

COUNTRY PROFILE

LITHUANIA

1. Basic information

Country name: Lithuania

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

We (National Agency for Education) are a national institution. The same regulation of inspection applies to the whole country.

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

National Agency for Education was established in 2019 as a result of the reorganization of six national educational institutions. One of them was National Agency for School Evaluation, established in 2006 and emerged as a consequence of School Improvement Programme (2002-2005).

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

More than 200 external school evaluators and 11 central staff in the Evaluation Department.

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

We inspect schools providing general education and early years.

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 main focus is on evaluation of school performance quality: lesson observation and ongoing processes in school.

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

Let's learn, improve and take action.

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?

We are a budgetary institution assisting the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport in the implementation of the state policy of early childhood education and care, pre-school and general education.

After external evaluation is finished a report containing strengths and areas of improvement is submitted to the school. Usually, only a part of this report is published if the school does not decide otherwise (to publish the full report).

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)?

The Agency prepares annual reports presenting the situation regarding school performance quality in the whole country.

2. Evaluation process

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.

Every year schools are requested to optionally provide reports on the use of self-evaluation results for performance improvement. External evaluation of the school performance quality is based on a self-evaluation conducted by the school.

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

During school external evaluation four main areas of school performance are looked at: performance of pupils, teaching / learning experiences, teaching / learning environments, management and leadership. About 75 per cent of information is collected from lesson observation.

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?

At the moment a quality-based evaluation model is being used in Lithuania (we do not inspect compliance). School quality assessment is indicator-based.

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 head teachers, lawyers or accountants?

Depending on the size of a school and number of teachers working there, it usually takes 4 or 5 days and respectively 4-7 people go on an external evaluation. Most of them are teachers, head teachers or deputy headmasters but there are also some pre-school teachers, representatives of education departments from municipalities, lecturers etc.

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?

Schools of general education used to be evaluated at least once in 7 years in case of full-scale external evaluation and after 2 years in case of risk-based evaluation. Currently risk-based and thematic external evaluations in schools of general education are being implemented.

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?

The Evaluation Division is also responsible for selection of headmasters. Besides, we organize training and CPD of external evaluators.

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?)

A long and a short report are produced after external evaluation is finished. While the main user of a long report is school (pupils, parents, teachers and school administration) and school decides to make it publicly available or not, a short report is always public and is meant for school founder and community.

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?

Schools are not graded by the Agency in Lithuania.

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

An annual report presenting the situation regarding school performance quality is prepared by the Agency.

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

There are no sanctions for schools after external evaluation. The main focus is on formative assessment and school support.

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

Our goal is to promote the improvement of schools striving for better quality of (self-) development and better achievements of pupils.