

# Learning walks

Inspectors will carry out learning walks during inspections. Learning walks focus on a specific aspect of the work of learners across a number of classes, for example standards in literacy or ICT or the quality of support for learners with additional learning needs. One inspector may undertake a learning walk across a range of lessons, or a number of inspectors may visit individual classes, workshops or areas of a provider for a short period with a common focus or theme in mind.

Due to the focused nature of the learning walk activity, and the spread of activity across a number of lessons/classes within a relatively short period, inspectors will not be in a position to offer professional dialogue to individual teachers after learning walks. During learning walks, inspectors may also not see very much whole class teaching at all. Inspectors on learning walks may focus on the work that learners undertake rather than the quality of the teaching.

During most inspections, the learning walk activities will usually take place between the start and middle of the time that the inspection team are with the provider, though they can happen at any time during the inspection period. The outcomes of learning walks and other inspection activities may inform the focus of inspection activity on any following day(s). Reporting inspectors will need to be flexible in their timetabling of further observations and other activities in order to respond appropriately to the emerging findings from the evidence obtained from learning walks.

There is no designated time allocation for a learning walk observation as the inspection focus may vary from learning walk to learning walk and from provider to provider. The RI should discuss the practicalities of learning walk activity with the inspection team and provide suitable guidance at the start of the inspection.

At the start of inspections, RIs will arrange for members of the inspection team to undertake learning walks at specific times and the RI will identify the specific focus for the learning walks. The RI will usually ensure that there is no overlap in the work of inspectors, for example. two inspectors observing the same activity in the same class. However, in open-plan learning environments, there may be occasions when inspectors may undertake observations and learning walks in similar areas, for example in a large, open-plan foundation phase area in a school, across a large workshop or performance space or in an outdoor area, such as a playground or playing field.