

SCHOOL INSPECTIONS IN A STRENGTHENED ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM



PACE Seminar Series

Presentation by:

Craig D. Jerald

Break the Curve

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What Is a School Inspection?

- Not simply a site visit that involves “walking the hallways and sitting in classrooms to form an impression”
- Rather, a systematic collection and analysis of evidence obtained mostly through direct observation in a school building
- Evidence is collected and evaluated based on a published set of standards describing a high-quality education (research-based frameworks, rubrics)

Many Countries Inspect Schools

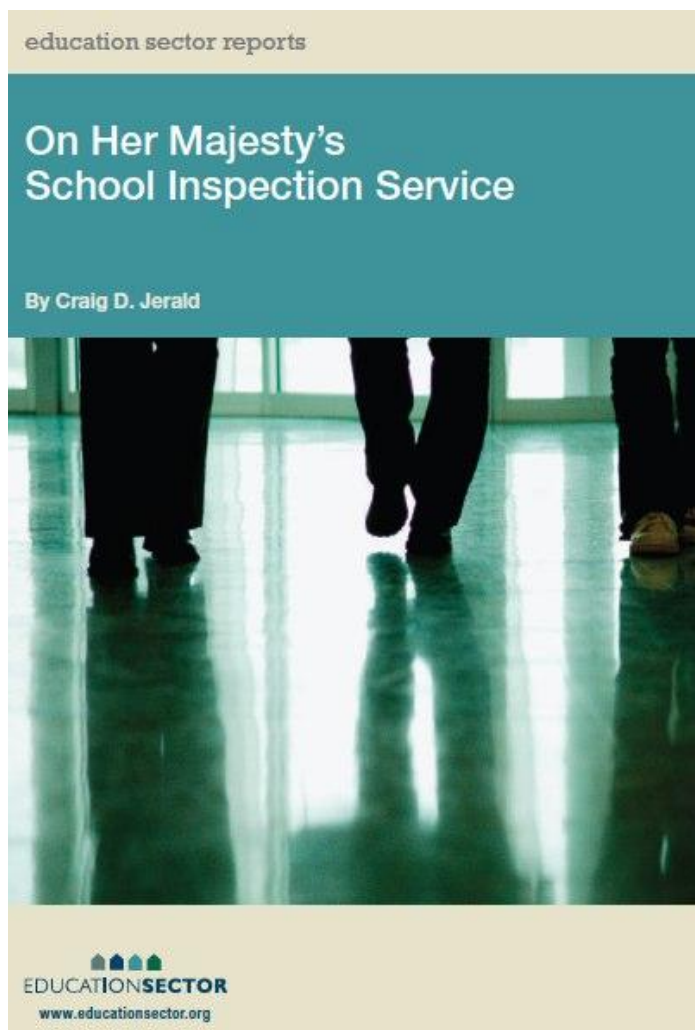
- The Standing International Conference of Inspectorates (SICI) includes 32 member nations and states in Europe alone
- U.S. is unusual in relying primarily on test scores for accountability, rather than combination of data and inspections
- While inspection requires significant investment, it is NOT a “risky, untested” idea

Learning from English Inspections



- **Although the U.K. has a national Department for Education ...**
 - England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have their own education systems
 - Therefore, England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have their own school inspectorates
 - We studied England's

Why Study England's Inspection System?

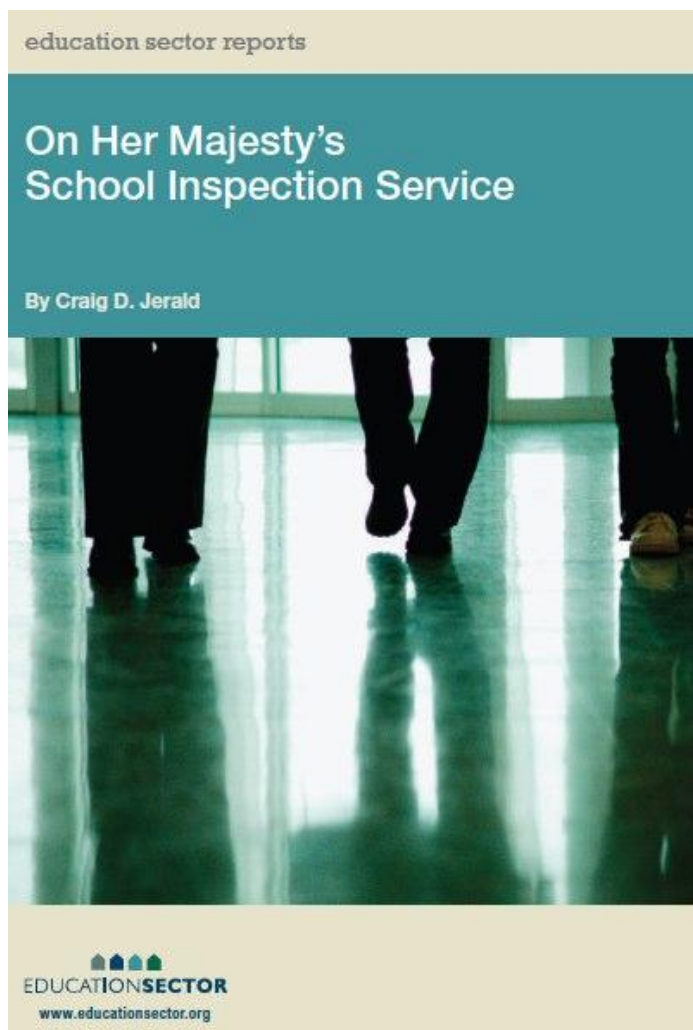


- 1) Key element of a ***public accountability system***
 - Produce summative evaluations of the quality of education, not just formative feedback for improvement
 - Inspection reports are public: written for lay audiences and published online
 - Clear consequences for schools linked to inspection outcomes

Purpose of School Inspection?

- Site visits used for variety of purposes in U.S., but none focus *primarily* on public accountability
 - ▣ Inform improvement planning after school identified based on low test scores
 - ▣ Inform charter school renewal decisions
 - ▣ Provide formative feedback to school leadership teams for continuous improvement planning
- E.g., Sacramento School Quality Reviews provide formative feedback but are not used for public accountability (reports not published, etc.)
- English inspections provide formative feedback for improvement, but designed for public accountability

Why Study England's Inspection System?



- **2) Grappled with challenges of interest to U.S. policymakers**
 - Evaluate schools based on a broader range of evidence including but not limited to test scores
 - Leverage expert human judgment rather than relying solely on data and mathematical formulas
 - Achieve a better balance between evaluative ratings and diagnostic feedback
 - Differentiate interventions based on key strengths and weaknesses

English Inspections: Ofsted

- England's inspectorate is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services, and Skills (Ofsted)
 - ▣ Created by Parliament in 1992 to replace a system in which inspectors were employed by local districts
 - ▣ Led by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
 - ▣ Reports directly to Parliament rather than to the Department for Education
 - School inspection reports are not submitted to Department for Education prior to publication
 - Independence to inspect schools "without fear or favor"


English Inspections: The Process

- Most schools receive 1-2 days notice
 - ▣ Lesson learned: Long notice: too much stress, too much prep
- Before visit, lead inspector examines available evidence; discusses emerging “inspection trails” with principal; develops working plan for team’s visit
- Inspections usually last 2 days
- During visit, inspectors
 - ▣ Observe classroom lessons
 - ▣ Analyze student work
 - ▣ Speak with students and staff members
 - ▣ Consider results of student and parent surveys

English Inspections: Classroom Observations

- Classroom observations are “the most important source of evidence”
- Team decides best strategy for observations, but generally try to observe as many lessons as possible
 - ▣ 25- to 30-min observations to maximize number
 - ▣ Whole-lesson observations to investigate issue/subject
 - ▣ Shadowing a group of students from lesson to lesson
- Must provide teacher with feedback if observe 20 minutes or longer

English Inspections: Judgments

- Inspectors grade various dimensions and “overall effectiveness” of a school on 4-point scale
 - Outstanding
 - Good 
 - Satisfactory
 - Inadequate
 - Notice to Improve
 - Special Measures

English Inspections: Judgments

- From 2009-2011, inspectors graded schools on 26 dimensions in addition to overall effectiveness

Overall effectiveness

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Outcomes: how well are pupils doing taking account of any variation?

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Pupils' attainment *

The quality of pupils' learning and their progress

The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress

The extent to which pupils feel safe

Pupils' behaviour

The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles

The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community

The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being

Pupils' attendance *

The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development

English Inspections: Judgments

- From 2009-2011, inspectors graded schools on 26 dimensions in addition to overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching

The use of assessment to support learning

The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships

The effectiveness of care, guidance, and support

How effective are leadership and management?

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement

The leadership and management of teaching and learning

The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers

The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being

The effectiveness with which the school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination

The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures

The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money

English Inspections: Judgments

- Beginning in 2012, inspectors will now grade only four dimensions in addition to overall effectiveness
 - ▣ Achievement of pupils
 - ▣ Quality of teaching
 - ▣ Behavior and safety of pupils
 - ▣ Quality of school leadership and management
- Grades are still “outstanding,” “good,” “satisfactory,” or “inadequate”

English Inspections: Framework & Rubrics

- Ofsted publishes detailed framework
 - ▣ describes types of evidence inspectors should consider
 - ▣ includes a separate rubric for each graded dimension
 - So 2009-11 framework included 27 rubrics!
- Also publishes its formal guidance for inspectors
- Publishing clear expectations and procedures provides *transparency* so inspections are not perceived as unfair “gotcha” exercise

English Inspections: The Inspection Report

- Detailed enough to be useful to educators, but written in language lay audience can understand
- Each report includes
 - ▣ Inspectors' grades for each dimension and for the school's overall effectiveness
 - ▣ Frank narratives discussing observed strengths and weaknesses in key areas
 - ▣ Parent questionnaire results
 - ▣ A letter to students from the lead inspector summarizing the inspection judgments and discussing next steps
 - ▣ Specific priorities for improvement in key areas such as achievement, teaching, and leadership

English Inspections: Timing

- In 2009, began “proportionate, risk-based” approach:
 - 1) Results of the school’s previous inspection
 - “outstanding” or “good” = 5 years
 - “satisfactory” = 3 years
 - “inadequate” = 1 to 2 years *and* receive more frequent visits to monitor progress (“monitoring inspections”)
 - 2) Annual “risk assessment” based on student achievement and attendance data, views of parents and guardians, concerns raised by district
- Beginning in 2012, “outstanding” schools exempt from further inspection unless triggered by risk assessment

English Inspections: “Inadequate” Grade

- Ofsted invites district and school leaders to a voluntary school improvement seminar
- District submits action plan to Ofsted for approval
- Ofsted conducts one or more “monitoring inspections” until school judged satisfactory overall
 - ▣ Evaluate/grade school’s overall progress overall and progress on priorities for improvement
 - ▣ Provide useful external feedback to school leaders
 - ▣ Report published on Ofsted’s website

English Inspections: “Inadequate” Grade

	First Monitoring Inspection: September 30, 2010	Second Monitoring Inspection: January 21, 2011
Progress since being subject to special measures	Satisfactory	Good
Progress since last monitoring inspection	(n/a)	Good
Priorities for Improving Achievement		
Accelerate pupils' progress across the school and raise attainment in English and mathematics ... by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • setting and sharing accurate targets for pupils based on accurate assessments • providing all students with access to good learning opportunities 	Satisfactory	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving attendance 	Satisfactory	Outstanding
Priorities for Improving Teaching		
Improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eradicating inadequate teaching and raising the proportion of good teaching • raising pupils' expectations • matching what is taught to the ages of pupils • using assessment to effectively plan lessons • improving marking 	Satisfactory	Good
Priorities for Improving Leadership and Management		
Build the school's capacity to improve and support the headteacher by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing leadership expertise across the school • holding staff to account for learning and progress in their classes • ensuring that governors evaluate the effectiveness of strategies for improvement 	Satisfactory	Good

English Inspections: “Inadequate” Grade

- Monitoring inspections evaluate actual progress rather than effort
- Lesson learned: Many schools do not begin to seriously implement action plan until first monitoring inspection, so now scheduling sooner
- Recently began conducting monitoring inspections of “satisfactory” schools, too
 - ▣ discourage coasting
 - ▣ provide useful feedback on progress toward “good”

English Inspections: Three Balancing Acts

- Designing an inspection system requires striking several delicate balances:
 - ▣ How to judge schools on multiple measures while appropriately emphasizing student learning, including standardized test scores?
 - ▣ How to leverage expert human judgment while ensuring a sufficient level of consistency (reliability) in ratings?
 - ▣ How to produce rigorous summative ratings of schools while also providing useful diagnostic guidance and feedback for improvement?

English Inspections: Student Achievement

- Inspectors **grade** student achievement
- Before inspection, analyze 80-page data report
 - ▣ National standardized test scores in key grades
 - ▣ Value-added measures of student growth
- During inspection, collect additional evidence
 - ▣ Examine student work to assess progress and quality of learning of students currently in the school
 - ▣ Scrutinize results of other exams or assessments
 - ▣ Talk with students about their work
 - ▣ Conduct “case studies” of individual student learning
 - ▣ Listen to elementary students read aloud

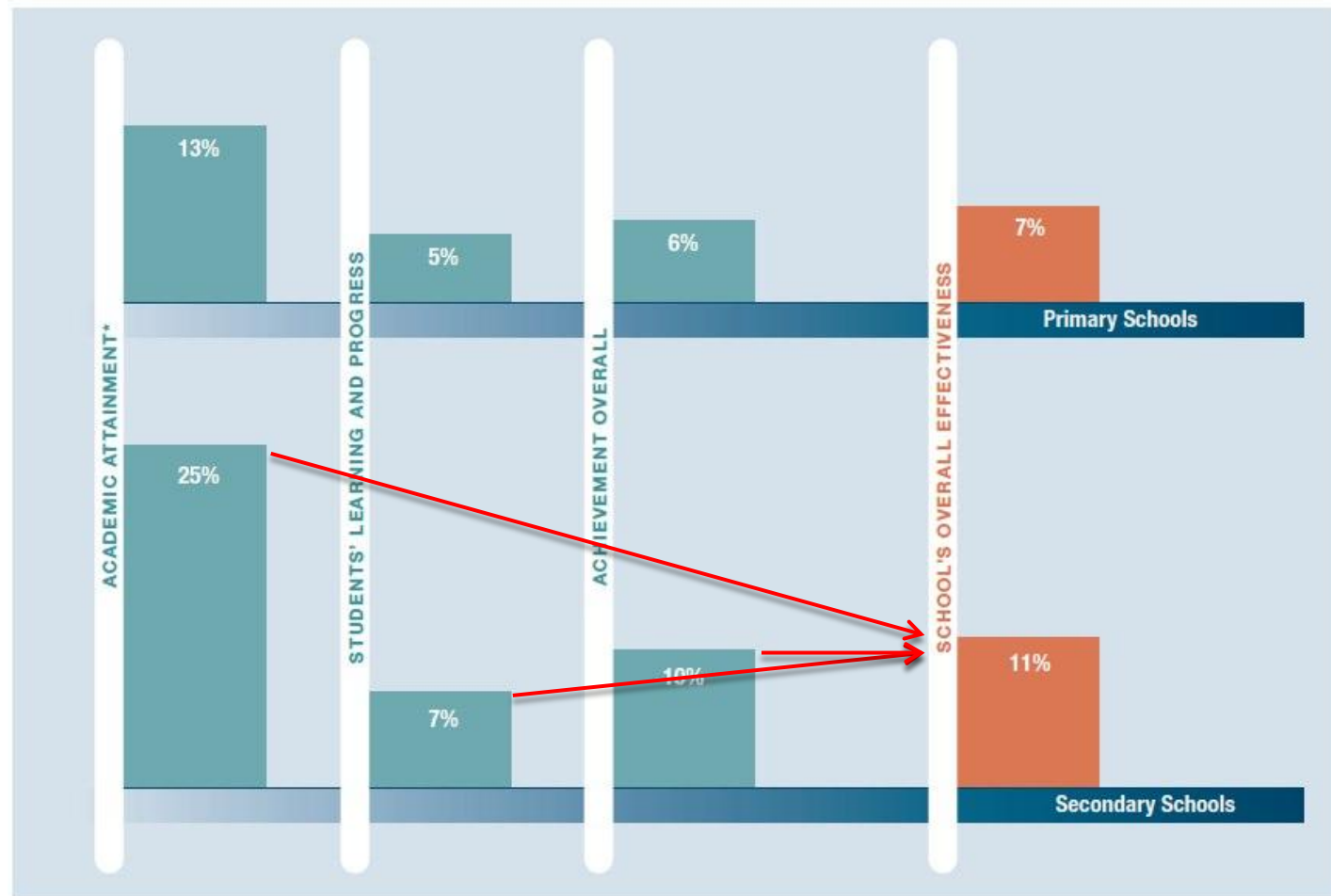
English Inspections: Student Achievement

- “The published data give you a steer on the inspection but don’t drive the final judgments.”
- “The overall judgment is determined by the full range and weight of evidence about the quality of learning, past progress, and current progress.”

— *Her Majesty’s Inspector Ceri Morgan, Ofsted*

English Inspections: Student Achievement

Figure 5. Percentage of Schools Inspected in 2009–10 That Were Judged Inadequate Overall and Inadequate in Areas Related to Student Achievement



* The lowest grade for attainment is "low," which corresponds to "inadequate" on Ofsted's four-point scale.


English Inspections: Expert Judgment

- How to minimize risk of human subjectivity and bias?
- Judgments must be:
 - ▣ Guided by common standards
 - ▣ Informed by rigorous training and experience (practice)
 - ▣ Steeped in professional expertise
- Therefore, decisions about who inspects schools are critical

English Inspections: Expert Judgment

- English inspectors mostly full-time professionals
- Extensive training and experience
- Two types of inspectors:
 - 250 of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) who have permanent appointments at Ofsted
 - 1,600 Additional Inspectors (AIs) employed by private firms called “inspection providers” that win competitive contracts to supplement Ofsted's inspection workforce
 - Rigorous selection process
 - Up to seven days of training plus several days shadowing an inspection team, then ongoing professional development
 - HMIs monitor quality, review draft inspection reports

Cost of English-Style Inspections for California

- Annual financial costs
 - ▣ Lower-bound estimate: \$64.7 million 
 - ▣ Upper-bound estimate: \$130.9 million
- Human resource demands
 - ▣ Estimated HMI-type inspectors: 111
 - ▣ Estimated AI-type (contractual) inspectors: 709
- NOTE: These are only rough, “back of the envelop” estimates that envision an inspection system closely resembling England’s; accurate estimates would depend on specific policy choices

English Inspections: Diagnosis & Feedback

- Every inspection report lists priorities for improvement
- Expert judgment informs differentiated interventions
- Two “categories of concern” ***based on inspectors’ judgment of an inadequate school’s capacity to improve***
 - ▣ Notice to Improve
 - Capacity to improve is at least “satisfactory”
 - Ofsted conducts a monitoring inspection before next full inspection
 - ▣ Special Measures
 - Capacity to improve is “inadequate”
 - Local district may intervene in governance or staffing
 - Local district or Secretary of State may close school
 - School may not hire beginning teachers without Ofsted’s permission
 - Ofsted conducts up to 5 monitoring inspections (once per term)

English Inspections: Diagnosis & Feedback

- Balancing evaluation and improvement
- Ofsted identifies what needs to improve but does not tell schools how
- District and school are responsible for creating specific action plans, forging strategic partnerships, securing technical assistance and resources
- Why not also offer direct support for improvement?
 - Possible conflict of interest when conducting monitoring inspections (grading progress based on its own advice)
 - Lacks resources to provide direct assistance and support

Key Policy Decisions for Designing an Inspection System

- Some entity must oversee inspections to ensure their quality and integrity = “inspectorate”
- Type of inspectorate?
 - ▣ Responsibility given to existing office within CDE?
 - ▣ New office within CDE?
 - ▣ Semi-autonomous entity with ties to CDE or other state agency?
 - ▣ Independent entity reporting to California Legislature or to Governor? (Led by “Governor’s Chief Inspector”?)

Key Policy Decisions for Designing an Inspection System

- Role of student test scores, other achievement measures, and indices in inspections?
- How will final accountability determinations be made?
 - ▣ Inspectors consider API in evaluating schools?
 - ▣ Inspection results considered alongside API?
 - ▣ Inspection grade converted to number and averaged with API or other index?

Key Policy Decisions for Designing an Inspection System

- How many graded judgments should inspectors be asked to make?
 - ▣ Implications for training and reliability
- What are the key dimensions for evaluating quality of education? Based on research **and** values.
 - ▣ Quality of teaching?
 - ▣ School leadership?
 - ▣ Behavior and Safety?
- Should inspectors consider a school's capacity to make sustained improvement?

Key Policy Decisions for Designing an Inspection System

- How will inspectors grade schools?
 - ▣ Euphemisms like “established” and “developing” less threatening to educators but less understandable to parents and public
- Who are key audiences for inspection reports?
 - ▣ Educators?
 - ▣ Parents?
 - ▣ The general public?
 - ▣ All of the above?

Key Policy Decisions for Designing an Inspection System

- How often should schools be inspected?
 - ▣ Regular cycle (e.g., every three years)
 - ▣ Proportionate timing (based on last inspection)
 - ▣ Risk-based “triggers” (test scores, API, other data)
- Example:
 - ▣ General policy of inspecting schools every 3 years
 - ▣ Prioritize “queue” based on API and/or other data
 - ▣ Increase time between inspections for schools that achieve one or two rounds of strong inspection results
 - ▣ Conduct annual “risk assessment” that can trigger inspection based on red flags

Key Policy Decisions for Designing an Inspection System

- Who should serve on inspection teams?
- 1) Volunteer model with educators who serve once or twice?
 - ▣ Low direct cost (nominal stipends?)
 - ▣ Moderate indirect costs (substitute teachers)
 - ▣ High student learning costs (subs)
 - ▣ Very low return on training investment (assume at least 40 hours of training to inspect reliably)
 - ▣ Lower reliability in judgments due to lack of accrued experience/practice

Key Policy Decisions for Designing an Inspection System

- Who should serve on inspection teams?
- 2) Professional model combining some HMI-type inspectors with AI-type (contracted) inspectors
 - ▣ Higher direct costs (salaries, contracts)
 - ▣ No indirect costs (no subs or replacement teachers necessary)
 - ▣ No student learning costs (no subs)
 - ▣ High return on training investment (assume at least 40 hours of training to inspect reliably)
 - ▣ Higher reliability in judgments due accrued experience/practice

Key Policy Decisions for Designing an Inspection System

- Who should serve on inspection teams?
- 3) Rotation model where educators serve temporary terms as full-time inspectors
 - ▣ Lower direct costs (if earn regular salary)
 - ▣ Higher indirect costs (replacement teachers necessary)
 - ▣ Lower student learning costs (depends on replacement teachers)
 - ▣ Moderate return on training investment (assume at least 40 hours of training to inspect reliably)
 - ▣ Higher reliability in judgments due to practice/experience

Key Policy Decisions for Designing an Inspection System

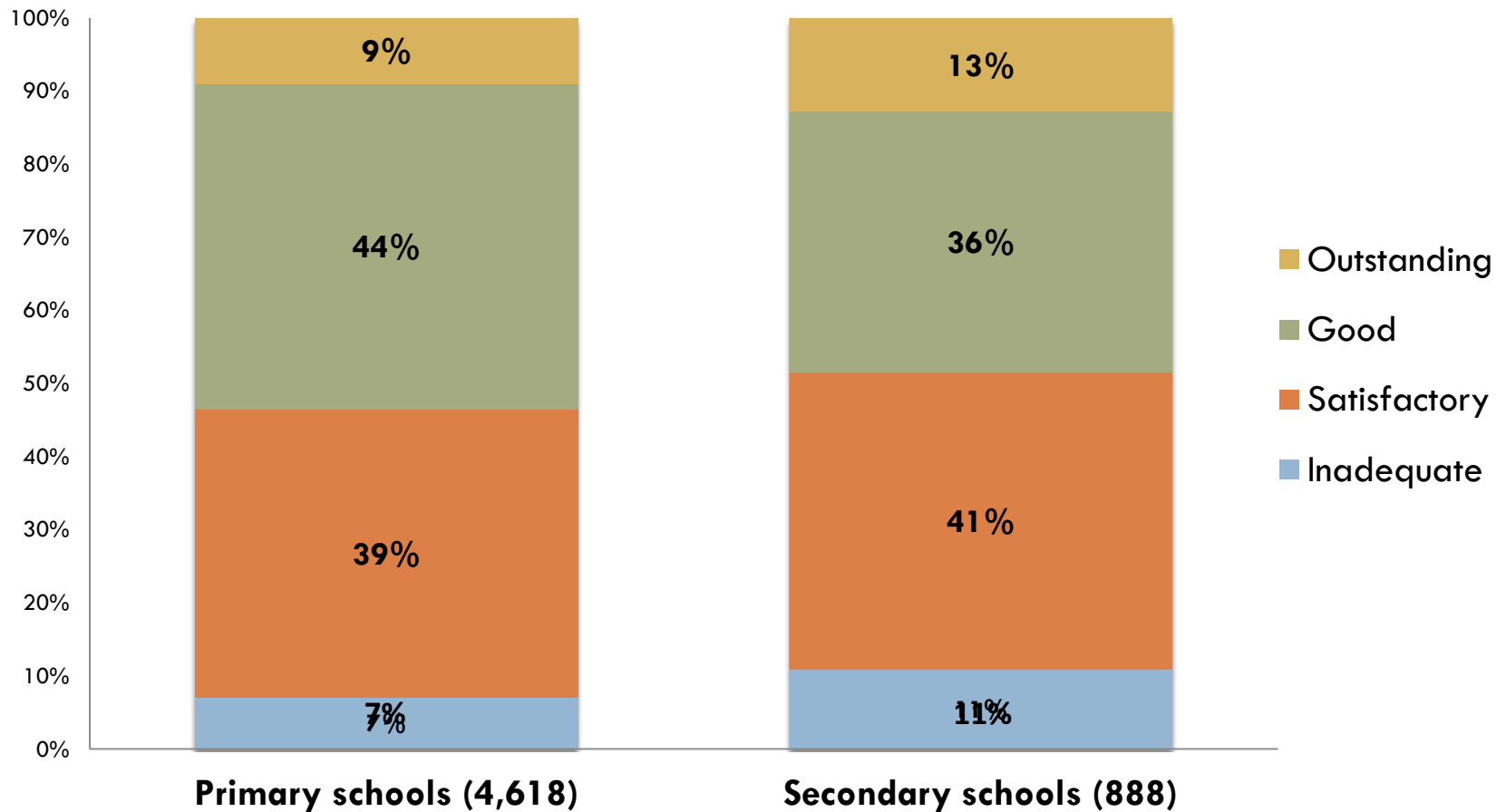
- Who should serve on inspection teams?
- 4) Mixed model with permanent core of HMI-type inspectors plus rotating educators on 3-yr terms
 - ▣ Low-moderate direct costs (salaries plus stipends)
 - ▣ Higher indirect costs (replacement teachers necessary)
 - ▣ Lower student learning costs (depends on replacement teachers)
 - ▣ High-moderate return on training investment (assume at least 40 hours of training to inspect reliably)
 - ▣ High-moderate reliability in judgments due accrued experience/practice

Additional Information

- Policy report on English inspections available at:
www.educationsector.org/publications/her-majestys-school-inspection-service
- This PowerPoint file can be downloaded from
www.stanford.edu/group/pace/cgi-bin/wordpress/seminars
- Craig Jerald can be reached at (202) 232-5109 or craig@breakthecurve.com

English Inspections: Judgments

Grades for "Overall Effectiveness" of Schools Inspected During 2009-10



English Inspections: Framework & Rubrics

Grade descriptors⁹: achievement of pupils at the school

Outstanding (1)

Almost all pupils, including where applicable disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are making rapid and sustained progress in most subjects over time given their starting points. They learn exceptionally well and as a result acquire knowledge quickly and in depth and are developing their understanding rapidly in a wide range of different subjects across the curriculum, including those in the sixth form and areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They develop and apply a wide range of skills to great effect, including reading, writing, communication and mathematical skills across the curriculum that will ensure they are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment. The standards of attainment of almost all groups of pupils are likely to be at least in line with national averages for all pupils with many above average. In exceptional circumstances where standards of attainment, including attainment in reading in primary schools, of any group of pupils are below those of all pupils nationally, the gap is closing dramatically over a period of time as shown by a wide range of attainment indicators.

⁹ Grade descriptors are not to be used as a checklist but should be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach.

English Inspections: The Inspection Report

- Narrative is very frank and straightforward
 - ▣ E.g., “Teaching is too often pitched at an inappropriate level as assessment of pupils’ attainment is not used sufficiently well to plan effective lessons. ... Pupils are not given adequate academic guidance to move their learning on, and the quality of feedback in marking is inconsistent across the school. Pupils’ books show that, in some cases, the teachers have low expectations, especially regarding the quality of pupils’ written work.”

English Inspections: “Inadequate” Grade

- During monitoring visit, inspectors evaluate actual progress, not effort
 - ▣ E.g., “Attendance is still too low ... despite the hard work by staff to encourage regular and timely attendance ... Since the last inspection, attendance has been closely monitored and swift action taken to arrest poor attendance and lateness. As a result of the targeted approach ... attendance is slowly improving. Nonetheless, the rate of improvement is not good enough.”
 - ▣ School graded “inadequate” in improving attendance