

Country Profile NORWAY

1. **Basic information** – this should be as short as possible; doesn't need to be in paragraphs or full sentences.

Country name: Norway

Structure of inspectorate: Are you organised centrally or by region/state? Does inspection regulation or standards vary across regions or states?

1) *The Ministry of Education and Research...*

...bears the overall responsibility for the Education Act, Private School Act and Folk High School Act, which are the laws we inspect. The Ministry has delegated the management of the inspection system to the Directorate for Education and Training.

2) *The Directorate for Education and Training*

The Directorate reports to the Ministry.

- *Department for Inspection...*

...is given the primary national responsibility for inspection work; e.g. instruction and guidance work for the County Governor's offices, carry out inspections towards private schools and Folk High Schools.

The Directorate for Education and Training carries out inspections of the private schools and Folk High schools. These inspections follow the same principles and methodology as with inspections of public schools.

In addition, inspection with private schools has a special focus on how they use their financial subsidies. The statutory requirements are generally the same, with the exception of the economic element that is characteristic of the private schools.

3) *County Governor's office... (16 soon 10.)*

...are the Governments regional offices with many different tasks for following up the Governments policy. One of their main tasks is to carry out inspections in public schools and with the municipalities' responsibility for the kindergartens. Inspections are carried out towards County municipalities and municipalities.

Age of inspectorate: How long have you been established for? What was your predecessor organisation (i.e. who did inspection before you?).

The department of inspection was established in 2008. Earlier the County Governors carried out inspections separately with a minimum grade of coordination.

Size: How many inspectors do you have? How many central/policy staff do you have?

Within the County Governors and the directorate there are approximately 50-60 full time equivalents (primary and lower secondary schools, kindergartens and private schools).

Remits: What form of education do you inspect? E.g. early years, schools, universities? Anything that is non-education?

The County Governors carry out the public school inspections. They also carry out inspections towards the municipalities' responsibility with kindergartens. Inspections with kindergartens are carried out at municipality level, not in each kindergarten. The inspections contain control with the

municipality's responsibilities by law. The municipalities are responsible for providing and running public kindergartens, as well as for approving and supervising both public and private kindergartens in the municipality. The municipalities are by law required to ensure that the kindergartens are operated within their approval framework and that the contents comply with legislation, regulations and the framework plan. In addition the municipalities have an active responsibility for providing guidance to the kindergartens within their municipality.

Unit of inspection: Do you inspect schools or groups of schools (or both?) Do you inspect teachers, or subject departments? Do you inspect local authorities?

The directorate inspects private schools.

What is your strapline? E.g. Ofsted's is "Raising standards, improving lives"

One of the main tasks for the inspection is to make sure that it helps to increase the fulfillment of the regulations (set of rules). If the regulations are obeyed, all pupils and children in Kindergartens would have the offer put out through legislation as a minimum standard.

Relationship with government: Do you operate as part of the Education Ministry, or are you independent? Briefly explain the legal relationship you have with the Ministry (e.g. any reporting duties)? Are you allowed to report on government policy? Are you allowed to publish reports without govt approval?

See described structure of inspection above. The Norwegian Inspectorate is not organized as its own agency. Instead, "inspection" is one of several tasks and roles at the Directorate for Education and Training; from supervisory tasks to development and school guidance. As a part of the directorate's responsibility for inspection, we are guiding and instructing the County Governors in their work with carrying out inspections.

Accountability: What are you accountable for delivering? Where is this set out? (e.g. in legislation or in a policy document?) How are you held to account as an organisation (e.g. must you report annually)?

Our responsibility for inspection is both set out in legislation and in policy documents. The Inspectorate focuses on inspecting the application of laws, ensuring that school owners and owners of kindergartens comply with the statutory obligations. As a preparation to all inspections, we contemplate both the law and other frameworks that are developed as tools for how the sector shall behave. It's important to mention that inspection is a part of a bigger toolbox (e.g. guidance, subsidies). Since 2017 we have had a new handbook for inspection on how inspections with schools and kindergartens are carried out. The Norwegian Inspectorate focuses on controlling the municipalities and counties compliance's with the statutory duties. National standards are ensured through legislation, regulatory controls, curricula and general framework plans. The Inspectorate will supervise and monitor the legislators' wishes and ensure that these are realized to the extent they are expressed in laws or in accordance with these laws.

The Inspectorate will also require schools and school owners to make changes to the educational practice if legal obligations are not complied with. In cases where inspections discover violations to the law, the Inspectorate's work does not end until the violation is corrected.

2. Evaluation process – this should be in short paragraphs

Self-evaluation: Do you have a form of self-evaluation (i.e. do you expect institutions to report on themselves?) If so, briefly explain how this relates to external evaluation.

Our methodology contains an offer to schools and school owners with guidance and self-evaluation before the inspection starts. The guidance will be both written material and conferences on each subject of the inspection. This guidance will be offered to all school owners (municipalities and county municipalities).

To carry out the self-evaluation there will be offered templates for school owners to do this. Initially it will be voluntarily to use them, but when the inspection starts, the inspectors will collect the self-evaluation and use them as documentation in the inspection.

What do you examine during inspection? Do you look at finances? Do you look at legal compliance? Do you observe and/or grade lessons?

One of the main tasks for the inspection is to make sure that it helps to increase the fulfillment of the regulations (set of rules). If the regulations are obeyed, all pupils and children in Kindergartens would have the offer put out through legislation as a minimum standard.

The inspection activities in Norway are legally based, this means that the national curriculum, the Education Act and its regulations are part of our framework. The municipalities and counties are not a part of the hierarchical national government system. The municipalities and counties are by law established as independent legal bodies. The Government therefore needs the legislation to intervene the local autonomy. *Other governing tools are economic- and pedagogical tools.*

Even though there is a certain freedom and opportunity for local adjustments, it is also a common democratic value that all citizens shall be treated *equally, without any discrimination, and should have the right to predict what they can expect from both local and national authorities.*

Do you have an inspection framework? Is this a quality or compliance model? Do you evaluate the quality of education or teaching, or report against a series of non-qualitative standards? How does this work?

All inspections, both those initiated by the directorate, and those decided by the County Governors themselves shall be carried out by using a common handbook for inspection.

Inspection time and resource. How long are your inspections? Do they last several days, or shorter? How many people go on inspection? What sort of qualifications/experience do they have? i.e. are they former headteachers, lawyers or accountants?

Before every inspection, we (or the County Governors) collect all available information about the theme for inspection. This normally takes place 3-4 weeks before we visit the schools. This should help the preparation of the inspection, and help the inspectors in how to prepare questions for their interviews in the inspection. Then, we do interviews, if necessary. This normally takes two days. If interviews are not necessary we write a report to the school owner/school based on the findings from the written material.

Frequency of inspections: Do you have set inspection cycles? How long are these? Are they risk-based or not? If risk-based, what information do you use for assessing risk?

Inspection activities are organized and carried out concerning conditions of important significance for attaining the objectives of the education sector, and where inspection could have the greatest effect. All inspections are risk based and limited within the economic frames of the inspection institute. A major focus of the Inspectorate is to have attention on fundamental values like safety, non-discrimination and attending to the interests of groups with the greatest needs.

An assessment is made of the importance of and risks involved in selecting themes for inspections. In the past, the Inspectorate has focused on themes like the psycho-social environment, students with special needs, and lately also Sami students' rights and the rights of adult students, how the schools handle with national tests and the schools work on the local curriculum. We make risk assessment, both to select municipalities for inspection, and to select themes for inspection.

An important basis for selecting themes and subjects for inspection is an effective system for monitoring education. Faster discovery of any possible violation of the law ensures that the Inspectorate can act on short notice to verify whether a law has been broken or not.

Information about the entire educational sector is collected, discussed and analyzed at regional and state level. The information from this work is also used as the basis for more long-term planning of inspection activities. Theme(s) for the inspections are selected based on a risk assessment of the data collected from a number of sources, recent research and information from the most important operators in the sector. Emphasis is also placed on experience from previous inspections and experience from guidance work and complaints and previous casework by the County Governor offices.

Main business: Do you do anything that is not inspection? E.g. pre-registration or providers, or other forms of regulation? Are you involved in complaints examination?
Do you take part in competition of headmasters?

See description above on the different organisations tasks. In the Directorate, we also handles complaints on the County Governors inspections. Private schools can complain on the directorates inspections to the Ministry.

3. Consequences of inspection

Reporting: Do you publish your reports on institutions? If so, who reads them and how are they used? (e.g. to help parents make school choices?)

Inspections reports are published by either the County Governors or the directorate.

Grade: Do you grade institutions? If so, how many do you have? Are there any rewards for getting the top grade? Or any punishment for getting the lowest?
No

Knowledge sharing: How do you use the findings of inspection? Do you use thematic reporting, and publish your findings?

Every year we make a summary of all inspections carried out by the county governors and the directorate. These reports are delivered to the Ministry and published on the directorate's website.

What happens following an inspection? Do schools shut down? Are the weak ones partnered with other schools; the strong ones allowed to flourish?

Consequences from inspections

Public schools	Private schools
Corrections - orders <i>a description of what to do in order to obtain a practice in accordance with law</i>	Corrections - orders
	Withdrawal of the funding's
	Hold back funding's
	Withdrawal of the schools approval

If we discover a breach to the regulations, the municipality will be informed. Then we will give orders to rectify non-compliance in the form of an inspection report. That means we must formulate the wording of these orders when we draw up the inspection report. Each order will require the formulation of one or more items for correction that describe the specific action required by the municipality to comply with the order. The wording of the orders are usually in general terms. It must always refer to a law or regulation and point out the specific regulatory requirement being in non-compliance. The wording must clearly tell the municipality what the legal grounds for the order are. In practical terms the wording of orders are often very similar to the wording of provisions in statutes or regulations. However, that does not mean the entire statutory provision has to be replicated in the order. An order must refer to a regulatory requirement, not necessarily to all the statutory or regulatory provisions.

What is the stated purpose of your inspectorate? Do you have a theory of action about how improvement is achieved through inspection?

As a part of the directorate's responsibility for inspection, we are guiding and instructing the County Governors in their work with carrying out inspections. Our work is based on the assumption that if the legislation is fulfilled, the pupils and children will be secured a good kindergarten and education situation. The Inspectorate's main duty is to contribute to improving compliance with the rules in the entire educational sector. School owners who are not subject to direct controls will also learn by observing other school owners being inspected.

It is important that the Inspectorate communicate with the sector in general terms based on experience, not just communicating with school owners who have been subject to controls.

Inspections at public and private schools are fundamental instruments to guarantee that children and adolescents receive their legally established right to a balanced education of the highest quality.

The inspection is acts by public authorities and it is therefore important for the Inspectorate's objectives to be well planned and executed according to the following principles for exercising public authority and application of law:

- Legitimacy
- Predictability
- Equal treatment and non-discrimination

Verifiability