and functioning of the Inspectorate in a society impregnated with Franco's ideology, with significant advances towards the end of the period in the schooling and modernisation of education, as set out in the General Education Act of 1970. Significant is the Decree of 23 November 1967, which approved the Regulations of the State Primary Education Professional Inspectorate, repealing the 1932 Decree of the Second Republic on the Professional Inspectorate of Primary Education, which had remained in force up to that time.

**4. The establishment of democracy (1978-2000).** This was a turbulent period for the Inspectorate, in which it went from permanence in the profession, achieved in the first third of the 20th century, to temporary status (Law 30 of 1984, of 2 August), which took the Inspectorate back to the 19th century and, later, in 1995, it regained its sanity with the creation of the Corps of Education Inspectors (CIE). This period came to an end with the completion of

the full transfer of education to the Autonomous Regions in 2000, in which the current functions of the Inspectorate were established.

**5. The inspection of the autonomous regions and the "war" of the education laws (2000-2024).** With the full transfer of education, the number of inspectorates increased from one to eighteen (17 Autonomous Communities and the MEFD territory -Ceuta, Melilla, Exterior). On the other hand, leaving aside the LODE (1985) and the LOGSE (1990) - the former is still in force and affects the freedom of education -, from 2000 onwards, one education law after another is enacted, each time the political sign of the Spanish government changes (LOCE in 2002, LOE in 2006, LOMCE in 2013 and LOMLOE in 2020). In these laws, the functions of the inspectorate remain substantially unchanged, although in 2020 the **functions of school evaluation and the evaluation and guidance** of the management function are accentuated.

In order to analyse the functions performed in each of these periods, we group them into the following sections:

- 3.1. Surveillance and control functions.
- 3.2. The evaluation function.
- 3.3. Counselling and guidance functions.
- 3.4. Administrative and management functions.

The following are also considered:

- 3.5. The functions of management and teacher training, which accompanied the Inspectorate from its beginnings until the enactment of the LOGSE in 1990.

- 3.1. Surveillance and control functions

The Inspectorate was created in the service of the Government, for the supervision and custody of schools, teachers and everything related to primary education (Moyano Law will refer to it as primary education). Its *raison d'être* is the function of supervision and control. This is expressed in the Royal Decree of 30 March 1849, which created the institution of inspectors:

(...) if the Government is vigilant, if it has the means to know the faults in order to apply correction or punishment, if it keeps those who must serve and help it in constant alarm, inertia disappears, activity and emulation are born, and a path of progressive improvements is entered upon, which in the end lead to the desired perfection, or at least come close to it. The creation of the Inspectors which most of the provinces have requested will give life to primary education and will be one of the means which will contribute most to improving the education of the people (preamble, eleventh paragraph).

Accordingly, the Royal Decree of 20 May 1849, which regulates the first Regulations of the Inspectorate, establishes among the competences of the Provincial Inspectorate: "2. To monitor compliance with the laws, decrees, regulations and other provisions in force relating to primary education, stimulating the zeal of the authorities, denouncing faults and abuses, and making the appropriate complaints to those concerned" (art. 18).

Ramírez Aisa (2023) is categorical in stating that the Education Inspectorate is conceived as an inspectorate, since: "(...) inspectors are the public eye, they not only judge the lawfulness of teachers' actions, but their attention to non-compliance with the norm serves as coercion and self-defence of the Administration, in order to avoid disturbances in its functioning" (pp. 3-4).

This surveillance and control are present throughout all the regulations of the Inspectorate, in all the periods identified at the beginning of this epigraph, through a particular expression, " to ensure compliance with

the laws " (Royal Decree of 1913 of Altamira, Decree of 1932 of the Second Republic and subsequent educational laws -LGE, LOGSE, LOE, LOMLOE), compatible with others, such as:

Comply with and enforce, as a delegate of the higher authority, the legal provisions relating to education (Primary Education Act, 1945).

Verify compliance with legal provisions on (...) (Secondary Education: Decrees 5 May 1954 and 898 of 1963).

Supervision and control reaches its modernity with the term "supervision " , which Decree 2915 of 1967, of 23 November, includes among its functions, albeit linked to technical direction and pedagogical guidance:

Exercise the tasks of **supervision, technical direction and pedagogical guidance** of teaching and school services within the jurisdiction corresponding to their different hierarchical levels, respecting and encouraging the spirit of initiative of Principals and Teachers in their teaching activities (Decree 2915 of 1967, art. 2.2).

Supervising is a term close, if not similar, to inspection and control. According to the RAE dictionary (1992), supervise is "Exercise superior inspection in work carried out by others", and according to María Moliner's *Diccionario de uso del español* (1991, editorial Gredos, volume II), "Exercise general or superior supervision or inspection of a thing". It should be added that supervisory control is not a blind control but has a direction which is the improvement and optimisation of teaching and schooling, as Casanova (1993, pp. 173-174) argues very well.

The LOGSE White Paper (1989) states that "School supervision constitutes an external control mechanism, which throughout history has not always been developed by agents linked to the education systems themselves" (p. 217).

Finally, in relation to the concept of school supervision, the conceptions of Soler Fierrez (1994) and Casanova (2015) should be

mentioned. In his doctoral thesis, the former justifies supervision as an educational science whose object of study is the school system as a whole and whose main goal is to optimise the performance of institutions created for educational purposes. The second identifies inspection and supervision as synonyms, citing as functions of supervision those of informing, advising, mediating, controlling and evaluating.

### 3.2. The evaluation function.

The function of surveillance and control is extended to that of evaluation from the General Education Act (1970), at the end of the third period considered in the evolution of the institution of inspectors, the Dictatorship, coinciding with the emergence of educational evaluation promoted by Tyler in the 1950s. This is how the LGE expresses this function:

Evaluate the functioning of the schools and teachers in their respective areas or in the speciality for which they are responsible, in collaboration with the Institutes of Education Sciences. To this end, it shall consider the guidance and internal inspection activity which, where appropriate, may be established for its centres by the promoting bodies " (art. 142. Uno, d).

While the function of "oversee" is proper to the Inspectorate, that of "evaluating" is assigned to it, not exclusively, but in collaboration and participation with others (first, with the Institutes of Education Sciences, in the LGE and Decree 664 of 1973, of 22 March, on the functions of the Technical Education Inspection Service; later, in the rest of the educational laws (LOGSE, LOPEGCE, LOCE, LOE, LOMCE and LOMLOE), participating with other institutions.

Moreover, the latest law, the LOMLOE, includes evaluation, within the triad "supervise, evaluate and control".

**Control** means verifying, conforming, checking the veracity or accuracy of something, that what is to be done is being done, generally set by the norm and, also, as planned or programmed by the institution (it is or is not being done). It is to have information on whether events are occurring as planned.

**Evaluation** involves making a value judgement by comparing the data collected from a reality with an established value criterion (it is good/not good; it is adequate/not adequate).

It is not only necessary to **verify** that educational events take place as they should, in accordance with regulations and plans, but also to **evaluate**, to make an evaluative judgement as to whether these events are appropriate and pertinent for the educational goals pursued. And this must be done with a methodology and instruments that give validity and reliability to the results of the evaluation.

Normally, when visiting a school, the control is being carried out at all times, whereas evaluation is applied at specific moments, as it requires systematic and rigorous data collection, with valid and reliable instruments, a formulation of value criteria against which the data collected will be compared and an assessment resulting from this comparison, which will be accompanied by a proposal for improvement of the situation or object being evaluated. This is done, for example, when the aim is to evaluate student performance, the good or adequate functioning of teaching teams or departments, the management function, or any other situation subject to evaluation.

In LOMLOE (2020), the evaluation role of inspectors has been intensified and enhanced by the following amendments to LOE (2006):

**Art. 151 LOE.** "Evaluate" has been added to "supervise" and "control" in the function: "a) Supervise, **evaluate** and control, from a pedagogical and organisational point of view, the functioning of educational centres, as well as the projects and programmes they

develop, with respect for the framework of autonomy protected by Organic Law 2/2006, of 3 May".

**Art. 146.2 LOE.** The following text has been incorporated: "The evaluation of the management function of centres, services and programmes shall be carried out by the corps of education inspectors and shall form part of their competences".

However, the general plans of education authorities mainly include supervisory, control and advisory functions, with evaluation functions being much less frequent. An example of the inclusion of these functions is the General Action Plan of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia<sup>1</sup> (2023-2027), which shows how supervision/control/advisory and evaluation functions are diversified in its two priority actions:

- **Supervision** and **counselling** of schools, services, programmes and activities of the education system in accordance with school times.
- **Evaluation** and **monitoring** of a sample of schools, services, programmes and activities in the education system.

Note how supervision and counselling are linked, which is useful for further exploration of the third group of functions.

### 3.3. Counselling and guidance functions

In 1849, the Inspectorate was created with permanent dedication and not as temporary or temporary commissioners, as had been the case previously; but there was no indication that they were entitled to the post or to the irrevocability of their post. Selection was not by competitive examination and, although criteria of publicity and merit were applied,

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<sup>1</sup> Order of 26 July 2023, establishing the General Action Plan of the Andalusian Education Inspectorate for the period 2023-2027. article 9, point 5.

appointments were not exempt from the ups and downs of Spanish politics throughout the 19th century, between conservative and liberal governments.

In spite of this, the discretionary selection of the first inspectors (49, one per province) was successful for the education system, as people with training<sup>2</sup> and intellectual and human maturity were chosen, most of them principals and teachers of teacher training colleges. These 19th century inspectors built the profession, so that the vigilance prescribed in the norm was impregnated with pedagogical intentionality, as Jiménez Eguizábal (2001) expresses it:

[...] from the point of view of the reports of the inspection visits themselves, a pedagogical intentionality is projected at the end of the century in the inspection function, which is corroborated and reflected in the correspondence books of the schools themselves. At the fin-de-siècle frontier, the initial concerns about compliance with the ordinances and the supervision of activities were transformed into didactic and organisational orientations (p. 399).

In this regard, Alcalá (2015) in his doctoral thesis recounts the instructions of an inspector to a teacher in 1861 and makes the following comment:

All the improvements that were proposed were didactic in nature, clearly pointing out the methods to be used and the subjects to which most effort should be devoted. A significant example of this is that, during the visit, the inspector himself gave the teacher a demonstration of how to use different methods to teach the pupils to read, write and count (p. 390).

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<sup>2</sup> The inspectors appointed were required to have a higher education and accredited experience: they had to have studied for three years at the Central School or at any of the Higher Teacher Training Colleges and to have worked for at least five years as teachers. At the Central School, the new inspectors had been imbued with Pablo Montesino's ideas on public instruction, as he was its first director and remained so until his death (1839-1849).



And this behaviour is not surprising, since Alcalá expresses his *raison d'être* at another point in his thesis:

The instructions on the conduct of school visits place the inspector at the epicentre of instruction, with the teacher, the materials, methods, textbooks, examinations and pupils' progress. This exhaustive knowledge of what was going on in the classrooms allowed them to fulfil one of their main functions, which was none other than to advise teachers on methodological aspects that could help them to improve their teaching (p. 375).

In turn, Castán Esteban (2019) points out the conception of the inspector held by Rafael Altamira, Director General of Primary Education and architect of the Royal Decree on the organisation of the Inspectorate in 1913: "An inspector who should influence, advise and encourage teachers, reminding them of the importance of their work, disseminating new methodological and school organisation trends" (p. 4).

Therefore, even though we have affirmed that surveillance and control are the *raison d'être* of the Inspectorate, we also affirm that advice and guidance, support and help, have been present in the norm and in the work of the inspectors, as a complement to control, as the front and the back of the inspection function.

This is not surprising, since the purpose of this vigilance, as stated in the preamble to the Royal Decree creating the inspectors (1849), was to improve the education of the people.

Like the surveillance and control function, the advice and guidance function is present in all legal texts regulating inspection functions and in all the periods identified at the beginning of this section.

Already, in the first regulations of the Inspectorate (RD of 20 May 1849), during the first period considered in its trajectory, one of its functions is: "To ensure that teachers are punctually paid and treated with due

decorum" (art. 18, 3º). And one of its attributions is "To advise teachers, to indicate to them the methods and systems they should follow for the most perfect teaching, the books they should use, and to instruct them in everything they do not know, or to indicate to them the means of perfecting their knowledge" (art. 20, 6º).

From my professional experience, I am a witness, like most inspectors, that it has always been present in our actions, with the striking exception of some inspectors who understood or understand that inspectors have to detect and say what is not well done, but do not have to give advice on what needs to be done to channel and guide a proper solution.

I end with the declarations of the Minister of National Education, Ruiz Giménez, in the period of the Dictatorship, which were reproduced in the bulletin of the Brotherhood of Primary Education Inspectors (HIEP, 1953):

In primary education, less than in any other administrative branch, the word "inspection" does not correspond to a negative concept of pure control and supervision. Primary school inspectors are not exclusively, or even primarily, inspectors. They have, and increasingly carry out, a creative task of guidance, assistance and encouragement of the school and the teacher. For this reason, the improvements envisaged for this body in the draft law are no less just and deserved than those for teachers (p. 4).

It is noteworthy that this way of seeing the Inspectorate (guidance, assistance and encouragement of the school and the teacher) corresponds to that embodied in the legislation of the Second Republic, influenced by the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (ILE) and the socialist party (*Decree of 2 December 1932, de Inspección Profesional de Primera Enseñanza*), with Fernando de los Ríos Urruti as Minister of Public Instruction and Fine Arts.

### 3.4. Administrative or management functions

From their creation until the 1970s, they were diverse and abundant. The LGE (1970) derived quite a few of them to the Provincial Delegations, created two years earlier (Decree 2538 of 1968) and endorsed in the LGE itself.

With the LOGSE (1990), the function of participation in the planning of schooling needs and teacher training disappeared. There must have been some doubt about this, as the LOGSE White Paper (1989, point 32) still cites these as being the role of the Inspectorate.

These two functions are last regulated by **RD 1524 of 1989, of 15 December**, in article 2:

Two. To collaborate in educational reforms, teacher training activities, pedagogical renewal processes and experimental programmes, as well as to participate in their dissemination, monitoring and evaluation.

Five. Collaborate with the planning units in the study of the educational needs of each province.

Until the 1970 law (LGE), the functions related to management are:

- Statistical studies, studies of educational needs (i.e. school enrolment) and updating of the school population<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> **RD of 20 May 1849.** To investigate the needs of primary education, in order to propose to the provincial authorities and the government as many improvements as they deem appropriate. 7º. Compile statistics on primary education establishments, in accordance with the models sent by the Directorate General (art. 18. 1<sup>st</sup>).

**Decree 2915 of 1967.** Carry out and keep up to date a detailed study of the school population (...). 16. Collect, refine and prepare statistical data on primary education and cultural promotion of adults in the field of primary education (art. 2.3).

**LGE (1970).** Collaborate with the Planning Services in the **study of educational needs** and in the drawing up and updating of the school map of the areas where it exercises its function, as well as carry out research concerning the educational problems of these areas (art. 142. One, b).

- Management and processing of teachers' files: transfer competitions, vacancies, complaints, exchanges, leave of absence, rewards (vote of thanks), disciplinary corrections (reprimands, warnings).
- Authorisation of the official use of the Primary School Book and presidency of the Examining Committees for the award of the Primary School Certificate.
- In school construction plans, assumption of the governing, advisory and executive functions entrusted to it, without prejudice to the competence attributed to the Provincial School Construction Boards and their services.
- Organisation of the circulating library service and of school and post-school activities, as well as those to protect school attendance: school camps and school preserves, school cloakrooms, school canteen -School Food and Nutrition Service (SEAN), school transport. SEAN-, school transport.
- Participation in the selection of textbooks, furniture and school material or in examination boards and tribunals.
- Issuing reports and processing the creation and authorisation of centres, their transformation and temporary closure or suppression.

The current Inspectorate has functions related to schooling, participation in teacher selection tribunals and the issuing of reports on various issues requested by provincial or territorial Directorates (accreditation of teachers for teaching, creation and suppression of schools, grants, etc.).

### 3.5. The role of teacher training and development

The function of teacher training and development deserves its own section, due to the direct and close relationship it has had with the work of

the Inspectorate, at least until the LOGSE (1990), when it disappeared from the legal text.

Concern for teacher training and the participation of the Inspectorate in this task began very early on. It is logical that this should be the case since, for the Administration and the inspectors, the improvement of instruction and teaching was an important premise in schooling; hence, the pursuit of better initial teacher training and, in addition, further skill development of practising teachers.

This function was lost with the LOGSE (1990), as already indicated, and continues in subsequent laws. It should be borne in mind that, prior to the LOGSE, the Ministry of Education had created its own training support for this task in 1984, the Teachers' Centres (CEP), with the brief antecedent of the Study and Exchange Circles for Pedagogical Renewal (CEIRES) in 1983, with these two institutions having relevant differences in their conceptualisation and dependence.

The CEIRES (Círculos de Estudio e Intercambio para la Renovación Pedagógica) [Study and Exchange Circles for Pedagogical Renewal] were created by Order of 3 August 1983, nine months after the beginning of the socialist government of Felipe González, with Blanca Guelbenzu as Director General of Basic Education (DGEB). The CEP were created by Royal Decree 2112 of 14 November 1984, fifteen months later, with the same government and a different head of the DGEB. In the CEIRES, the Inspectorate will be its driving force; in the CEP, it is only indirectly mentioned:

**CEIRES** "First. They are constituted as a group of Pre-school, General Basic Education, Adult Continuing Education and Special Education teachers for the improvement, exchange of experiences and updating of the exercise of their teaching function".

"Sixth. The CEIRES will report to the Provincial Director who, through the Basic Education Inspectorate, will exercise the functions

of stimulation, advice, general coordination, evaluation of results and economic control of the CEIRES".

**CEP.** "Art. 1. The Teachers' Centres are preferential instruments for the further training of teachers and the promotion of their professionalism, as well as for the development of pedagogical renewal activities and the dissemination of educational experiences, all aimed at improving the quality of teaching".

"Art. 3. The Teacher Training Centres shall depend on the Provincial Directorate of Education and Science in whose territorial area they are located, without prejudice to the functions of supervision and coordination in matters of teacher training that correspond to the competent bodies of the Ministry of Education and Science.

In the study of this training and development function, two lines of involvement of the inspectors can be observed which are no longer among their current functions:

**Initial training.** The Royal Decree of 1849 already provided for inspectors to teach in teacher training colleges, institutions which prepared future teachers. Teacher training colleges and inspectorates remained united in this training pathway until the 1970 law (LGE), when teacher training colleges were incorporated into universities and renamed Escuelas Universitarias del Profesorado de EGB [University Schools for Teachers of Primary and Secondary Education]. From then on, not only did they separate their paths, but they went their separate ways as if they were strangers.

**In-service training or in-service training.** The first precedents date back to the 19th century, when summer holidays were regulated in 1887 and included teacher training activities by inspectors (Pedagogical conferences). Then came the Centros de Colaboración Pedagógica [Pedagogical Collaboration Centres] in 1932, with the

Second Republic, which remained in force beyond the period of the Dictatorship.

In addition, in 1955 and 1958, two didactic bodies were created: the COD (Centro de Orientación Didáctica) [Didactic Guidance Centre] or CODEM (Centro de Orientación Didáctica de Enseñanza Media) [Secondary School Didactic Guidance Centre] and the CEDODEP (Centro de Documentación y Orientación Didáctica de Enseñanza Primaria) [Centre for Documentation and Didactic Guidance in Primary Education], with the majority participation of inspectors, which were responsible for supporting pedagogical training and providing information on legal and pedagogical changes, through publications, study meetings and short courses.

CEDODEP guided the training activities that inspectors were to carry out in their areas, through the aforementioned Centres for Pedagogical Collaboration and the magazine *Vida Escolar*, which reached all schools in the country. It also carried out important tasks such as the elaboration of the 1965 National Questionnaires.

**As a summary** of this section on the evolution of the functions of the Inspectorate, we conclude with a few words by Ramírez Aisa on the state and administrative model created with the Royal Decree of 30 March 1849:

Seen from a historical perspective, we can speak of the triumph of a state and administrative model that has withstood the passage of time in the face of profound crises. It has survived in its essential parts, even though the political system has moved from authoritarianism to democracy (pp. 60-61).

I would like to add a specific reflection for each of the functions analysed.

While their functions remain similar, their content varies considerably as a result of adaptation to changes in society and in the education system itself.

The functions of supervision, control and counselling continue to be strong pillars underpinning the inspection function. It is true that in order to carry out counselling, it is currently essential to have a competence in relevant knowledge and strategies for seeking knowledge, in order to satisfy the needs and expectations of teachers and schools, and the inspector sometimes stakes his or her prestige on this.

The evaluation function needs to evolve, and not remain a mere comparator of the evaluations of the education system (international or national), especially after the strengthening of this function in the LOMLOE, specified in the triad "supervise, evaluate, control" and in the assignment of the competence of evaluation of the management function of centres, programmes and services to the Corps of Education Inspectors (CIE).

Different inspectors have emphasised this strengthening of the evaluation function, endowing it with different perspectives and qualities. Thus, among others, the following are cited:

Casanova (2015) argues for a shift from a finalist evaluative model to a formative evaluative model:

I am convinced that if the evaluation model (in many cases only verifying, negative, classifying, definitive, with little virtuality for real improvement...) is changed and transformed into a valid tool to improve educational work in general (in the functioning of the centre, in the teaching model, in student learning, in the active and positive participation of families and other social agents, in the exercise of management...), both images (evaluation/supervision) will change and become accepted and assumed as essential means to achieve the desired educational quality (p. 13)....), both images (evaluation/monitoring) will change and become accepted and



assumed as essential means to achieve the desired educational quality (p. 13).

Fernández Garrido (2019) postulates evaluation as a fundamental strategy in the achievement of quality education: "Achieving the optimisation of the performance of all the elements of the system, through the improvement of results" (p. 121).

Rodríguez Bravo, in "Desarrollo estratégico para una adecuada organización interna" (2021), states in the second of his conclusions:

From the study of educational models in comparative law and Spanish law, it can be deduced that in recent years there has been a general tendency to seek greater autonomy for schools as a means of achieving quality in education. This greater autonomy also implies the need to be accountable for the management carried out and the results obtained, which may to a large extent force the inspectorate to rethink its work, strengthening its advisory and external evaluation functions (p. 98).

Pérez Jiménez and García Ballesteros (2022) consider that evaluation should be a relevant part of the inspector's work, although they assign two particularities to it: "(...) informing citizens about the functioning of the education system and schools in all its aspects and, at the same time, an evaluation that leads to real, internalised and sustainable changes" (p. 17).

With regard to the administration and management functions, although they have theoretically disappeared from the legal text, there are still some tasks that inspectors believe should give way to a greater weight of the evaluation function, due to its great potential in the professional field of inspection. Esteban Frades (2019) states that "the inspectorate does not fulfil the fundamental role assigned to it by law, as it occupies a lot of time in bureaucratic and management tasks" (p. 24).

For the functions related to the training of teachers and education managers which, in fact, are carried out by many inspectors, I believe that on most occasions they are a valuable reference for the educational community, so these activities should be more visible, which would result in a greater impact and recognition of the Education Inspectorate.

#### **4. PROPOSAL FOR PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF INSPECTORS**

We come to the last block of contents, perhaps the most delicate, since professional competences appear in our context and oblige us to investigate the competences required of education inspectors, both in their preparation and training and in the performance of their duties.

The LOGSE White Paper (1989) already made a generic reference to the professional competence of inspectorates. It indicates how this competence is the main source of legitimisation of their work by educational agents, who find in them an efficient support in the resolution of their difficulties and an element of verification of progress in the performance of the educational system (p. 217).

We recall, in this respect, what we understand by the professional competence of the Education Inspectorate:

Application and mobilisation, with guarantees of success, the necessary and precise knowledge, skills and attitudes to concrete and contextualised situations in the exercise of the profession of inspector.

We will first identify the professional competences in the draft Royal Decree on Inspection, then the professional competences derived from the functions that the regulations assign to the Inspectorate and, finally, the professional development of inspectors through the competences.

##### 4.1. Professional competences in the draft Royal Decree on Inspection

At the moment, there is a special emphasis on the incorporation of professional competences into the new Royal Decree on Inspection, in which USIE and other groups of inspectors and professionals are participating. In the draft Royal Decree on Inspection (January, 2024), we find explicit references in articles 28.2 and 31.1.

Art. 28. Training activities.

2. The Education Administrations shall promote a **practical approach** to training **based on the improvement of the performance** of the functions and attributions of educational inspection, and **oriented towards the acquisition of professional competences** specific to educational inspection, including those established in article 32.

Art. 32. Professional qualification.

1. Education administrations shall promote the updating and improvement of the professional qualifications of education inspectors.

2. The Education Administrations, within the scope of their competences, may orientate the training plans of the Education Inspectorate towards the acquisition of professional competences inherent to the proper performance of the inspectorate's work, among which are to be found:

- a) **Scientific competences.**
- b) **Inspection management competence.**
- c) **Personal competences.**

Among the scientific competences, pedagogical competence, knowledge and application of regulations, knowledge of administration, digital competence and knowledge of languages are identified and described.

Among the competences for the management of inspection work, the following are identified and described: the work and dynamisation of teams, mediation, supervision techniques and strategies, planning and preparation of the inspection visit (registration and follow-up, report, taking of minutes and other documents); techniques for advising the educational community, evaluation techniques, the procedures in which it participates (schooling, selection and renewal of headmasters and headmistresses, evaluation and training of trainee teachers, planning).

Among the personal competencies, empathy, planning and time management skills with optimisation of productivity, responsibility and leadership are identified.

4.2. Professional competences derived from the Inspectorate's functions.

Different authors such as González and Wagenaar (2003). Veliz (2016) and Piñel (2019) propose the classification of professional competences into two types: technical or specific and transversal.

**Technical or specific competencies (hard skills)** are associated with the successful performance of a given profession: they are specific to that profession. They cover the mastery of any necessary knowledge and skills, without which the functions of the profession cannot be performed.

**Soft skills** are made up of knowledge, skills and attitudes that may be common to other work environments and can be put into practice in different professions.

Thus, for the Education Inspectorate, taking into account the functions assigned to it by the regulations, the following integrated

competences are proposed for each of the two types of professional competences (technical, transversal).

#### 4.2.1 Technical or specific competences

**Scientific and pedagogical competence.** As education is the Inspectorate's field of work, the inspector needs to be competent in up-to-date knowledge and in the application of pedagogical, didactic and organisational knowledge to specific situations and contexts, in their corresponding areas: classroom, centres (management and organisation), educational programmes and services. By virtue of their own name, education inspector, and functions limited to educational centres, programmes and services, the inspector must be an expert in education.

**Regulatory competence.** From the function of ensuring compliance with regulations in educational institutions and ensuring compliance with and application of the principles and values set out in educational laws, inspectors must have knowledge of administrative and educational regulations, in accordance with the context, and know how to apply them appropriately in specific situations. Specific areas of this competence are: the educational system, the educational administration, the curriculum, the organisation and functioning of schools, evaluation in general and the evaluation of the elements of the educational system, evaluation of educational centres, programmes and services.

**Competence in the supervision, monitoring and evaluation** of schools, school programmes and services, from a pedagogical and organisational point of view. Derived from the assigned function of supervising, monitoring and evaluating, inspectors must know and have an efficient use of techniques, instruments and strategies that are necessary, precise and appropriate to the standard and the context. The purpose of this function is not only to ensure that the standard is complied with but, fundamentally, to collaborate in its continuous improvement, which is why

the inspectorate must know and know how to apply strategies conducive to this improvement, stimulating and accompanying the centres.

**Competence in providing advice, guidance and information** to the various sectors of the educational community and, specifically, to management teams, in the exercise of their rights and the fulfilment of their obligations, especially in the field of school coexistence, mediation processes and in situations of conflict, such as bullying. Derived from functions f) and h) of Art. 151 of the LOE, this competence involves knowing and applying - to the context and situation - the necessary and precise techniques of counselling, guidance and information in the educational and organisational field. Fields: educational system, curriculum, planning, organisation, evaluation...

**Competence in carrying out the inspection visit.** This competence is derived from the attributions and powers that the law gives inspectors to exercise their functions (art. 153, LOE), and is one of the hallmarks of the Inspectorate, as attested to by its historical trajectory. It includes the knowledge and effective management of strategies, techniques and instruments for: **a)** planning and preparation of the inspection visit, **b)** carrying out the visit (observation, interview, taking of minutes, etc.), **c)** post-visit activities: registration and follow-up, issuing reports, preparation of administrative documents specific to the inspection function such as requirements, notices, reviews or summons, as well as their electronic processing.

**Competence in the procedures in which the inspectorate participates.** Derived from the function of reporting (art. 151, g) and from the powers that may be given to them by the education authorities (art. 153, f) for their participation in certain procedures, inspectors must know and apply the knowledge, techniques and professional attitudes specific to those procedures in which they participate, such as the schooling of pupils, the

selection and renewal of headmasters and headmistresses, the assessment and training of trainee teachers or the planning of needs.

#### 4.2.2. Cross-cutting competences

Although the transversal competences are common to those required in other professions, they must be applicable to the field of inspection.

**Digital competence.** Nowadays, this competence is required in almost every profession. In the work of the inspector it is equally necessary. Therefore, apart from general knowledge and use of computers and general computer programs, it is necessary to know and use the different programs, platforms and applications existing in the field of their educational administration and in the inspectorate. They must also be able to manage the information they are responsible for in their field of work: archiving, retrieval and communication.

**Communicative competence.** The Inspectorate is involved in frequent and diverse oral and written communicative situations: face-to-face and telephone conversations and interactions, meetings, interviews, speeches at ceremonial events and training presentations, mediation situations between parties with conflicting positions, e-mails, official letters, documents, reports, etc. Therefore, the inspector's communicative competence includes knowledge and practice of the four communicative skills: oral and written, comprehension and expression. This competence includes knowing how to say, write, relate and argue, emotional self-control, empathy, active listening, appropriate gestural communication, contextual understanding of what is said and read, credible and enthusiastic transmission, the ability to analyse and synthesise and information management.

**Competence in foreign languages (one or more) and, where appropriate, in the co-official language.** The co-official language is compulsory in the Autonomous Regions where this is regulated. In a global

and intercommunicated world, it is desirable to consider linguistic competence in at least one foreign language, as it opens doors in terms of scientific updating and communication with other groups of inspectors. Linguistic competence in a foreign language is already systematised at a general level, in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In the case of including at least one foreign language in the inspector's professional competence, it would be necessary to specify which level of competence would be required (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2).

**Competence in teamwork.** The regulations on the organisation and functioning of the Inspectorate include a variety of meetings to inform, shape, coordinate and evaluate the actions that contribute to the aims of the Education Inspectorate. In this competence, the cohesion of the team, the group and its efficiency in the tasks it undertakes are important. To this end, one must be competent in the knowledge and incorporation into their way of working of the factors that contribute to the growth of the team, such as: active listening, empathy, the practice of verbal courtesy, valuing the skills and knowledge of each team member, facilitating interrelationships, solving or channelling conflicts that may arise, debating ideas in the face of attacking the person, respecting and summarising interventions, responsibility in the tasks assigned.

**Planning and organisational competences.** Inspectorate services regulate the tasks of inspectors by means of multi-annual and annual plans and, in turn, their organisation is regulated by detailed rules, so that it is clear that planning and organisation are highly valued in the Inspectorate. These competences are necessary and appropriate and this implies being competent in those elements that form part of the planning and organisational process, both of the Inspectorate itself and of the educational centres and programmes, such as: drafting objectives and formulating strategies and lines of action based on needs and realistic diagnoses, identifying tasks and projects leading to the objectives, dates of completion,



control points, setting priorities and methods of monitoring and evaluation. For the execution of the plan: identification of actions and human and technical resources and their consequent distribution/organisation of tasks (work groups, people in charge, times, etc.).

**Competence in problem solving and decision making.** An important part of the inspector's job is to solve problems (related to management, teachers, parents, pupils) by applying normative and pedagogical criteria. This competence implies the knowledge and application, necessary and adjusted to the context, of knowledge, techniques and attitudes in relation to problem solving and decision-making, following the process of action in this type of situation: delimitation of the problem, objective data collection, detailed analysis, consideration of alternative solutions (taking into account their consequences), reasoned selection of the alternative, communication to the parties and its acceptance.

**Competence in the assumption of responsibilities.** Important consequences can be derived from the actions and reports of the inspectors, which are comparable to the relevance of their responsibility. To be competent in the assumption of responsibilities is to apply their professional knowledge and to act analysing the consequences of their decisions, through a careful exercise of their functions at all times, manifesting technical, legal and ethical solvency in their procedures and proposals, transmitting involvement, a sense of duty and credibility.

In addition to the competences considered, a series of attitudinal characteristics can be listed, such as restlessness, curiosity and autonomous learning, flexibility and adaptation to new situations, proactivity, knowing how to live with uncertainty, knowing how to motivate and maintaining an ethical commitment to the profession.

All these competences and professional characteristics constitute a whole, a whole that makes up the leadership of the inspector, as an influential professional in the educational community and in the educational

administration, because they are recognised as a human, technical and legal authority.

Competences + professional characteristics = LEADERSHIP
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4.3. The professional development of the Inspectorate through the development of its professional competencies.

Professional development involves lifelong learning, a reflection of professional practice, which integrates regulations and the professional's own expectations, in such a way that it advances the profession towards its identity, recognition and social prestige. According to Miranda Padilla, A.M., Hernández de la Rosa, M.A. & Hernández Luque, E. (2015), professional development is a process "where key attitudes and skills are formed for success, not only in training but also in professional practice" (p. 113, second paragraph).

Jesús Manso, Dean of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at the Autonomous University of Madrid, presented us with his dissertation on this subject at the XXIII National Meeting of Education Inspectors (Granada, 25-27 October 2023), from which I select some of the notes taken as I agree with his proposal and consider that it may be a good way forward in this emerging field of the professional competences of the Inspectorate. The content of his paper is included in a later article in this issue of *Supervisión* 21, to which I refer.

Jesús Manso proposes professional development in three dimensions: lengthwise, breadthwise and depthwise.

Lengthwise development includes the elements of professionalisation, which are: **a)** initial training and access (more explicit training? enabling masters?); **b)** professional induction (what happens in the first years of incorporation, how to provide the necessary support?); **c)**

lifelong learning, which includes going beyond current courses and seminars; **d)** the professional career, which is currently flat and should be deployed (levels, salaries, performance evaluation, contribution to schools and the education system as a whole), and **e)** performance evaluation geared towards continuous improvement, integrating knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Breadthwise development includes developing, from the Inspectorate's functions, **the competency framework**, integrating knowledge, skills and attitudes of each, with their observable, scalable and contextualised performances. The framework is more than a set of competences, it is open and not immutable, with levels of achievement (from A1 to C2) throughout the professional development and with its competency description (rubric).

In-depth development is related to identity, prestige and social recognition. Jesús Manso understands that inspectors have achieved these. For this reason, he suggests that the educational inspectorate should take advantage of its depth to advance in both length and breadth. This progress requires two characteristics that the Inspectorate must have: autonomy and independence in relation to the Administration. A certain degree of autonomy, with the possibility of participating in the construction of educational policies. Independence to express their reflections, as a result of their knowledge of educational reality and regulations.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The evolution of the functions of the Inspectorate over these 175 years of existence has been analysed, a proposal has been made for professional competences that can provide a successful response to the execution of these functions and a path of professional development has been suggested, as pointed out by Jesús Manso in his presentation at the XXIII USIE National Meeting in Córdoba (October 2023).

We have seen how, among the functions of supervision-control, evaluation and assessment based on the regulations and underlying pedagogical conceptions, that of evaluation is not sufficiently present in the Action Plans, despite its strengthening in the last Education Law enacted, the LOMLOE (2020).

On the other hand, the Education Administrations, the School Community and also Society look to the Education Inspectorate and expect from it actions that help to solve the delicate educational problems of all kinds that arise on a daily basis. It is worth asking whether the "institution of inspectors", with an average of 20 schools and 1,500 teachers per inspector, is capable of providing this response and what path, road or highway can lead to it.

Among the possible ways forward, one of them is to increase the number of inspectors (or to create a sub-inspection in the style of the Tax Inspectorate, an experience that has existed in the educational inspectorate under the name of "collaborators"), and another is to advance in the professional field, through: (a) making the strengthening of the evaluation function a reality at the expense of bureaucratic administrative tasks still performed by inspectors, and (b) making the professional competences of inspectors a reality in their initial training and selection, in their induction period to the profession and in their professional career.

In order to realise and advance in the professional competencies of inspectors, which are necessary to give an adequate response to the existing expectations of the Education Inspectorate, it will be appropriate to ask ourselves some questions, just as I am sure previous inspectors have asked themselves throughout these 175 years of life.

**1. Is the educational inspectorate useful to society, to the administration, to the educational community?** The actions of inspectors must be useful: with their reports and other information actions, with the resolution of problems or their channelling in such a way that they serve to

move forward, with the guidance and advice needed by the Administration and the educational community, and also with the proposal of reasoned sanctions when necessary.

**2. Is the work of inspectors valued and recognised?** Although this is the case in some quarters, perhaps we need to make our work more visible, be more efficient and contribute to a social image that is currently somewhat blurred in some sectors. It would not only help us to have a relevant place in the social imaginary, but also to strengthen motivation for the profession.

**3. The inspector is a legal authority, but is he also a technical authority?** Third entrance in the RAE defines authority as "prestige and credit that is recognised to a person or institution for its legitimacy or for its quality and competence in some matter". The inspector must be an authority not only for his legitimacy, but also for his professional competence.

**4.** In the school visit, the inspector's competences come into play: **is the preparation and execution of the visit as careful as it should be, and in the subsequent actions,** are the experiences of teachers who are new to the inspection function taken into account?

**5.** In times of change and uncertainty, **should innovation and research be at the heart of inspectors' concerns and work?**

- ✓ Giving oxygen, accompanying the good practices and innovations observed in the centres.
- ✓ Promoting known good practices and innovations in their visits or in other situations in schools, classrooms, cloisters.
- ✓ Developing innovations that they have been able to design on their own or together with others, as a result of their continuous reflection and development, in short, of their professional competence and development.

**6. Can multiplicative synergies be established with others?**

We have the universities, including the teacher training colleges, we have the schools, so why are educational theory and practice so far apart?

One characteristic of professional development and professional competences is that they are not exhausted in initial training or in selection (competitive examination) but are present and enriched throughout life. Professional competences are built, renewed and strengthened through experience, combining the application of knowledge with the discovery of different paths and ways of acting, adapted to the new realities that we encounter.

The profession of inspector is a creative profession, not a monotonous one, with all that it implies in terms of research and enquiry, method, initiative, resilience, empathy and living with uncertainty and change.

The research by Doural García, A. C., Estévez Blanco, I., and González Sanmamed, M., (2023) on the motivation of inspectors to train leads to optimism. One of their conclusions is that the driving force behind inspectors' training is the desire to update themselves, to be better professionally, to feel more satisfied with their work and to be able to innovate in the development of their profession (p. 73).

Let us make the construction of our profession a reality:

**TO IMPROVE, TO MOVE FORWARD IN ORDER TO REMAIN**

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