

## The Effectiveness of School Inspection in Selected Junior Secondary Schools in Freetown.

Santigie Sesay<sup>1</sup>, Ibrahim Sesay<sup>2</sup>, Joseph Kinnie Amara<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (Education Department, Milton Margai Technical University, Sierra Leone)

<sup>2</sup> (Education Department, Milton Margai Technical University, Sierra Leone)

<sup>3</sup> (Department of Agricultural Science Education and Home Economics, Njala University, Sierra Leone)

Corresponding author –Santigie Sesay,

**ABSTRACT:** The purpose of this research is to investigate 'The Effectiveness Of School Inspection In Selected Junior Secondary Schools In Freetown. 120 participants were involved – 30 staff purposively selected from the inspectorate office; 10 teachers and 20 pupils randomly selected from each of the three selected schools – With the use of questionnaire and interview, it was found out that the schools have not been effectively inspected and that could be the reason for the poor quality teaching in the schools as evidenced by the rampant examination malpractices and poor performance of students at public examinations such as WASSCE, BECE, and NPSE.

**Key words** – Effect, Effectiveness, School inspection, Supervise

---

### I. Introduction

School Inspection (Inspection of Schools) in Sierra Leone could be as old as formal education in Sierra Leone. This is so because, the human being naturally needs motivation (be it intrinsic and/or extrinsic) to maximize effectiveness in performing their duties. The inspection of schools could be an extrinsic motivation for teachers to maximize effectiveness in their work and thereby increase the learning outcomes of pupils. School inspectors and school supervisors are responsible for school inspection, supervision and quality assurance of all schools including the quality of teaching (<https://hrmanual.tsc.gov.sl>)<sup>[1]</sup>. According to the Sierra Leone Education Ordinance of 1954<sup>[2]</sup>, provision for 'inspection of schools' was made in Section 44. Such provision gave powers to the Director of Education to inspect or cause inspection of every school at such interval as he shall think fit. In the inspection process, the Director, the Inspector, or any other person specially authorized by the Director shall inspect the school premises and anything appertaining thereto or contained therein.

This shows how important is this activity (the inspection of schools); but how effective it is in the selected schools in Freetown is the crucial point that has stimulated this study.

School inspection is one of the most challenging aspects in education; it represents an approach of accountability in teaching and learning. Moreover, school inspection provides policy and decision makers with accurate information about the current state of education in their respective institutions (<https://www.researchgate.net/publication>)<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **1.1 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to **investigate the effectiveness of school inspection in selected secondary schools in Freetown, Western Area Urban District, Western Region, Sierra Leone; and to recommend strategies that could be employed to improve school inspection and the learning outcomes of pupils.**

There has been a gradual increase in the accessibility of secondary schools by pupils which, however, is not relatively matched to an increase in pupils' success. Several factors contribute to low output and pass rates, and these include, amongst others, poor leadership, under-preparedness of students to pursue their education, lack of effective instruction, and inadequate access to student support services (Strydom, Basson and Mentz, 2010)<sup>[4]</sup>. The above-mentioned factors are important, but the key to improving output and pass rates in secondary education lies in ensuring quality leadership for effective teaching and learning through school inspection. Teaching and learning should be informed by the institutional approaches that translate leadership into effective teaching and learning practices and learning support for students.

For a school system such as the one in the three selected secondary schools (Freetown Secondary School for Girls, Saint Joseph Convent and Methodist Girls High School), there are supervisory and monitoring agencies such as Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE), and Teaching Service Commission (TSC) who are set up by statutes and laws to monitor teaching and learning activities across the country. The Officers or Officials who are performing the functions of monitoring/overseeing/supervising teachers and their teaching activities are called various names or tags such as inspectors, supervisors, secretaries, etc.

Despite the premium put on Free Quality School Education (FQSE) in Sierra Leone, with 21% of the country's Gross Domestic Per capita (GDP), the poor performance of students remained unsolved although many other factors could be responsible. The crux of the matter remains that if the supervision of instruction combined with the guidance and developmental approaches are provided for teachers, it will translate to the improved performance of teachers and pupils. In addition to the above, the education inspectors at their monthly meetings in Freetown, in 2013 revealed that topics filled in schemes of work and syllabi were not completed during teaching periods of academic years, thus pupils were deficient and inadequately prepared. This could be attributed to the ineffectiveness of school inspection. It has therefore prompted this study titled **'The Effectiveness of School Inspection in Selected Schools in Freetown, Western Area Urban District, Western Region, Sierra Leone'.**

### **1.2 Research questions:**

1. What is the role of School Inspectorates in the Western Area?
2. What is the effectiveness of school inspection in the selected schools?
3. What are the effects of school inspection on teaching and learning in the selected schools?
4. What are the challenges associated with school inspection in the selected schools?

## **II. Review of literature**

In many developed countries, such as United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA), much more attention has been given to inspection than school supervision (Lee, Dig & Song, 2008)<sup>[5]</sup>. The Inspectorate of Education had originated from France under Napoleon's Regime at the end of the 18th century, and other European countries followed the idea in the 19th century (Grauwe, 2007)<sup>[6]</sup>. For example, in UK, the first two inspectors of schools were appointed in 1883 (Shaw, Newton, Aitkin & Darnell, 2003)<sup>[7]</sup> and in the Netherlands, according to Dutch Inspectorate of Education report on The State of Education in the Netherlands 2008/2009, it was started in 1801. According to Grauwe (2007), the terms "inspector" and "inspection" are still being used in various developed and developing countries, including UK, USA, European countries and some African countries such as Lesotho, Senegal, Tanzania and Nigeria.

So much transformation is taking place in education throughout the world even though it is yet to be felt in some developing countries. There has been a change in the role of the inspector, supervisor or advisor, as is now widely called, from authoritarian control, prescription and enforcement to persuasion, leadership, consultation and guidance. Education in Sierra Leone is on the exclusive list of the constitution meaning that the government has absolute right to determine the policy implementation and ensure strict quality control through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), and its collaborative agencies (Wilcox, 2000<sup>[8]</sup>; Macbeath, 2006)<sup>[9]</sup>, which is now called Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE).

School inspection is one of the mechanisms that governments use to ensure accountability to the public in terms of the value for money invested in the education systems, and to improve and guarantee the education quality and standards in schools (Hargreaves, 1995<sup>[10]</sup>; De Grauwe, 2001<sup>[11]</sup>; Wanzare, 2002<sup>[12]</sup>; Jackson & Wallis, 2006)<sup>[13]</sup>. In various education systems, the school inspection process, also known as external evaluation, is carried out by either an independent agency or a semi-autonomous organ attached to the Ministry of Education (MOE) or by an organ within the MOE. The current practice of school inspection in various education systems is facing challenges that curtail its credibility and usefulness in achieving the objectives for which it was established.

Recent research has identified some of the bottlenecks to external evaluation practice that curtail its credibility among teachers and head-teachers. These include poor inspection techniques leading to high levels of anxiety and stress among teachers and head-teachers, and the failure for external evaluation practice to improve teacher classroom practice and head-teacher management practice. According to Hopkins, Harris, Watling and Beresford (1999)<sup>[14]</sup> and Perryman (2010)<sup>[15]</sup>, the improvement of schools through inspection has been a subject of research and evaluation to justify the investment of funds in the process. Even though inspection has been supposed to lead to school improvement there has been limited research on the topic to support the claim or to establish whether or not inspections as currently conducted actually made positive impact upon school improvement (Earley, 1996<sup>[16]</sup>; Wilcox & Gray, 1996<sup>[17]</sup>; Hopkins et al. 1999; Whitby, 2010)<sup>[18]</sup>.

The effectiveness and reliability of educational system can majorly be achieved through supervision, therefore, Peretomode (2004)<sup>[19]</sup> defined instructional supervision as a set of activities to make teaching and learning conducive for learners and for improving instruction which influence teachers' behaviours through assisting and supporting to facilitate learning in order to realize school' goals and mission. A related research study conducted by Akinwumiju & Agabi in 2008<sup>[20]</sup> defined instructional supervision as a collaborative effort between supervisors and teachers whereby the supervisor stimulates, directs and co-ordinates, and cultivates good interactions for achieving effective achievement of the goals of the school.

The Supervisors who report to the Inspectors of Schools should, among other things, give demonstration lessons, examine methods and contents of syllabuses, coordinate and organise In-service Training and maintain records of schools, staff, pupils and facilities. (<https://www.ministryofeducation.gov.sl>)<sup>[21]</sup>

After inspection and supervision, the Supervisors should discuss their findings with the school administrators and prepare a report which is submitted to the Inspector of Schools. The Inspector should oversee, check and give advice on the report for onward transmission to the DD who should then review the report before submission to the Director of Inspectorate at Ministry of Education Headquarters in Freetown. (<https://www.ministryofeducation.gov.sl>)

UNESCO-IIEP (2007)<sup>[22]</sup> gave some inspection models that had been used in schools in various education systems over the decades, three of which were: (i) classical inspection, (ii) central control, and (iii) close-to-school support. In the **Classical Inspection (CI) model**, an inspection organ in the Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for elaborating inspection policies, planning for national inspection, training and system control. School inspection under the **Central Control (CC) model** is implemented by an autonomous body through time-to-time school visits every three to five years, and takes on the form of an audit of all the aspects of the school

functioning with a published report at the end. At the school level, the board supervises the school management while the principal who is the school administrator, conducts regular teacher supervision and engages private service providers for teacher in-service training. The **Close-to-School Support (CSS) model** has the following underpinnings that schools are very different in terms of the constitution and needs of their students, teachers, parents, resources and environments, hence the supervision process must consider the specific characteristics and diverse needs of each school; and that schools require consistent pedagogical support through regular visits conducted by support-oriented supervisors. Inspection officers at the district level are responsible for intensive training and for implementing support-oriented inspection for schools that are in most need. At the school level, the head-teacher is responsible for the informal supervision of teachers.

### **III. Materials and Methods**

#### **3.1 Population and sample**

According to the Sierra Leone 2021 Annual School Census Report, there were 295 Junior Secondary and 183 Senior Secondary schools in Freetown. There was an inspectorate office in which the DD, the inspectors, and the supervisors are found.

Therefore, 4 (four) institutions were purposively selected for the study namely: the inspectorate office at the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE); Freetown Secondary School for Girls (Junior); St. Joseph's Convent (Junior); and Methodist Girls High School (Junior). The purposive selection of the four institutions was justifiable by the fact that the purpose of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of school inspection in selected junior secondary schools in Freetown, and the information required to achieve such purpose could best be obtained from the four selected institutions.

Furthermore, 120 (one hundred and twenty) participants were selected as follows: 30 (thirty) staff members (the Deputy Director of Education and 29 School Quality Assurance Officers – Inspectors of Schools) were purposively selected from the inspectorate office. 10 (ten) teachers and 20 (twenty) pupils were randomly selected from each of the 3 (three) selected schools.

#### **3.2 Instrumentation**

The questionnaire and the interview were used for this study. The use of the questionnaire was justifiable by the fact that the respondents were literate enough to read the questions and respond to them independently. However, some of the respondents were randomly selected and interviewed in order to verify the information gathered through the questionnaire.

#### **3.3 Method of Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed both quantitatively (use of tables and figures) and qualitatively (use of narrative) in line with the research questions. Each table was followed by narrative and then discussion.

### **IV. Results**

This was concerned with the presentation and analysis of findings within the framework of the aforementioned research questions.

#### **4.1 The knowledge about the role of School Inspectors in the Western Area:**

This was determined by measuring how many of the participants were knowledgeable about the role of school inspectors in Freetown of Western Area.

**Table 1: The knowledge about the role of School Inspectors in Freetown of Western Area.**

| CATEGORY<br>SELECTED<br>RESPONDENTS | OF<br>HAVE KNOWLEDGE<br>ABOUT<br>SCHOOL<br>INSPECTORS | DO NOT<br>HAVE<br>KNOWLEDGE<br>ABOUT<br>SCHOOL<br>INSPECTORS | TOTAL             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Students                            | 3 (5%)                                                | 57 (95%)                                                     | 60 (100%)         |
| Teachers                            | 18 (60%)                                              | 12 (40%)                                                     | 30 (100%)         |
| Inspectorate Staff                  | 30 (100%)                                             | 0 (0%)                                                       | 30 (100%)         |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>51 (42.5%)</b>                                     | <b>69 (57.5%)</b>                                            | <b>120 (100%)</b> |

*Source: Author's survey data 2025*

According to table 1, only 3 (5%) of the 60 selected pupils had knowledge about the role of school inspectors whilst 57 (95%) did not; 18 (60%) of the 30 selected teachers were knowledgeable of the role of school inspectors whilst 12 (40%) were not; and all the 30 (100%) selected inspectorate staff had knowledge about the role of school inspectors.

Table 1 further shows that 51 (42.5%) of the 120 selected participants had knowledge about the role of school inspectors whilst 69 (57.5%) did not.

#### 4.2. The effectiveness of school inspection in the selected schools:

This was assessed based on 8 (eight) characteristics (see table 2)

**Table 2: The characteristics of effective school inspection in the selected schools**

| CHARACTERISTIC                                     | NO. & (%) OF<br>RESPONDENTS<br>SUBSCRIBING TO THE<br>CHARACTERISTIC | NO. & (%) OF<br>RESPONDENTS<br>NOT<br>SUBSCRIBING TO THE<br>CHARACTERISTIC | TOTAL NO. OF<br>RESPONDENTS<br>INVOLVED IN THE<br>RESEARCH |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Inspectors' nonacceptance of bribe                 | 35 (29.17%)                                                         | 85 (70.83%)                                                                | 120 (100%)                                                 |
| Adequate inspections                               | 34 (28.33%)                                                         | 86 (71.67%)                                                                | 120 (100%)                                                 |
| Inspectors' non-policing attitude                  | 33 (27.5%)                                                          | 87 (72.5%)                                                                 | 120 (100%)                                                 |
| Inspectors' adequate knowledge                     | 33 (27.5%)                                                          | 87 (72.5%)                                                                 | 120 (100%)                                                 |
| Good Record Keeping                                | 39 (32.5%)                                                          | 81 ((67.5%)                                                                | 120 (100%)                                                 |
| Inspectors' adequate feedback to teachers          | 37 (30.83%)                                                         | 83 (69.17%)                                                                | 120 (100%)                                                 |
| adequate support from the inspectorate head office | 5 (4.17%)                                                           | 115 (95.83%)                                                               | 120 (100%)                                                 |
| Inspectors' commitment to work                     | 32 (26.67%)                                                         | 88 (73.33%)                                                                | 120 (100%)                                                 |
| <b>TOTAL NO. &amp; (%) OF<br/>SUBSCRIPTIONS</b>    | <b>248 (25.83%)</b>                                                 | <b>712 (74.17%)</b>                                                        | <b>960 (100%)</b>                                          |

*Source: Author's survey data 2025*

According to table 2, 35 (29.17%) of the 120 selected respondents subscribed to ‘inspectors’ nonacceptance of bribery’ as a characteristic of effective school inspection whilst 85 (70.83%) did not subscribe; 34 (28.33%) subscribed to ‘adequate inspections’ whilst 86 (71.67%) did not; 33 (27.5%) subscribed to ‘inspectors’ non policing attitude’ and ‘inspectors’ adequate knowledge’ whilst 87 (72.5%) did not; 39 (32.5%) subscribed to ‘good record keeping’ whilst 81 (67.5%) did not; 37 (30.83%) subscribed to ‘inspectors’ adequate feedback to teachers’ whilst 83 (69.17%) did not; 5 (4.17%) subscribed to ‘adequate support from the inspectorate head office’ whilst 115 (95.83%) did not; and 32 (26.67%) of the 120 selected respondents subscribed to ‘inspectors’ commitment to work’ as a characteristic of effective school inspection whilst 88 (73.33%) did not subscribe.

Table 2 further shows that only 248 (25.83%) of the 960 subscriptions were for all the characteristics of effective school inspection whilst 712 (74.17%) were against.

### 4.3. The effects of school inspection on teaching and learning in the selected schools:

These were measured by the number of participants that subscribed to each (see table 3).

**Table 3: The effects of school inspection on teaching and learning in the selected schools**

| THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL INSPECTION                           | NO. & (%) OF RESPONDENTS SUBSCRIBING TO THE EFFECT | NO. & (%) OF RESPONDENTS NOT SUBSCRIBING TO THE EFFECT | TOTAL NO. OF RESPONDENTS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Improved teaching and learning                             | 44 (36.67)                                         | 76 (63.33)                                             | 120 (100%)                                        |
| Capacity building of teaching staff                        | 54 (45)                                            | 66 (55.00)                                             | 120 (100%)                                        |
| Proper management of schools                               | 61 (50.83)                                         | 59 (49.17)                                             | 120 (100%)                                        |
| Increase of pupils’ success in passing public examinations | 63 (52.50)                                         | 57 (47.50)                                             | 120 (100%)                                        |
| <b>TOTAL NO. &amp; (%) OF SUBSCRIPTIONS</b>                | <b>222 (46.25)</b>                                 | <b>258 (53.75)</b>                                     | <b>480 (100%)</b>                                 |

*Source: Author’s survey data 2025*

According to table 3, 44 (36.67%) of the 120 selected respondents subscribed to ‘improved teaching and learning’ as an effect of school inspection whilst 76 (63.33%) did not subscribe; 54 (45%) subscribed to ‘capacity building of teaching staff’ whilst 66 (55.00%) did not; 61 (50.83%) subscribed to ‘proper management of schools’ whilst 59 (49.17%) did not; and 63 (52.50%) 57 (47.50) subscribed to ‘ increase of pupils’ success in passing public examinations whilst 63 (52.50%) did not.

Table 3 further reveals that 222 (46.25%) of the 480 subscriptions were for all the effects of school inspection whilst 258 (53.75%) were against.

#### 4.4. The challenges associated with school inspection in the selected schools:

The participants were asked whether they subscribed or not to some predetermined challenges and their responses were recorded (see table 4).

**Table 4: The challenges associated with school inspection in the selected schools**

| CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOL INSPECTION         | NO. & (%) OF RESPONDENTS SUBSCRIBING TO THE CHALLENGE | NO. & (%) OF RESPONDENTS NOT SUBSCRIBING TO THE CHALLENGE | TOTAL NO. OF RESPONDENTS INVOLVED IN THE RESEARCH |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Bribery                                              | 85 (70.83%)                                           | 35 (29.17%)                                               | 120 (100%)                                        |
| Inadequate inspections                               | 86 (71.67%)                                           | 34 (28.33%)                                               | 120 (100%)                                        |
| Inspectors' policing attitude                        | 87 (72.5%)                                            | 33 (27.5%)                                                | 120 (100%)                                        |
| Inspectors' Inadequate knowledge                     | 87 (72.5%)                                            | 33 (27.5%)                                                | 120 (100%)                                        |
| Poor Record Keeping                                  | 81 ((67.5%)                                           | 39 (32.5%)                                                | 120 (100%)                                        |
| Inspectors' Inadequate feedback to teachers          | 83 (69.17%)                                           | 37 (30.83%)                                               | 120 (100%)                                        |
| Inadequate support from the inspectorate head office | 115 (95.83%)                                          | 5 (4.17%)                                                 | 120 (100%)                                        |
| Inspectors' lack of commitment to work               | 88 (73.33%)                                           | 32 (26.67%)                                               | 120 (100%)                                        |
| <b>TOTAL NO. &amp; (%) OF SUBSCRIPTIONS</b>          | <b>712 (74.17%)</b>                                   | <b>248 (25.83%)</b>                                       | <b>960 (100%)</b>                                 |

*Source: Author's survey data 2025*

According to table 4, 85 (70.83%) of the 120 selected respondents subscribed to 'bribery' as a challenge associated with school inspection whilst 35 (29.17%) did not subscribe; 86 (71.67%) subscribed to 'inadequate inspections' whilst 34 (28.33%) did not; 87 (72.5%) subscribed to 'inspectors' policing attitude' and 'inspectors' inadequate knowledge' whilst 33 (27.5%) did not; 81 (67.5%) subscribed to 'poor record keeping' whilst 39 (32.5%) did not; 83 (69.17%) subscribed to 'inspectors' inadequate feedback to teachers' whilst 37 (30.83%) did not; 115 (95.83%) subscribed to 'inadequate support from the inspectorate head office' whilst 5 (4.17%) did not; and 88 (73.33%) of the 120 selected respondents subscribed to 'inspectors' lack of commitment to work' as a challenge associated with school inspection whilst 32 (26.67%) did not subscribe.

Table 4 further shows that 712 (74.17%) of the 960 subscriptions were for all the challenges associated with school inspection whilst 248 (25.83%) were against.

#### 4.5 Discussion

In table 1, 69 (57.5%) of the participants did not have knowledge about the role of school inspectors. It implies that most of the pupils and a good number of teachers did not even know what the school inspectors were supposed to do in the schools. It could be because school inspection was not effective in the selected schools. Otherwise, all the stakeholders of the schools including pupils and teachers would acknowledge the work of the school inspectors.



In table 2, 712 (74.17%) of the 960 total subscriptions of participants were against the characteristics of effective school inspection. This implies that school inspection was ineffective in the selected schools. This could be the reason why most of the pupils and a good number of the teachers could not have adequate knowledge of the role of school inspectors in the schools. If they were effective in playing their role, they would be acknowledged by the pupils and the teachers. The acceptance of bribery by the school inspectors, as indicated by the participants, could be a very strong source of compromise of the role of school inspectors.

In table 3, 258 (53.75%) of the total 480 subscriptions of participants were against the effects of school inspection. It implies that most of the participants could not see or feel the effects of school inspection on teaching and learning in the selected schools. It corroborates the discussion of table 4.9 about the ineffectiveness of school inspection in the selected schools.

In table 4, 712 (74.17) of the total 960 subscriptions of participants did subscribe to the outlined challenges. This could be the reason for the ineffective school inspection in the selected schools.

## **V. Conclusion and recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

This study examined “The Effectiveness of School Inspection in Selected Junior Secondary Schools in Freetown” with the primary objective of assessing how effectively school inspection contributes to teaching, learning, and school improvement in Sierra Leone’s educational system. The research was guided by four key questions: the role of school inspectorates, the effectiveness of school inspection, its effects on teaching and learning, and the challenges associated with inspection in the selected schools.

The findings reveal that while school inspection is recognized in policy and law as a vital mechanism for ensuring accountability and quality in education, its practical implementation in the selected schools is largely ineffective. The majority (57.5%) of participants, particularly pupils and some teachers, lacked knowledge of the role of school inspectors, indicating low visibility and engagement of inspectors at the school level. Effective school inspection should be participatory, supportive, and well-communicated, yet the study showed that inspection activities are often irregular, poorly coordinated, and inadequately supported.

The study further found that only 25.83% of respondents agreed that inspection in their schools exhibited characteristics of effectiveness such as non-acceptance of bribery, adequate feedback, and commitment to duty. Conversely, 74.17% indicated that these characteristics were largely absent, suggesting that inspection practices are compromised by corruption, insufficient frequency of visits, poor feedback systems, and inadequate professional knowledge among inspectors. The limited logistical and institutional support from the inspectorate head office, cited by 95.83% of respondents, further undermines the quality and regularity of inspections.

Additionally, the study revealed that the perceived effects of inspection on teaching and learning were minimal. Only 46.25% of the respondents observed any positive effect, such as improved school management, capacity building, or better academic performance. This demonstrates that the current inspection framework has not significantly contributed to enhancing instructional quality or pupil outcomes in the studied schools.

The major challenges identified included bribery, inadequate inspection visits, policing attitudes of inspectors, insufficient professional capacity, lack of feedback, and weak institutional support. These challenges collectively limit the credibility, effectiveness, and developmental impact of school inspection. The study concludes that school inspection in the selected junior secondary schools in Freetown is largely ineffective due to systemic, administrative, and ethical weaknesses.



However, the findings also underscore that effective inspection – if conducted with integrity, regularity, and proper support – can play a transformative role in improving teacher performance, school leadership, and student achievement. Therefore, reforming the inspection system is both necessary and urgent to ensure that it fulfills its intended function as a driver of educational quality assurance and school improvement.

## **1.2 Recommendations**

### **5.2.1 Strengthen institutional and logistical support**

- The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) should provide adequate logistical support to inspectors, including transportation, inspection tools, data management systems, and operational budgets. The Inspectorate Department should establish clear inspection schedules and monitoring frameworks to ensure regular and systematic visits to schools.

### **5.2.2 Promote transparency and ethical conduct**

- The government should develop and enforce a strict code of ethics for inspectors, with mechanisms to prevent and penalize bribery, favoritism, and corruption. Regular audits and peer reviews should be conducted to monitor inspector performance and uphold professional integrity.

### **5.2.3 Enhance capacity building and professional development**

- Continuous professional development programs should be organized for inspectors and supervisors to improve their pedagogical, managerial, and interpersonal skills. Inspectors should receive updated training on modern educational supervision techniques, data collection, feedback delivery, and the use of digital inspection tools.

### **5.2.4 Improve communication and feedback mechanisms**

- Inspectors should provide timely, constructive, and actionable feedback to teachers and school administrators after every inspection exercise. Feedback sessions should emphasize professional growth and improvement rather than fault-finding, aligning with the 'supportive supervision' model recommended by UNESCO-IIEP (2007).

### **5.2.5 Increase stakeholder awareness and participation**

- Awareness campaigns should be conducted in schools to educate teachers, pupils, and parents about the roles and benefits of school inspection. School communities should be encouraged to view inspection as a collaborative process aimed at improving teaching and learning outcomes.

### **5.2.6 Integrate school inspection with teacher support and accountability**

- Inspection should not merely be evaluative but should also provide coaching and mentoring support to teachers. Inspectors should collaborate with school leadership to identify areas needing intervention and to design professional development plans tailored to each school's context.

### **5.2.7 Establish data-driven and evidence-based inspection practices**

- The Inspectorate Office should maintain accurate records and develop a centralized digital database to track inspection reports, follow-up actions, and outcomes. Data from inspections should inform policy decisions, curriculum development, and resource allocation at the district and national levels.

### **5.2.8 Foster collaboration among education agencies**

- The MBSSE, TSC, and school boards should strengthen coordination to ensure consistency in inspection standards, reduce duplication, and promote unified quality assurance frameworks. Collaboration with teacher training institutions should also be encouraged to align pre-service and in-service training with inspection findings.

### **5.2.9 Regular review of the inspection policy framework**

- The national policy on school inspection should be reviewed periodically to reflect evolving educational needs, international best practices, and lessons learned from local implementation. Community feedback should be incorporated into policy reforms to ensure relevance and effectiveness.

## **References**

- [1] Teaching Service Commission. (n.d.). Teaching service commission human resource manual. <https://hrmanual.tsc.gov.sl>
- [2] Sierra Leone Education Ordinance. (1954). Education Ordinance of 1954 (Section 44). Government of Sierra Leone.
- [3] ResearchGate. (n.d.). Publication on school inspection. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>
- [4] Strydom, J. F., Basson, N., & Mentz, M. (2010). Enhancing the quality of teaching and learning: Using student engagement data to establish a culture of evidence. South African Council on Higher Education.
- [5] Lee, J. C. K., Dig, N., & Song, H. (2008). School inspection and supervision: The changing paradigm in education quality assurance. *Educational Research Review*, 3(1), 15–25.
- [6] Grauwe, A. D. (2007). Transforming school supervision into a tool for quality improvement. International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP)–UNESCO.
- [7] Shaw, I., Newton, D. P., Aitkin, M., & Darnell, R. (2003). Do OFSTED inspections of secondary schools make a difference to GCSE results? *British Educational Research Journal*, 29(1), 63–75.
- [8] Wilcox, B. (2000). Making school inspection visits more effective: The English experience. Paris: UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).
- [9] MacBeath, J. (2006). School inspection and self-evaluation: Working with the new relationship. Routledge.
- [10] Hargreaves, D. H. (1995). School effectiveness and school improvement. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 6(1), 23–46.
- [11] De Grauwe, A. (2001). School supervision in four African countries: Volume 1, Challenges and reforms. UNESCO–IIEP.
- [12] Wanzare, Z. (2002). Rethinking school inspection in the Third World: The case of Kenya. *Educational Management & Administration*, 30(2), 213–229.
- [13] Jackson, P., & Wallis, J. (2006). Revisiting educational supervision: A new model for accountability and improvement. *Educational Review*, 58(1), 75–85.
- [14] Hopkins, D., Harris, A., Watling, R., & Beresford, J. (1999). School improvement in an era of change. Cassell Education.
- [15] Perryman, J. (2010). Inspection and the fabrication of professional and performative processes. *Journal of Education Policy*, 25(5), 597–620.
- [16] Earley, P. (1996). Inspection, evaluation and quality assurance: An international perspective. *School Leadership & Management*, 16(3), 343–354.
- [17] Wilcox, B., & Gray, J. (1996). Inspecting schools: Holding schools to account and helping schools to improve. Open University Press.
- [18] Whitby, K. (2010). School inspection: Recent experiences in high performing education systems. CfBT Education Trust.
- [19] Peretomode, V. F. (2004). Principles and techniques of instructional supervision. Springfield Publishers.

- [20] Akinwumiju, J. A., & Agabi, O. G. (2008). Foundations of school administration. Mushin, Lagos: Triumph Publishers.
- [21] Ministry of Education. (n.d.). Ministry of Education Sierra Leone official website. <https://www.ministryofeducation.gov.sl>
- [22] UNESCO–IIEP. (2007). Different models of school inspection: Classical, central control, and close-to-school support. UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning.