

**Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria
(ESSPIN)**

Quality Assurance - position paper

Doc. No.: ESSPIN 031

May, 2009

Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations	iii
Introduction.....	1
The rationale for quality assurance inspection	1
The philosophy and principles behind quality assurance inspection.....	2
Supporting inputs	11
Policy and planning for institutional organisational change towards new agency at federal and state level.....	11
Capacity building of inspectors and schools by setting up interim inspection groups ready to begin a quality assurance inspection cycle with training, processes etc.....	11
Managing quality assurance systems.....	11
Activities - Summary.....	13

Acronyms and Abbreviations

DVD	Digital Video Disc
ESSPIN	Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria
FIS	Federal Inspection Service
LGA	Local Government Area
NCE	National Council on Education
NAEQA	National Agency for Education Quality Assurance
SBMC	School-Based Management Committees
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board

Introduction

The rationale for quality assurance inspection

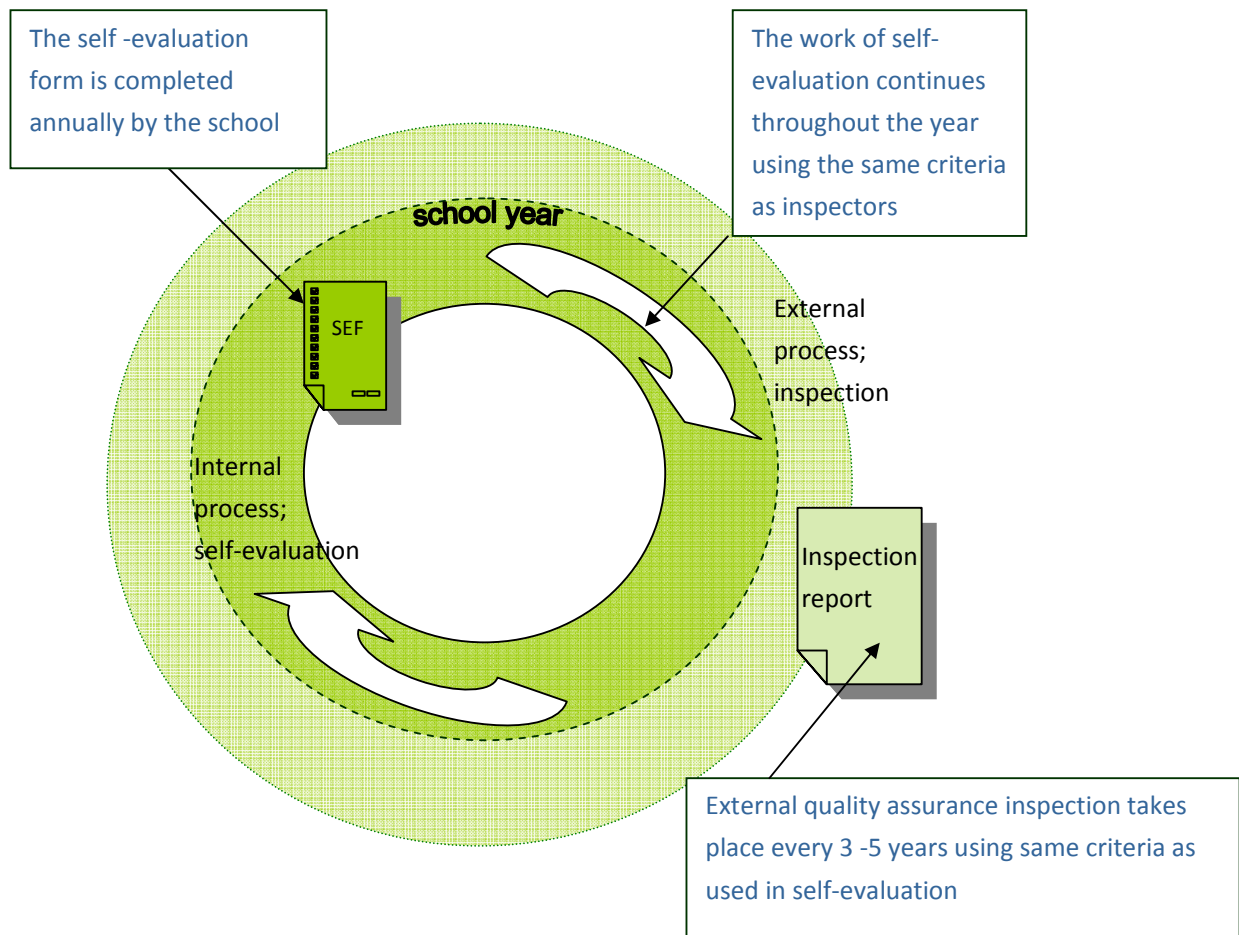
1. School inspection in Nigeria has, over time, become increasingly ineffective and irrelevant to the process of improving education. The history for this is well documented elsewhere. To support the political and popular desire to offer Nigerian children a productive and useful education, inspection must change. Thus, the focus of ESSPIN support is on reforming inspection to concentrate on quality rather than just compliance to laws, rules and procedures. The inspection process and the attitudes and practices of those involved in this process need complete overhaul to enable this change. Currently, those working in and with schools are reluctant to take responsibility for education quality blaming lack of resources and other problems.
2. The term quality assurance inspection is used to indicate a change from the many different types of inspection activity that proliferate in Nigeria carried out by a variety of different Federal and state agencies. To successfully make the change from old practice to quality assurance inspection the process of inspection needs to be simple and uniform across Federal and States. Those who carry out inspection must work to a similar standard.
3. The focus of quality assurance inspections is the Nigerian child and his or her achievement. Therefore inspections should emphasise collection of evidence on the impact of schooling on pupils' achievements.
4. The new quality assurance inspection process requires those working in schools to accept some responsibility for the quality of education provided. This will be achieved by developing the notion of whole school inspection where self-evaluation processes and school development planning play integral parts in the quality assurance inspection process.
5. The new QA inspection process will enable the money, time, resources and personnel, currently being ineffectively used on inspection, to be much better used.
6. A more lasting goal, identified in the Federal Minister of Education's Road Map, is to establish a National Agency for Education Quality Assurance (NAEQA). ESSPIN will support the development of NAEQA as a means of coordinating and driving policy and processes of quality assurance at Federal and State level. This would subsume all the varied types of current inspection and inspectors towards the single activity of quality assurance inspection linked to school self-evaluation.

Approach and methodology

The philosophy and principles behind quality assurance inspection

7. Quality assurance inspection can be defined by the classic QA definition “a planned and systematic set of activities where you check the quality of a process or product”. It identifies a range of activities that combine to pursue improvement for any learner. These activities include school self-evaluation (encouraging the school leaders to be quality assurance inspectors in their own school taking responsibility for improvements) and external inspection, (see figure 1 below). Both activities use the same criteria and judgements to focus on the quality of learning rather than compliance to regulations or the quantity of resources, as has been the practice of inspection in the past. Past inspection practice encouraged those in school to believe improvement could only come from an external source. It could happen if someone more powerful or influential put resources or money into the school. Quality assurance inspection combined with self-evaluation passes some of the responsibility for improvement to those working with a school.
8. The guiding principles being used are:
 - The findings of quality assurance evaluation contribute to improvement;
 - The process of quality assurance promotes inclusion of all learners;
 - Quality assurance is carried out openly with those being evaluated;
 - All quality assurance evaluation uses the same quality standards and quality indicators must be made known to all stakeholders;
 - The findings of quality assurance evaluations are valid, reliable and consistent;
 - The outcome of evaluations must inform state policy, planning and training.
9. The principles are important because they can be used to check whether developments are true to QUALITY ASSURANCE and therefore likely to keep the focus on improvement in quality.

The relationship between self-evaluation and the quality assurance inspection cycle (figure 1)



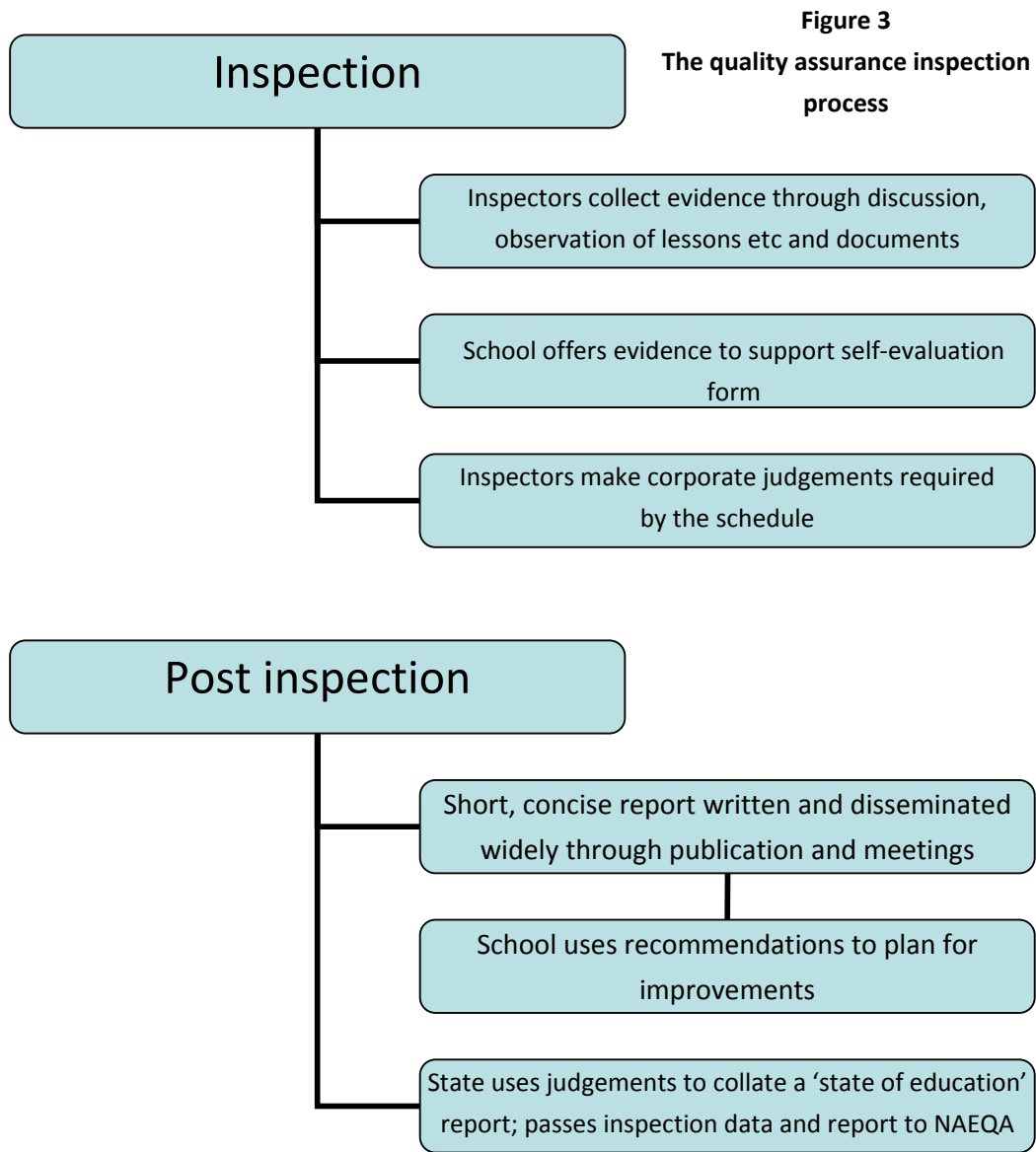
- The outcomes of external quality assurance activity or inspection are short, easily understood reports that are disseminated to the stakeholders particularly; teachers, school based management committees, parents and the local community. For example, inspection judgements will be shared with students through a one page student summary provided by the inspection team. Parents will have accurate and truthful access to the judgements through meetings in local languages where appropriate. Open publication and good communication of inspection judgements emphasises the accountability of those with responsibility for playing a part in the education of Nigeria's children. Reports' recommendations should mainly concern things schools can improve themselves. There is no point in a school waiting for outside intervention or blaming lack of progress on others lack of will. The recommendations also require schools to have good school evaluation processes and development planning processes.

The process linking inspection, self evaluation and school development planning (figure2)

11. The great power of quality assurance inspection is that it is the quality of the experience for the learner and his or her progress that is paramount.
12. The new quality assurance process requires a planned cycle of activity to ensure schools are inspected at regular intervals whilst allowing them the time to self-evaluate and take responsibility for improvement. Currently some schools get visits more than twice a term whilst others never get visited. Different inspection teams can give conflicting judgements and advice. Most of the activities taking place in schools by external individuals and teams are called inspection but these incorporate many types of monitoring, advisory and assessment visits. Unfortunately there is little positive impact from these activities on children's outcomes or educational experience.
13. Inspection cannot improve the quality of education on its own; it supports improvement and offers some of the tools. When looking at models of how quality assurance agencies might be structured, ESSPIN will offer one that enables inspectors to inspect schools in one part of their state and to give support in a different part. This enables inspectors to use their quality assurance skills in a supportive capacity without compromising their objectivity when they inspect.
14. This position paper is intended to complement the Component 3 position paper and to mirror the philosophy and approach it outlines. This model develops the notion that a linked approach to quality improvement is essential and also illustrates the interconnectedness of all elements of the ESSPIN programme. It recognises that improving the effectiveness of individual

components does not automatically lead to an overall improvement in quality. For example, having qualified teachers does not mean that they are necessarily effective teachers bringing about improved learning outcomes for children. The presence of text books in a school does not automatically ensure these are used well to help children learn.

The quality assurance process



15. The quality assurance work outlined in this position paper contributes in some way to all the ESSPIN components whilst being seen as part of an integrated approach to quality improvement in school.

16. The various ESSPIN components and their relevance to quality assurance inspection development are outlined below.

Linkages to the log frame

17. Component 1: Federal Governance framework for enabling basic education reform strengthened, which includes:
- the formulation of a national framework of standards (to focus attention on the desired results)
 - the improvement in the use of information for accountability and performance
 - supporting the integration of inspection services to avoid inefficient use of resources.
18. The activities under component 1 related to quality assurance work will focus on supporting the federal inspection service (FIS) in the policy and institutional changes necessary to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of inspection work. Attention will be paid to furthering the work contained in the recently completed Handbook for Quality assurance evaluation in Nigeria that identifies some agreed national education standards for individual learners and schools. Quality assurance processes will encourage the use of information and promote accountability and performance in schools at all levels. ESSPIN will also support the transfer of inspection services to the planned National Agency for Education Quality Assurance.
19. Component 2: State-level governance and management of basic education strengthened;
- working on the systems and institutions in order to ensure that supporting inputs are in place which are necessary to bring about change at school level
 - A more normative inspectorate, which monitors the application of standards, supports teachers, heads and officials in performing their roles, and contributes to sector management helps drive up performance, build accountability, and provide information for planning purposes
20. Much of the work at federal level in supporting the policy and institutional changes necessary to improve inspectorates will be mirrored in the work at state level included under component 2
21. Component 3: Capacity of primary and junior-secondary schools to provide a high quality learning environment developed and sustained.
- School development plans and associated grants promote decentralised, school-level control of resources.
 - Better deployment of resources at school level and increased managerial discretion given to schools.
 - Information on physical infrastructure, instructional materials, demographic trends, and the profile of out of school children help States build capacity to plan, resource and procure infrastructure and materials.
 - Strengthened capacity of school leadership, management, quality development and quality
 - Assurance

22. The activities to be pursued under component 3 in the quality assurance inspection strand will ensure that inspection of school management includes the use of school development plans, and available resources, and the quality of the infrastructure. The capacity building to be done will focus on the importance of judgements bring made in terms of the impact on learners' outcomes. Activity will also ensure the outcomes of quality assurance inspections are available to be systematically used for planning at school and state level.
23. Component 4: Capacity of communities and civil society to articulate demand for educational services created and sustained.
- School Based Management Committees (SBMC) help improve school governance and promote demand for better services.
 - Strengthen voices demanding better education services and greater accountability from government at different tiers.
 - Increase citizens' ability to claim rights and hold government accountable,
24. The intent is to develop a system where reports from quality assurance inspections are to be published widely; in a variety of accessible formats to help parents, communities and other stakeholders to hold their school to account, including oral feedback. The availability of such qualitative information is intended to increase accountability amongst all those working in the education system.

Assumptions made in this position paper about the roles and functions of the various players in the new inspection process for Nigeria

25. These assumptions will inform the activities outlined in this position paper.
26. The Federal inspectorate (FIS) will in time, and in line with the Federal Minister of Education's Road Map, becomes the National Agency for Education Quality Assurance (NAEQA).
27. The shape for this agency is not yet determined in detail and there is discussion about the relative merits of either as a freestanding agency, a bureau under the Minister of Education, a parastatal or some other arrangement. ESSPIN will work on developing the systems needed to support quality assurance inspection regardless of the structure agreed upon.
28. NAEQA have a strategic role, setting national policy for quality assurance inspections, including:
- providing the criteria for inspections,
 - guiding the schedule, frequency, length and cycle of inspections,
 - providing guidance on self-evaluation
 - setting criteria for selecting, accrediting and training inspectors and
 - determining the quality assurance process to be used by state inspectorates (SAEQA) to ensure equity of method, same categories for judgements and the coordination of cycles so there is fairness in the system
 - managing and analysing data and judgements from reports to ensure they influence policy and supply evidenced based information about the state of education at states and national level

29. NEAQA would be the national authority for quality assurance; setting high standards, offering guidance and support whilst working with and alongside State inspection teams to develop consistency and good practice. NEAQA would also coordinate the information collected on inspections by using inspection judgement tables and the States' own annual inspection reports, where they collate their inspection findings. NAEQA would use this information to draw up a national report to be used to inform the public and federal policy makers. In the model ESSPIN is supporting, and has the blessing of those stakeholders already involved, inspectors would have a rigorous and assessed training leading to an accreditation or license as an inspector. Quality assurance inspection teams would then contain a mix of inspectors from state and federal levels, for example, to inspect all schools, federal unity, public and private with the unifying characteristic that all would be 'accredited' and would follow the same schedule and process for inspection.
30. The Road Map identifies December 2009 as the date for establishing NAEQA, with the date of December 2010 as the time to "professionalise education quality assurance practice by training, accrediting and certifying practitioners". The intervening year is allocated for training schools to self-evaluate. There is a strong case to establish a shadow quality assurance cycle during that intervening year to test out roles and responsibilities and ensure the necessary processes are supported, enabling the quality assurance cycle to be effective. ESSPIN would support a quality assurance task team at federal level to implement this shadow process. The new processes for quality assurance inspections must be robust, effective and efficient to support the principles and purposes. Using a shadow cycle and its necessary structures would allow federal inspectors to learn practically whether their proposals are feasible.
31. Planning towards developing a quality assurance system and the model for delivering it is being undertaken by FIS at this time. Federal inspectors' knowledge of quality assurance evaluation is theoretical; they have not observed quality assurance practice nor taken part in training inspections. This makes it very difficult for them to select appropriate models, identify effective solutions or ways to work. Federal inspectors have identified their need for quality assurance inspection training and experience. This position paper recognises that this work must form the basis of some early ESSPIN supported development to ensure inspectors at federal level become as skilled as those within states.
- Activities to attain an effective and legal agency dedicated to quality assurance include:
 - Develop links with the members of the Minister's task force for the implementation of his Road Map for the Education Sector and where it relates to quality assurance and also with the Head of FIS and the selected FIS representative for quality assurance reform.
 - Establish a modus operandi for regular meetings to support the process as FIS level and to inform the Road Map task group.
 - Work with the Road Map task group to define the functions for NAEQA and work with FIS on the practicality and viability of the newly developed National Quality Assurance Model for Education below Tertiary Level.

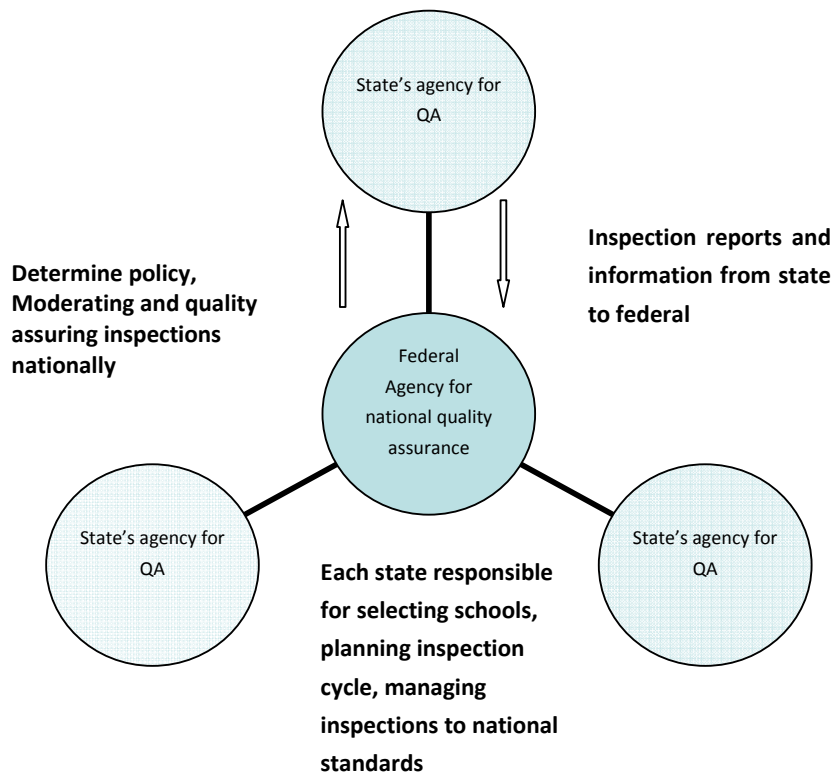
- Scrutinise the model’s suitability to support the already-agreed Handbook for quality assurance evaluation in Nigeria and the Framework for quality assurance evaluation
 - Develop and share alternative models for quality assurance agencies that would offer workable solutions to issues identified for reform in the Road Map.
 - Improve the capacity and understanding of the senior FIS inspectors by running a programme of training that would include quality assurance inspections.
 - Support Federal inspectors in the “capacity building of school leaders to empower them to assume the role of monitoring supervising and assuring quality performance in the schools” (the start date for this is June 2009 which means this is to be carried out by an un-experienced FIS workforce.)
 - Train NAEQA senior leaders to analyse inspection information from the states in order to assess the state of the nation’s schools and write an annual national report about the quality of education.
32. The State inspectorates will be tasked with using the guidance and processes identified in the national policy for quality assurance inspections, to reform inspection at state level. The national policy framework, as it now exists after acceptance at NCE, sets out a requirement for each state to establish one body to carry out quality assurance inspection. At a quality assurance conference in Abuja in June 2008 twenty six of the states signed up to the idea of the principle of forming their own state agency. All the ESSPIN supported states have in some way begun the process of establishing a quality assurance process. It is proposed in the Policy that this new state agency for quality assurance would be the only body required to carry out inspections.
33. In some states there are up to 11 bodies that inspect in schools at a range of frequencies, with often overlapping roles and with no regard to each other. Legislation will be required if the decision is made to disband some of these groups, or reorientate their roles towards monitoring or advisory work. This legislation can take a considerable amount of time and therefore ESSPIN will support the continuation and strengthening of the interim structures or task groups already delivering quality assurance inspections in Kaduna and to some extent Kano. These task groups can maximise the usefulness of effort before the new state agency is in place, by establishing a shadow quality assurance cycle to test out roles and responsibilities and ensure the necessary processes are supported.
34. ESSPIN will support the quality assurance task team in each ESSPIN state except Kwara to implement this shadow process. Kwara is in a unique situation as it has a newly established state quality assurance agency in place. The new processes for quality assurance inspections must be robust, effective and efficient to support the principles and purposes. Using a shadow cycle and its necessary structures would allow state inspectors to continue to test out their systems and check their proposals are feasible when applied to large numbers of inspections.
35. In the model which ESSPIN is supporting, it is assumed that state quality assurance inspection agencies will do the bulk of inspection work in all schools within their state. These agencies will

deploy trained, assessed and accredited or licensed state quality assurance inspectors on inspection teams. The accredited or licensed inspectors may still work for other agencies, such as SUBEB or LGAs and be loaned or seconded to, or may be employed fulltime the state quality assurance inspection agency. They will be joined by NAEQA (Federal) inspectors on some inspections to fulfil two functions: to ensure consistency and best practice across Nigeria and to quality assure the process.

36. Activities to attain an effective legal agency for quality assurance at state level include:

- Work with key personnel in the quality assurance task teams that have already been identified in each state, on the practicality of various models for Quality Assurance agencies and on how support is offered to schools to compliment inspection.
- Develop policies and a framework for quality assurance evaluation in the state that take into account the work being done at federal level.
- Develop and share alternative models for state quality assurance agencies that would offer workable solutions to issues identified for reform
- Develop a shadow cycle of QA inspections
- Improve the capacity and understanding of the state and LGA inspectors by planning, training for and running a programme of quality assurance inspection of approximately 20% of schools over the academic year starting in September 2009.

The relationship between autonomous federal and state quality assurance inspection agencies



Supporting inputs

37. ESSPIN will work to support the reforms in quality assurance at both federal and state levels in three main areas of activity.

Policy and planning for institutional organisational change towards new agency at federal and state level

38. In The states in which ESSPIN is working, expect federal policy and legislation to provide a legal framework they can follow. However, in States such as Kwara, Jigawa and Lagos, where the political initiative for reform is strong, there is already a commitment to legal change. The setting up of autonomous quality assurance agencies is likely to proceed without waiting for the creation of federal structures.

39. There are important themes to be tackled including:

- Producing and enacting the necessary legislation;
- Merging and linking agencies which currently inspect;
- Developing institutional capacity, systems and models for delivering quality assurance;
- Securing sufficient and regular funding to enable the new agencies to plan and function systematically.

Capacity building of inspectors and schools by setting up interim inspection groups ready to begin a quality assurance inspection cycle with training, processes etc.

40. If quality assurance inspections are to play a part in supporting improvements in education it is imperative these begin as soon as possible and not wait for lengthy legislation. In addition, the best capacity building exercise is the experience of carrying out inspections. In addition, the process of self-evaluation, integral to quality assurance inspection plays a significant role in school improvement, so the sooner this process can begin the better. To make this happen, State inspectorates need to develop a method of working together for training and undertaking a coordinated programme of inspections before legislation is in place. Kaduna has an established and effective task group made up of all the various bodies who do work on inspection together. Kano has an identified group ready to begin the work. Lagos is identifying a core group to begin this process.

Managing quality assurance systems

41. Structural change and capacity building alone will not ensure that inspection cycles are managed in a coordinated way, that reports are handled systematically and that results are collated and synthesised so that a broad picture of inspection results is produced. In order to ensure that due attention is paid to the mechanics of the inspection process, ESSPIN will work with Federal and State quality assurance bodies to improve management and supervision systems. This will include establishing and maintaining agreed inspection cycles, so that all

schools are inspected on a regular basis. It will also include assisting with the development of systems for handling reports. The information from inspection reports should be provided in accessible forms to schools and communities. Key information on the performance of schools also has to be fed upwards through the education superstructure in useful form so that the inspection process can inform policy making and management decisions.

Activities - Summary

ESSPIN wide

1. Develop interactive training DVD for quality assurance training
2. Write detailed brief and costing for DVD production
3. Develop ICT capacity and skill of state and federal inspectors to support quality assurance inspections mainly basic word processing skill
4. Research and source cheap robust simple word-processing laptops for inspection units to buy.

Federal

1. Support the Minister of Education's Road Map initiative in QA
2. Support FIS and the FME Roadmap initiative representatives in developing the detail of the institutional model for the new agency alongside FIS to include:
 - Organisation structure,
 - Functions,
 - Staffing structure,
 - Roles and responsibilities with job descriptions,
 - Systems,
 - Funding,
 - Logistics
 - Report production and analysis
3. Train federal inspectors in QA inspection as part of state team training
4. Support the amendments of the QA policy, and handbook after the protracted process of stakeholder engagement.

States summary

1. Set up committees for the integration of inspection services; develop an agreed understanding about roles and functions.
2. Support the production of a document of agreement, and other papers to propel the legislation in each state as appropriate
3. Determine at state level as appropriate, the nature of the new autonomous inspection agency, its legal authority,
 - Organisation structure,
 - Functions,
 - Staffing structure,
 - Roles and responsibilities with job descriptions,
 - Systems,
 - Funding,
 - Logistics
 - Report production and analysis
4. Support training programmes for inspectors to start regular cycle of quality assurance inspections
5. Support inspectors in train head teachers in self-evaluation
6. Set up systems to manage inspections and reports including quality assurance

Kwara position

The old inspectorate has recently been disbanded by the Commissioner for Education.

The new bureau for inspection has been set up with a named leader and a new building.

- The recruitment and selection process has been supported by ESSPIN technical assistance
- Posts for inspectors were advertised in local media.
- Candidates have applied, been selected for examination against published criteria; exam scripts marked and then the best invited for interview.
- Interviews were held by trained panels of independent educationalists.
- No appointments have yet been made (as of May/14/09).

The next step is for ESSPIN to support Kwara in setting up the internal systems and processes needed to conduct inspections

Then a training and induction process supported by ESSPIN in June/July 09 – the outcome to be a cycle of high quality inspections beginning September 09 for a minimum of 20% of Kwara schools.

Kaduna position

Senior personnel have:

- A working knowledge of the Handbook.
- They have reliable data about the numbers of schools and evaluators.
- Spent much time revising the wording of various aspects rather than planning the key steps towards implementation.
- are to adopt the new Record of Evidence and Reference Document for Schools and Evaluators, developed by ESSPIN, realising its importance in the corporate judgement process and to provide support and clarity during external evaluations.

ESSPIN will support Kaduna to set up the systems to manage the 465 external evaluations for 2009/10 academic year about 12% of schools in the state.

ESSPIN will also strive with Kaduna to acquire a mandate for cooperation between inspectorates working together in task team leading to building a single QA institution.

At this stage ESSPIN will work to support the development of the new autonomous inspection agency,

- its legal authority,
- Organisation structure,
- Functions,
- Staffing structure,
- Roles and responsibilities with job descriptions,
- Systems,
- Funding,
- Logistics
- Report production and analysis

Kano position

Task team for change has been very slow to move forward, exacerbated by the number of different bodies involved in the inspection process. There are 20 'task team' members, representing 11 different bodies all involved in making the decisions in the interim QA inspection development process.

However, a clear action plan produced by the interim QA group in May 09 supported by ESSPIN now identifies a clear plan for training and inspection for 2009-2010.

ESSPIN will also work with key decision makers to pursue the new autonomous QA inspection agency.

Jigawa position

Jigawa has a QA inspection unit SEIMU set up in 2007/8. However, it has not received training in QA inspection and is not enshrined in law.

ESSPIN is supporting this need for legalisation to protect the function of the Quality assurance unit and has worked with SEIMU to develop the necessary policy and briefing paper for this process to begin.

In June and July SEIMU will pursue the legislative and political process necessary for its legal remit for QA and ESSPIN will support if requested.

ESSPIN will work to develop key players' understanding through a study tour in September 2009.

ESSPIN will cooperate in a training programme for inspectors and then support inspectors to train head teachers in self-evaluation.

ESSPIN will work with SEIMU to turn their current inspection practice into quality assurance and support them in setting up systems to manage inspections and reports.

Lagos position

Lagos has an ambitious plan for training head teachers and inspectors and to begin a QA inspection cycle that inspects every public school annually.

ESSPIN will explain the risks in this mass approach and will support effective systems for training.

ESSPIN will support the development of key players' understanding through a study tour in September 2009, combined with Jigawa and Federal.

ESSPIN can also support Lagos in setting up systems to manage inspections and reports.