> ## The Inspectorate of Education of Portugal

1. A summary profile of the Inspectorate.

IGE has a specific law that details its organisational framework and states its role within the education system. Inspection activities range from the supervision of legal compliance to school external evaluation. There are many other activities the Inspectorate can perform, such as monitoring schools' performance, administrative and financial audits or even disciplinary proceedings against individual staff. Schools are inspected regularly (very often more than once in a year), although in the scope of different activities. The external evaluation of schools (a kind of full inspection) is among the most visible inspection activities.

Each school is expected to be submitted to an external evaluation every four years.This task is done by inspectors working in the five regional offices throughout the country, against a national framework with five quality domains, broken down into a set of indicators. The evaluation teams include two inspectors plus an external evaluator, who follow a set of guidelines and a handbook. Schools that are reported to perform well are liable to have their autonomy strengthened by means of a contract to be signed with the education authorities.

These evaluations are done with great respect for the autonomy of schools and teachers. The IGE does no classroom observations as part of school external evaluation. They invest more in interviews and analysis of documentation. The IGE takes the self – evaluation of schools very seriously and uses its results as a starting point for external evaluation. In the recent past (2005 and 2006), the IGE undertook a meta-evaluation activity, which aimed at reporting on schools actual self-evaluation practices, and simultaneously at stimulating schools to invest more in self-evaluation.

The IGE also does financial and administrative audits of schools and in case of non-compliance with norms, a short and focused follow-up inspection can be undertaken or a disciplinary procedure can be started.

There are also thematic inspections aimed at checking the compliance of specific norms or in the scope of monitoring activities. IGE prepares reports of every inspection activity and issues an annual report about the overall activity of the Inspectorate. Reports are kept confidential whenever dealing with inspections on individuals (disciplinary activity).

The inspectorate also invests on the training of its staff

(Johan van Bruggen, December 2008)

2. The Education System.

2.1 Structure, tables, numbers

The table below provides an overview of the distribution of students through the Education System in the school year 2006/2007. [1]

ISCED level	Sector	Name of subdivision in your country	Age range of pupils	Number of schools/ institutions that provide each level[2]	Number of pupils	Number of teachers/ employees[3]
0	Pre-school (nursery education)	Educação Pré-escolar	3-5	6448	263887	16707
1	Primary education	1º Ciclo do Ensino Básico	6-10	6491	500823	31371
1	Primary education	2º Ciclo do Ensino Básico	10-12	1082	255766	30597
2,3	Lower Secondary education	3º Ciclo do Ensino Básico	12-15	1460	398592	82415
3	Upper Secondary education	Ensino Secundário	15-18	850	356711	
	Non-university higher education	Ensino Politécnico	18 – 20			
5	University	Ensino Universitário	18 – 21 /22 / 23			
2, 3	Adult education	1, 2, 3	18 -			
0,1, 2, 3	Special education	0,1, 2, 3				

Source: GEPE, *Estatísticas da Educação 2006/007*

In 2006/07 there were 1 775 779 students enrolled, attending non-higher education: 81, 7% in the Public system and 18, 3% in the Private. The weight of the private sub-system is more relevant in Pre-school (47, 6% of the children enrolled), whereas in compulsory basic education it is 11, 4% and in Upper Secondary 18, 8%.

2.2. Description.

Pre-school education is not compulsory. However, the enrolment rate in nursery schools for children aged 3-5 was 78% in the school year 2005/2006 Schooling covers compulsory (basic) education (grades 1 to 9), upper secondary (grades 10-12) and higher education.

The vocational schools and education and Training courses are alternative training models to the regular educational system in training middle-ranking professionals.

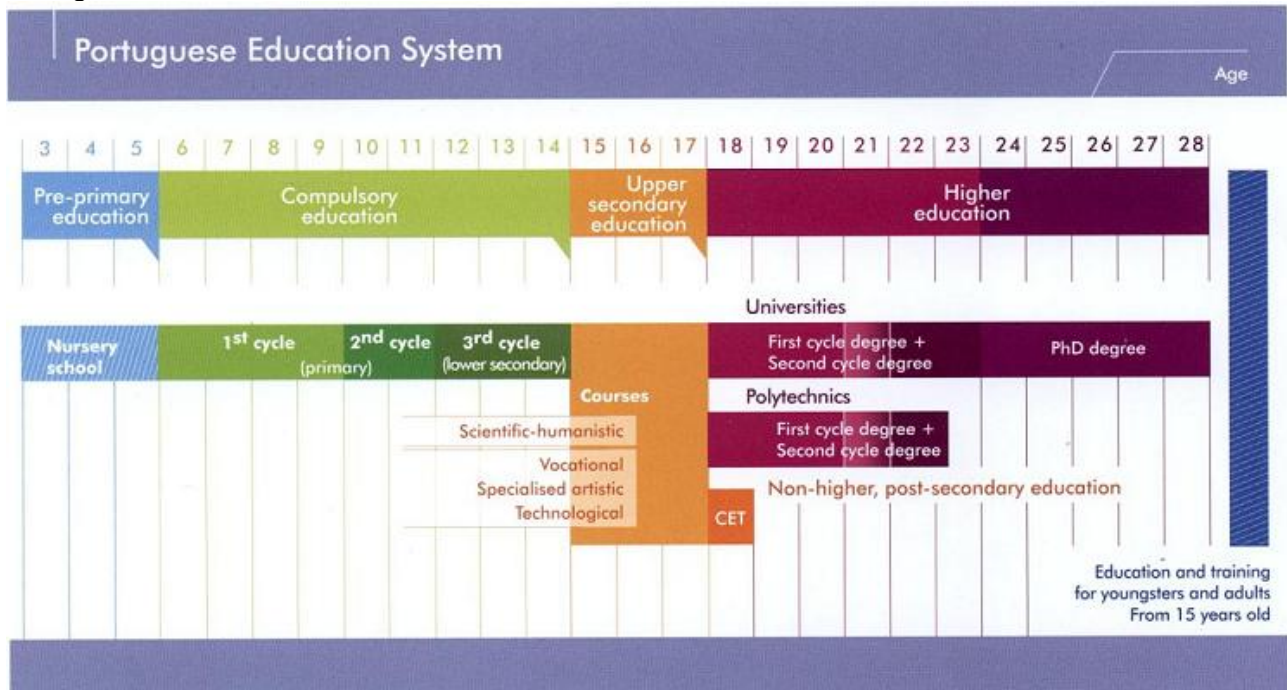---

[1] Data report to Portugal - mainland

[2] In most schools more than one level can be provided. Therefore, each school is counted as many times as the level it provides.

[3] Non- teaching staff - There are no available data aggregated by level of education. In the overall there are 75966 people (non-teaching staff) working for the public and private sectors.

Upper secondary is structured in varied ways, and has courses leading to further studies (scientific-humanistic courses) and for working life (technological courses).

Higher education is organised into two subsystems: Universities and Polytechnics.

A diagram of the structure:

Portuguese Education System

| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | Age |

Pre-primary education | Compulsory education | Upper secondary education | Higher education

Nursery school | 1st cycle (primary) | 2nd cycle | 3rd cycle (lower secondary)

Courses

Universities
First cycle degree + Second cycle degree | PhD degree

Scientific-humanistic
Vocational
Specialised artistic
Technological | CET

Polytechnics
First cycle degree + Second cycle degree

Non-higher, post-secondary education

Education and training for youngsters and adults
From 15 years old

The Portuguese Education System is made up of pre-school, compulsory, upper-secondary and higher education.

Pre-school education is optional and is designed for children between 3 and school starting age.

Compulsory schooling lasts for 9 years, from 6 to 15 years old. It is divided into three successive cycles that last 4, 2 and 3 years respectively.

Upper-secondary is structured into 3 academic years and is organised according to differentiated forms with permeability between courses, which are designed for further study or the job market.

Non-higher post upper-secondary is organised into specialised technology courses, which aim to qualify students for the job market and confer a level 4 vocational training.

The education and training of young people and adults provides a new opportunity to those with low level qualifications. A wide range of courses guarantee double school and vocational education (which corresponds to compulsory and upper-secondary education and a level 1, 2 or 3 vocational qualification).

Source: Ministério da Educação Education and Training in Portugal, September 2007

Most students attend the mainstream in compulsory education. When they finish it (grade 9), there are several options to pursue their studies in upper secondary education: either they choose a general course or a technological course provided by a High School, or a Vocational School, in order to obtain a professional certification.

Curricular Structure

- Curricular structure of ISCED 1/first cycle: Portuguese, Math, Environment Studies, Expressions (artistic, physical). All the subjects are taught by one single teacher.

- Curricular structure of ISCED 1/second cycle: subject areas - Language and Social Studies, Math and Science, Artistic and Technological education, Physical education. Each area is taught by one teacher; non-subject areas - Project area, Tutorial Studying, and Civic Education (usually, these areas are assigned to the same teachers of the subject areas);

- Curricular structure of ISCED 2/third cycle: subject areas - Portuguese, Foreign Language, Human and Social Sciences, Technological Education, Physical Education (one teacher per subject); non-subject areas - Project area, Tutorial Studying, and Civic Education (usually the subject teacher areas).

- Curricular structure of ISCED 3/upper secondary education (grades 10-12):

  o General Courses: a general component (4 subjects common to all areas: Portuguese, Foreign language, Philosophy and Physical Education); a specific component (5 core subjects of the course); Project and social training area (project work and religion [optional])

  o Technological Courses: general component, scientific and technological (6 subjects, 3 of them matching the technological area), Project and social training area (project work and religion [optional])

  o Professional courses (provided in vocational schools):

Evaluation and certification

In compulsory education the formative evaluation prevails, but at the end of each grade there is a summative one, consisting of an overall judgement about the quality of learning based on the evidences gathered by the teacher(s) during the school year. It determines whether the student will pass to an upper grade or he/she will be retained in the same one.

Pupils have standardized national tests in grades 4 and 6 in Math and Portuguese. Results are not used to assess students' performance, but to evaluate the quality of teaching and as benchmarking measures instead.

There are national examinations in grades 9 (Portuguese and Math), 11 and 12 (Portuguese plus three subjects of the upper secondary attended course).

The first diploma pupils can be awarded is at the end of the 9th grade, when they finish compulsory education. When they finish upper secondary education (12th grade) they are awarded the upper secondary education diploma.

Students' enrolment

While attending compulsory education (grades 1 to 9), pupils have to enrol in a school near their residence (priority) or near the parents' work area. Compulsory education provided by public schools is free. Most management units (see next paragraph) have the support of a psychologist, who not only co-operates with teachers that deal with students who have learning and behavioural difficulties, but also provides guidance to students for professional and academic choices. Very often, the choice of

the upper secondary course is a consequence of psychologists' advices, based on the results of pupils' tests of competences.

Pupils are free to choose the High School they want to attend. Usually their choice takes into account the educational offers the school provides and their own interests.

School management

From the management point of view, public schools can be grouped in two types: single and school clusters. Single means that the school has its own management boards. This situation is common among High Schools. A school cluster is a management unit, that is to say a group of schools within the same district, providing mostly pre-school and compulsory education levels, run by the same management boards. School clusters were designed to increase efficiency in the management of resources and to improve articulated work between schools and pedagogical sequence. Most schools in Portugal are already clustered.

Schools (single and clusters) are managed by three main boards:
- The school assembly is the body responsible for the definition of guidelines for school activities. The educational community - teachers, parents, students, non-teaching staff, municipality and local stakeholders - is represented in the assembly, which may have up to 20 members. The head teacher and the chairperson of the pedagogic council attend the meetings of the school assembly, although they are not entitled to vote.
- The Assembly has the following major duties:
  o Approving, monitoring and assessing the school education project (the plan that gives the main features of the school; guiding principles for the work; planning of the curriculum in headlines; and the school development plan – this plan is for a period of 3 à 4 years; see below in paragraph 4 for further details) and its implementation;
  o Approving the internal rules of procedure of the school, or school cluster;
  o Approving proposed contracts for autonomy;
  o Defining budget guidelines and issuing an opinion on management accounts;
  o Assessing the outcomes of the school.
  o The school assembly must meet once every quarter on a regular basis.

- The executive board is responsible for the administration and management of the school or school cluster. The executive board has a president (head teacher) and two deputies. This body may have the support of two teacher assistants, who undertake a kind of consultancy work.
- The executive board has responsibilities such as:
  o Drawing up the main school documents that will be submitted for the approval of the school assembly,
  o Teaching and administration management of the school or school cluster, in line with the principles defined by the pedagogical body, in matters such as grouping students, timetable preparation, assignment of classes and other services to teachers; implementing school social programmes and signing agreements with other schools.
- Any teacher who wants to become the head teacher of a school must be a fully qualified teacher of that school, with a minimum of five years' experience, and must be qualified to work in school administration and management, having acquired these qualifications through training or through working experience corresponding to a full mandate in a post of school management. In public schools, head teachers are elected by school peers and non-teaching staff, and representatives of parents and of upper secondary students (whenever applicable).

- The Pedagogical board is a consultative body that issues opinions on the educational policy of the school or school cluster. It may have a maximum of 20 members (curricular department co-ordinators, co-ordinators for the year/cycle or course, specialised services for educational support, project co-ordinators, parents, non-teaching staff and pupils (in upper secondary education).
Responsibilities of the pedagogical board:

- Submitting proposals for the school education project and the annual plan of activities;

- Issuing opinions on the internal regulations;

- Issuing opinions on proposals for autonomy;

- Organizing a training plan for teaching and non-teaching staff,

- Adopting school handbooks.

    The pedagogical board meets ordinarily once a month.

3. The Tasks, Responsibilities and Roles of the Inspectorate – general statements.

3.1 Legal basis; description in official documents.

These roles and tasks are based in the specific law that frames the activity of IGE. The Inspectorate of Education is legally mandated to:

o Ensure the quality of the non-higher education system;

o Safeguard the interests of those who take part and use the education system;

o Appreciate the legal conformity of the activity of all services and organisms of the Ministry of Education;

o Audit the internal control devices of all services and departments of the ME;

o Supervise the effective and efficient use o public money, with regard to the aims set by the Government;

o Undertake disciplinary proceedings in the services and departments of the ME;

o Supervise all the services of the Ministry of Education

o Propose measures aimed at improving the education system;

o Undertake the external evaluation of schools.

        A few notes on the past of the Portuguese Inspectorate of Education

When the first laic (non – church based) public education system was built, a General Study Directory with inspection roles, was set up (1759). The competencies of that Directory in supervision aimed at the compliance with education norms, namely:

o To report about the state of the art of studies at the end of the school year;

o   To propose the "adequate means for school progress";

o   To warn and correct teachers who were not fulfilling their duties. In serious circumstances, the inspectors could propose teachers to be punished or withdrawn from the profession.

The current Inspectorate of Education (IGE - Inspecção-Geral da Educação) was set up in 1979.

Since then there were a few changes in its roles:

o   - The overall activities were more centred in the control of legal compliance;

o   - There was an additional role of supervision of the evaluation of non-teaching staff.

3.2 Mission statement.

The mission of the Inspectorate is:

o   To guarantee quality, equity and justice in education

o   To undertake the control, audit and supervision of the non-higher education system, including the services and departments of the Ministry of education

o   To contribute to the accountability of the education system

o   To provide information in order to support policy-makers in their decisions and in order to underpin the public opinion, in general.

Ten years ago, the mission statement included both audit and supervision competencies. Also, the technical support to the Ministry, by means of recommendations aiming at the improvement of the system, was part of the mission.

3.3 Which organizations and practices are inspected except schools?

The Inspectorate of Education is entitled to inspect:

o   non-higher education providers (public and private)

o   teacher training centres (organised within associated schools)

o   services and structures of the Ministry of Education, whenever requested by a member of the Government.

4. Full Inspection of Schools as a Task of the Inspectorate.

4.1 General description.

Aims of the school external evaluation (full inspection) activity:

- To lead schools to a systematic self-questioning about their practices and outcomes;

- To use external evaluation as a tool that can increase school self-evaluation culture and devices;

- To empower schools;

- To contribute to the regulation of the school system;

- To improve the knowledge of schools and their educational provision.

The results of the school evaluation are reported by the Inspectorate. If the performance is good, it means that the school has conditions to increase its autonomy. The development of autonomy is a contractual process – a contract establishes the terms to increase autonomy. The contract is signed between the school, the Ministry of Education and other local stakeholders. The contract defines the roles of each of the parties, the competencies that will be transferred from the Ministry to the school and the means that are necessary to support the process. It still is an experimental regime of school autonomy, encompassing currently 23 schools and school clusters.

4.2 The main aspects of quality to be inspected

There are five-broad domains of quality that are inspected. For each domain there is a set of factors (in brackets) that will be analysed (see list below).

1. Students' outcomes (Students' attainment, Students' participation and citizenship development, Behaviour and discipline, Valuing and impact of learning)

2. Provision of education (Articulation and sequence, Monitoring classroom teaching, Differentiation and extra support, Scope of the curriculum and enhancement of multi knowledge and learning)

3. Organisation and school management (Activity designing, planning and developing; Management of human resources; Management of financial and material resources; Parents participation and other players of the school community; Equity and justice)

4. Leadership (Vision and strategy, Motivation and commitment, Openness and innovation, Partnerships, protocols and projects)

5. Self-regulation capacity and school progress (Self-evaluation, Sustainability of progress)

Infrastructure: the evaluation team visits the school together with the school head. Although the evaluation does not address specific issues concerning infrastructure, the overview of them is taken into account when reporting on the quality of the school.

In the course of school external evaluations, inspectors interview the following actors in order to collect evidences about the school performance in each of the 5 dimensions above-mentioned:

- The head teacher and the Deputies

- Representatives of parents, namely the School Parents' Association

- Class Tutors

- The President of the Pedagogic Council and Department Coordinators or Teachers' Council (Pre-school and Primary education)

- Some teachers, without leading positions

- The School Psychologist and other technical support staff

- Students' representatives, namely of the students' association

- Non-teaching staff

- School evaluation team

- Chair and members of the school assembly

4.3 The inspection process.

The inspectorate is the initiator of the external evaluation. It is the Inspectorate that takes the initiative by inviting the Schools (either single or clusters) to submit themselves to an external evaluation process.

So far, the management units have applied on a volunteer basis. However, all the schools will be evaluated within the 4-year cycle, irrespective of being a volunteer. Following this step, the Inspectorate selects the annual sample of schools that will be evaluated.

Schools are requested to provide pre-inspection information: a text with an overview of the school (including information about students' attainment progress in the last 3 or 4 years), documentation encompassing school guidelines, statistical data and any other information school finds relevant.

This is done 3 months before the whole process begins.

For each school evaluation, a report is produced containing the results and highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the school performance, as well as the opportunities and constraints. There are no follow-up inspections planned.

A description in more detail:

Preparation phase:

The evaluation team includes two inspectors plus an external evaluator (usually a University Professor). The school is requested to prepare and provide some information (see above).

The inspection team analyses the information previously requested from the school. The inspection team schedules the inspection and informs the school about the planned activities.

School phase:

This phase lasts two or three days. The School Director and the Deputies introduce the school to the team of inspectors. The inspectors visit the school and have a number of meetings with various groups in order to collect information and to verify its consistency.

- o Meeting with the School Director, the Deputies and the school coordinators, whenever schools are clustered in the same Management Unit

- o Meeting with the representatives of Parents

- o Meeting with Class Tutors

- o Meeting with the head of the pedagogic council and Department coordinators

- o Meeting with other school teachers

- o Meeting with the Psychologist and other guidance support staff

- o Meeting with students representatives

- o Meeting with non-teaching staff

- o Meeting with the self-evaluation team (if there is one)

- o Meeting with the school board

- o Document analysis – whenever the evaluation team finds it necessary to confirm the information

- o School visits (other schools belonging to the same Management Unit)

Completion phase:

The report is sent to the school. Schools are allowed to express contradictory opinions. If these opinions are evidence-based, the content of the evaluation report can be reviewed.

4.4 Practical organization.

Frequency:

Within the external evaluation programme: schools are visited every four years.

However, management units can be inspected once or more every year, in the scope of other inspection activities. [See paragraphs 6.1 to 6.3]

Evaluation Team:

Two inspectors plus one external expert evaluator.

Sectoral differences:

Tertiary sector is not part of the scope of IGE activity. Adult or Special Education – there are not inspections addressing specifically these target publics. The school provision to adult and special needs children is inspected, but in the scope of other inspection activities. There are no major differences in the practical organisation of the inspections, with regard to the inspected sector. The inspection programme for full inspections addresses exclusively the public system.

Differences in governance.

The full evaluation is planned in accordance to the type of Management Unit – single school or school clusters.

The main difference between the evaluation of a single school and the evaluation of a school cluster is the duration of the school phase: while in the first case it lasts two days, in the second it lasts three days (school clusters). Although the number of meetings with school players is basically the same, when a school cluster is evaluated several of its schools are visited.

No *questionnaires* are applied.

Interviews are held with the heads and their deputies; representatives of parents, class tutors, members of the pedagogic council, school teachers, psychologists and other support staff, students representatives, non – teaching support staff, the self – evaluation team, the school assembly. These interviews cover various aspects of quality domains stated earlier in paragraph 4.2.

Observations:

There are no observations in classrooms.

Tests or examinations:

Results are analyzed. Data is provided by the Department responsible for statistics in the Ministry of Education. Very often, schools provide their own data on students' attainment. It is possible to benchmark the results of a school against national ones, or against schools located in a municipality with a similar index of social development.

Document analysis

Various *documents* are read and analyzed:

- o The "school education project": a set of objectives established by the school to be achieved in a medium time frame (3 or 4 years), based on a diagnosis of the existing situation. They are shared by the school players.

- o The annual plan of activities: various school activities (curricular, non-curricular, training, etc.) planned for a school year, which must be aligned with the objectives of the School Education Project.

- o The report about the annual plan of activities: the evaluation of the planned activities - achievement and outcomes.

- o The school internal regulations: internal norms, decided by the School Board with respect to the legislation, that students and school staff must fulfil.

- o Evaluations or previous inspection reports: the results of previous evaluation or inspection activities.

- o Description of training activities undertaken by the school.

There is a framework of references that helps the evaluation team to analyse the quality of the five domains [see paragraph 4.2]. Such framework comprises the following elements:

- o a question of departure for each domain;

- o a set of indicators that are to be evaluated in each factor of the domain;

o   the criteria against which the factors are evaluated;

o   examples of questions that can be asked in the interviews.

4.5 Reporting with a judgment about the school's quality and the possible consequences.

500 judgements were made in the school year 2006/2007 (100 schools or clusters of schools were evaluated in 5 domains each). The proportion was: Very Good – 21%, Good – 54%, Satisfactory – 24%, Unsatisfactory – 1%.

Roughly two percent of the schools were below the minimal standards. These schools presented a development plan aimed at overcoming the weakest domains of their performance and they are receiving some support of the Regional Services of the Ministry of Education.

The school that succeeds is awarded an autonomy contract that enables it to manage an increasing number of areas of school governance. [see paragraph 4.1].

After the external evaluation, the school is also expected to build up a Development Plan aimed at overcoming the weakest aspects that were found. Such a plan is submitted to the school assembly and to the Regional Services of the Ministry of Education. Schools will not be able to sign an autonomy contract, before they give evidence they are performing above the minimal standards.

The school has the possibility to appeal against the judgement of the evaluation tem.

If the judgement remains negative, in the course of the following school year the school will profit from the support provided by the Regional Services of The Ministry of Education and will be monitored by the Inspectorate. The school must present an improvement plan with objectives and goals to be achieved.

Full inspection of non–public schools:

Non-public schools are not encompassed by the external evaluation programme. There are some other inspection activities that also address the private sub-system.

5 Inspection of the School's Self – Evaluation

5.1 Obligation of schools concerning quality assurance and improvement.

School self-evaluation is compulsory. The mandatory self-evaluation addresses both process and product evaluation. Schools are expected to evaluate:

o   The degree of implementation of their own "school education project"

o   A set of objectives established for the school to be achieved in a medium term (3 or 4 years), based on a diagnosis of the existing situation and addressing goals shared by the school players.

o   The implementation of activities that contribute to the development of the school;

o   The administration and management;

- o Students' attainment;

- o The collaboration between the members of the education community.

However, school self-evaluation initiatives have been undertaken on a volunteer non-systematic basis and mostly focused on very specific aspects (i.e. students' attainment, projects, satisfaction towards an aspect of school life).

The aspects of quality that have to be covered by the obligatory self – evaluation are rather coincident with the framework of the IGE:

- o The progress of the school education project and annual plan of activities;

- o The adequacy of the teaching processes in relation to the individual characteristics of students;

- o The performance of school managers (high and middle levels);

- o The students' attainment;

- o The effectiveness of the collaboration between the diverse members of the education community.

 School self-evaluation is usually led by teachers, namely the headmaster, the deputies and an evaluation team. The Inspectorate is not a partner in the process

The most common methods seem to be: a) surveys; b) document analysis (minutes, reports of activities, etc.); c) data on student's results.

When an external evaluation is undertaken, the school has to account on aspects previously set by the Inspectorate, although the information provided can go far beyond. Schools have to account on the inspection requirements (i.e. – their own self-evaluation devices, students' attainment rates, improvement strategies, etc.)

Schools have to provide regularly the Ministry of Education with updated data on students, human resources, financial and material resources. These data will support the Ministry of Education to manage the overall system.

This obligation is valid for all kinds of schools within the non-higher education system. Although specific legislation applies to the private education sub-system, for most core issues the same legislation as for the public sub-system applies also for the private sub - system.

5.2 Standpoint of the inspectorate about the inspection of school – self –evaluation.

In 2005 a new activity was set up – The appraisal of schools self-evaluation. This activity was focused on school self-evaluation. Both the quality of self-evaluation processes and products and the sustainability of the process were evaluated by the team of inspectors. As part of the interaction between inspectors and school players, some new ideas for improvement and, at the end of the inspection, some suggestions were given to schools.

The initiator of this activity was the inspectorate. Schools were selected by the Inspectorate with regard to pre-established criteria. In the beginning of the civil year, a notice was sent to schools that were going to be inspected in the scope of this activity.

Previous to the beginning of the activity, a training programme was provided for the inspectors who would later be involved in the school inspections.

The *school phase* consisted of:

o   presentation of the activity to the schools;

o   collection of evidences, mostly based on interviews, about the four domains of the appraisal: Vision and strategy of self-evaluation, self-evaluation and improvement of resources, self-evaluation and improvement of key processes, Self-evaluation and impact on outcomes;

o   providing the feedback about the highlights of the appraisal.

The *inspection* lasted 6 days.

The *reporting phase*:

The first step of the reporting phase took place at school - a meeting with the school interlocutors in order to present the key findings and the draft version of the report. The preparation of the National Report on the activity was built upon data and main findings of all the school inspection reports.

A sample of schools (selected from those that obtained the highest and lowest scores) was chosen for a follow-up evaluation focused on the progress made.

5.3 Practice.

In 2005 and 2006, 101 management units - comprising 792 individual schools - were inspected in the scope of this project. The activity was suspended in the beginning of 2007 (see below). The inspections were developed by two inspectors. Interviews were held with all groups representing the school community about the four domains and their nine Quality Indicators:

o   Aims and values

o   Strategy and policy for self-evaluation and improvement

o   Human resources

o   Finance and physical resources

o   Guidelines and standards

o   Planning and implementation of self-evaluation activities

o   Planning and implementation of action for improvement

o   Self-evaluation of the outcomes

o   Effectiveness of self-evaluation in the improvement of global performance.

Panel interviews were the most used methodology to collect examples of previous or underway school-based evaluations. The interviewees usually supported their testimonies with tangible evidences.

Inspectors used the handbook, a note book (which helped them to organise the notes taken from the interviews and observed evidences), a laptop and an excel table (providing some orientation for the interviews).

5.4 Reporting on the school's self – evaluation and possible consequences.

The assessment scale had four levels: 1 – Unsatisfactory (major weaknesses); 2 – Fair (some important weaknesses); 3 – Good (strengths outweigh weaknesses); 4 – Very Good (major strengths). The framework and the evaluation scale had much in common with the ESSE project, developed in the scope of SICI.

Besides the evaluation of the Quality Indicators, the team of inspectors collected good examples of self-evaluation practices (up to 3 per school/school cluster). In a very concise way, they reported on them using the following headings (in brackets some examples):

- TITLE (Students' Outcomes Analysis)
- OBJECT (Data on students' attainment)
- AIM (Setting up adequate compensatory education)
- METHODOLOGY (Questionnaire, Data Analysis, Focus group, Observation, etc.)
- EXTERNAL SUPPORT (Yes – Teachers' Training Centre; Provided training and helped processing data)
- EFFECTS (Yes – Started compensatory education in Math and Science. Students' results improved; too much time spent)
- REFLEXION (about the process and the outcomes)

The team of inspectors reported on the findings, taking into account the evaluation of each Quality Indicator. Schools were expected to overcome the weakest aspects after recommendations.

The distribution of ratings in the 909 evaluations (9 Quality Indicators per each of the 101 Management Units), the list of the levels and the percentage of each is: Unsatisfactory-22, 44%; Fair-55, 89%; Good-21, 45%; Very Good-0, 22%.

This activity was suspended in the beginning of 2007.

6. Inspection of particular Themes of Quality.

6.1 General position.

The starting point of this type of inspections is not the whole school, but a particular topic, theme, domain or actor. Domain(s) or /actor(s) can vary greatly. Some examples: an inspection could be concentrated on domains like "the quality of teaching in pre-primary education", "the quality of

teaching and learning in mathematics in upper secondary education", "cross-curricular work in primary schools", or "guidance in higher education", etc. Such themes or topics are inspected in a sample of schools with the intention to report at national level about the "state of education at national level" in that particular theme or topic.

6.2 Examples of particular themes or topics.

The working methods of the IGE are described in two examples of different characteristics. However, in both themes the inspectors work in teams of two, they undertake interviews and document analysis.

The first example of such a thematic inspection is: "The organisation of the school year". It covers issues like: Students' grouping; students' schedules; teachers' schedules; curricular and extra-curricular schedules, etc. All the schools are visited in the scope of this activity within a four-year cycle. Follow-up inspections are foreseen whenever schools do not meet the expected standards properly. The aims of this thematic inspection are:

- o - to check the compliance with the law;
- o - to ensure the good use of resources;
- o - to promote the efficiency of the system;
- o - to correct irregular situations.

The second example is "School Management and integration of Pre-School and Primary Education Students". It covers areas such as

- o the planning of educational action (The School Education Project, School Curricular Project, Annual Plan of Activities, Class Curricular Projects);
- o Curriculum Management
- o Extra-curricular (enrichment) activities in Primary Education
- o Care and extra-curricular activities in support of working families;

It is focused on school management of curricular and non-curricular activities, in order
- o to observe school practices (on the management of the curriculum and non-curricular activities):
- o to evaluate the effectiveness of school practices;
- o to identify the good practices of school and community management of resources;
- o to identify constraints to the implementation of educational policies.

6.3 Processes and methods in thematic inspections.

Preparation phase

"The organisation of the school year"

There is a meeting with regional interlocutors of the Inspectorate aimed at improving the handbook of the activity and to analyse changes in the procedures. Then training module for inspectors are prepared and provided.

Schools are requested to fill in tables with data about students, teachers and schedules. The inspectorate initiates the inspection. Each inspection lasts one or two days. The head teacher is asked to select the school actors who will be interviewed – usually the team that helps preparing timetables.

"School Management and integration of Pre-School and Primary Education Students"
There is a meeting with regional interlocutors of the Inspectorate aimed at improving the handbook of the activity and to analyse changes in the procedures. Then training module for inspectors is prepared and provided.
The notice arrives at school one month before the inspection begins. Schools are requested to send Structural documentation: School Education Project, School Curricular Project, Annual Activities Plan, Class Curricular Projects. The head teacher is asked to select the school players who will be interviewed.

School phase

"The organisation of the school year"

The executive board and the team of teachers that supported the preparation of the timetables are interviewed whenever necessary: clarifying any provided data; clarifying the content of any analysed documentation (school timetables, students' groupings, school education project, minutes, and so on). The school inspection lasts one or two days and it is undertaken by a team of two inspectors.

When a not too serious unconformity is found, the Regional Services of the Ministry of Education can either accept it (when it has little influence on school efficiency or equity) or ask the school to correct it. When the unconformity is a serious one, it can lead to a disciplinary proceeding. In 2006/07 in 66% of the inspected schools unconformities were found. However, only 1% was serious.

"School Management and integration of Pre-School and Primary Education Students"

The inspectors look for

- o a set of objectives established by the school to be achieved in a medium term (3 or 4 years), based on a diagnosis of the existing situation and addressing goals shared by the school players;

- o strategies for the development of the national curriculum adapted to the specificity of each school;

- o diverse school activities (curricular, extra-curricular, training, etc.) planned for a school year, which must be aligned with the objectives of the School Education Project.

Interviews are held: if relevant, these education community actors can be interviewed - the head, parents, students, teachers, the coordinator of the Teachers' Council; staff in charge of extra-curricular activities; auxiliary staff, a representative of the municipality. These interviews help checking the data available in the tables and whether the school year was organised with respect to the principles of equity, fairness and efficiency.

At the end of the inspection, the team of inspectors presents to the head teacher a synopsis of the school inspection. The inspection report is sent to school in two weeks time.

No direct observations are foreseen in both inspection activities.

6.4 Inspection of staff.

Individuals are not inspected, unless there are complaints or in the scope of a disciplinary proceeding.

6.5 The judgment about themes, topics and staff and its possible consequences.

See the two examples in 6.3.

7. Advisory Tasks of the Inspectorate.

7.1 Areas and Tasks.

The Inspectorate has no statutory advisory role. However it can provide recommendations built upon inspection activities, addressed to schools, to policy-makers and even to the Inspectorate itself: whenever weaknesses are found in during the inspection. Below some examples of causes for recommendations:
- for teachers: ineffective interaction with students and lack of participation in school life.
- for head teachers: weaknesses found in the school, such as the lack of school strategies to meet students' problems, lack of efficiency in the use of resources; non-compliance with norms; and weaknesses of organisational processes.
- for policy makers: norm review whenever it does not fully respond to observed situations or when the assumptions that underpin the norm have changed.

7.2 Practices.

In the course of the supervision of the National Examinations and standardized tests it was found that schools had some difficulties dealing with the norms that frame the procedures, namely where the application of the examinations is concerned.. So, the Ministry was advised to make available to schools all the norms and instructions earlier than usual.

8. Other Tasks of the Inspectorate.

8.1 Curriculum development.

There is no task for the IGE here. There is a ministerial department assigned with this responsibility. The IGE can give advice or recommendations to that department.

8.2 Data bases

Although the Inspectorate organises the necessary bases to collect and process data, these are not published.

8.3 Examinations.

The IGE has no role in the preparation or in the organisation of examinations. However, it has the responsibility for the supervision of the process, aiming at the accomplishment of the norms and at ensuring equity in the process.

8.4 Handling complaints.

The Inspectorate of Education receives complaints through the ombudsperson service. Many of the complaints are made over the phone and the written ones mostly through the e-desk.

The complaints are diverse, as head teachers may complain about staff (teaching and non-teaching); parents may complain about head teachers, teachers and other school staff; and so on.

After analysing the characteristics of the complaint, the ombudsperson can try to overcome the problem with the school management, can forward it to the Regional Delegation in order to verify *in loco* the situation, or can propose to set up a disciplinary enquiry.

8.5 Financial or staff management of schools or districts.

The activity of IGE has no influence on the definition of the school budget. However, the Inspectorate has the responsibility to audit schools financial management. School sampling for audits is mostly risk-based [paragraph 9].

9. Risk – Based Evaluation.

The alternative for the periodic full inspection of all schools on a regular basis is the development of a "risk-based" selection of schools. In this type of evaluation, the inspectorate could rely on "early warning" monitoring systems: only if there is such a "warning" schools are selected for a "quick scan" if they provide low scores on the monitored quality standards. If the "quick scan" confirms that something is not satisfactory, a full inspection may be done.

The Portuguese Inspectorate is not working with such an approach, except in the case of financial and administrative audits. Here the warning system is based on previous inspection reports, which pointed out meaningful unconformities and weaknesses in a specific school.
Where the services of the Ministry of Education are concerned, the warning system relies upon the information provided by the Internal Control System of the State Administration and Finances (SCI).

Annually the SCI proposes a set of audits to be developed the following year, according to the degree of risk and based on a 'matrix of risk'. This decision is known in the last quarter of the year. Then the audits are scheduled. The training of inspectors is based on terms of reference. Approximately 30 days before the audit this training is done. The audit itself could take 3 weeks.

Approximately 60 days after the audit. The IGE is checking whether the recommendations were followed.

The IGE is also considering a risk – based approach for school inspections, but it depends on the ongoing improvement of the statistical monitoring system, which is being developed by another Service of the Ministry of Education (MISI).

10. Reports of Inspectors.

10.1 Kinds of reports.

IGE produces four kinds of reports:

- School reports: the outcomes of individual school inspections. They are public. Some copies are sent to school managers and in the case of the external evaluation of schools they are made available on the website of IGE.

- National Reports: about thematic inspections and the external evaluation of schools - one per activity. These address primarily the Policy makers and the Inspectorate. They are public.

- Annual Report of the Activities of the Inspectorate of Education (all the activities developed by the Inspectorate). The target audiences are primarily Policy makers and the Inspectorate, but they also can be any of the education stakeholders or researchers. The report is public and it is made available on the website.

- Enquiries; Disciplinary Proceedings. These reports are for individuals who are object of the inspection. They are confidential.

10.2 Target audiences.

[See 10.1]

10.3 Confidential or public.

[See 10.1]

11. Structure, Position, Staff and Budget.

11.1. Structure.

The Inspectorate consists of the Central Services and five Regional Delegations.

The "Central Services" are responsible for designing the annual working plan and the frameworks and instruments of inspection activities. It is also responsible for the co-ordination of the activities at national level and for writing and issuing national reports.

The Regional Delegations are responsible for undertaking fieldwork (school inspections), in co-ordination with the Central Services, and for the assignment of tasks to the inspectors in a regional dimension. Each school inspection report is prepared at regional level.

The Inspectorate Board consists of a Senior Chief Inspector and two Deputy Senior Chief Inspectors. This Board is managing the IGE. Every Regional Delegation has a Chief Inspector, whose position in the hierarchy is equivalent of the Deputy.

The Middle management consists of two heads of multidisciplinary teams (namely: Monitoring and Evaluation, Control and Audit) plus four departments with heads: the Juridical Bureau, Staff Bureau (support structure); the Planning and Documentation Bureau (support structure); the Informatics Bureau (support structure). Support structures do not have inspection roles.

11.2. Position.

The Inspectorate reports to the Minister of Education or the Secretary of State (Deputy Minister) responsible for the educational administration. There is no relationship of dependence with any other department of the Ministry. The Inspectorate is entitled to inspect all these Central and Regional Services of the Ministry of Education, under request of a member of the government.

11.3. Staff and budget

At the end of 2007 there were 206 inspectors. In 2000 the IGE took 0, 31% of the total education budget; in 2007 0, 24%. In 2000, it also included the inspection of Higher Education.

12. Recruitment and Training of Inspectors.

12.1. General remarks.

To enter an Inspectors' career it is necessary to take part in a competition for the position, following the opening of vacancies.

12.2. Recruitment conditions.

It is a pre-requisite to have a graduation at university plus five years of teaching, while a post-graduation on inspection of education or similar field is an asset.
Recruitment follows diverse stages:
- Notice of vacancies – per country region and teaching background – Sciences, Social Sciences, Pre-School education, etc.)
- Eligibility checking (verification of the documentation sent by applicants. Checking if the application accomplished the pre-requisites);
- Written test – two general questions about inspection
- Applicants' CV evaluation
- Interviews - only for those who passed the 3 previous stages.
One probationary year (involving job-shadowing and additional training) is compulsory. At the end, trainees have to prepare a critical report.

12.3.   Training.

New inspectors participate in a wide variety of activities, either in the modality of job shadowing or supervised by a senior inspector.

12.4.   In - service – training.

Regular annual themes: school evaluation, legal issues, financial audits, ICT and Reporting.
Activity focused on training: whenever an inspection activity is launched or re-launched, all the inspectors involved are expected to attend some specific training on the activity.

13. Evaluation of the Inspectorate

13.1.   Internal

The Internal Quality Unit currently manages and analyses the use of 'inspection days' in the activities, and supervises the distribution of tasks across the Regional Delegations of the Inspectorate.

All individuals working at the inspectorate are evaluated either by the middle management or by the senior management, depending on the leadership he/she reports to. The evaluation has effects on the individuals career, namely on the required time to progress to another category.

13.2.   External.

Schools - in 2004 and 2005 – gave their opinions and perceptions of the impact of inspections. Parents were not involved, nor were others. The Inspectorate collected and processed information about the provision with regard to 4 different activities, by means of questionnaires on the impact of these inspections. It was developed an 'Indicator of Provision'. The results were forwarded to inspectors involved in those activities and used in debates and for the review of the inspection handbooks.

It is part of the external evaluation of schools, a questionnaire addressed to inspectors and external evaluators involved in the activity, as well as school boards of the evaluated schools. They are asked about the following topics: the relevance of the issues approached and the framework of references, the evaluation preparation stage, the process of evaluation and the report itself.

The Inspectorate accounts to the Minister of Education or, in some cases, to the Deputy Minister (Secretary of State); by means of reports or in person (the Senior Chief Inspector has regular meetings with members of the Government).

13.3.   Consequences.

Whenever it is found - by means of the evaluation of impact or by the perception of field inspectors themselves - that the processes are not the best to achieve the aims. the methods can be adapted, in order to facilitate the inspection processes and to make it more effective (for instance, the time the inspection lasts or the time between the notice and the inspection).

Sometimes it is necessary to set up new activities, aligned with new demands and addressing new problems. On the other hand, other activities may drop either because they are substituted by new ones or because the problems in their origin were overcome.

14. **Developments, prospects**.

14.1.   Developments.

Important developments are:

- The increasing number of responsibilities assigned to IGE that makes it more complex to define its roles;

- The challenges brought about by strengthening school autonomy;

- The increasing complexity of the 'inspector profile', due to the broad diversity of tasks inspectors must fulfil.

- The new criteria for the progression in the career of inspector.

14.2.   Prospects.

Due to a gradual reduction of Human Resources, mostly brought about by the retirement of inspectors, and to the wide range of activities assigned to the organisation, it is expectable that new priorities will be set in the near future, and some activities may drop.

14.3.   Other areas of inspection.

The Inspectorate is entitled to inspect non-higher education training institutions, for teacher training organised on the basis of associated schools, as well as other services from the Ministry of Education, whenever requested by a member of the government.

14.4.   Other remarks.

15. Information: website, liaison - contact, links.

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Important websites are:

www.ige.min-edu.pt (website of the Inspectorate of Education. also in English)

www.min-edu.pt (website of the Ministry of Education))

www.mctes.pt (website of the Ministry for Higher Education)

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About Legislation

- Decree-Law nr 540/79, 31 December 1979 – sets up the Inspectorate of Education

- Decree-Law nr 213/2006, 27 October 2006

- Organic law of the Ministry of Education

- Implementing Law - nr. 81-B/2007

– Organic Law of the Inspectorate of Education

- Ordinance nr 827-G/2007, 31 July – Management structure of the Inspectorate

- Ordinance nr 827-F/2007, 31 July - Management structure of the Inspectorate