

**LEARNING FROM HMI:  
THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF  
SCHOOL INSPECTORATE IN CHINA  
AND PROPOSALS FOR ITS FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis examines the functions and structure of the recently restored Chinese education inspection system, and proposes practical suggestions for its future development by adapting relevant experiences drawn from the practice of Her Majesty's Inspectorate in England.

After analysing briefly the background of the restoration of the Chinese inspectorate and revealing its intention to learn from HMI, the thesis addresses the question: "How much can the Chinese inspectorate learn from HMI and how can those HMI experiences which are transferable be adapted in the light of the Chinese conditions"?

To answer this question, the study looks first into HMI's functions and the ways of performing these functions, its relationships with various educational partners, and its organisational structure in historical as well as contemporary administrative perspectives. This section attempts not only to describe HMI's experiences but also to obtain a better understanding of the educational and administrative context which have a decisive influence on the operation of HMI.

An analysis of these aspects in the Chinese context is then carried out, using mainly the author's own research findings.

A considerable part of the thesis is devoted to discussing the feasibility of using HMI as a model. The differences and similarities between the two inspection systems as well as between the two educational administration systems, and other major factors including ideology of government, standards of economic development, and

territory size have been identified and examined in order to decide the extent to which and the ways in which the Chinese inspectorate can benefit from learning from HMI.

In the final part of the thesis, several important issues and shortcomings in the present Chinese inspection system are identified, based on the comparisons with HMI as well as on the field work findings. Practical proposals for the future development of the Chinese inspection systems are put forward. In addition, as the first substantial piece of research in English on the system of educational inspection in China, the thesis suggests some areas for further research.

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b><u>Chapter One: Background</u></b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 The restoration of the Chinese inspectorate	1
1.2 Learning from foreign inspectorates	9
1.3 The feasibility of using HMI as a model	12
1.3.1 Is borrowing desirable for China?	15
1.3.2 Why HMI?	19
1.3.3 How much can the Chinese inspectorate learn from HMI?	20
<b><u>Chapter Two: Research methods</u></b>	<b>21</b>
2.1 Historical and documentary method	23
2.2 Observation method	26
2.3 Survey method	28
2.3.1 Interview	29
2.3.2 Questionnaire	31
2.4 Summary of field work	32
<b><u>Chapter Three: A brief history of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools</u></b>	<b>35</b>
3.1 A brief account of the English primary and secondary education	36
3.2 The history of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of schools	39
3.2.1 The period of initiation 1839-1861	40
3.2.2 The period of tension 1862-1902	44
3.2.3 The period of shaping 1902-1944	48
3.2.4 The period of frustration 1944-1968	55
3.2.5 The period of revitalisation 1969-1988	61
3.3 Conclusion	67

<b><u>Chapter Four: The functions of HM Inspectorate</u></b>	<b>71</b>
4.1 The function of the HMI prior to 1988	72
4.1.1 The role of the HMI in the English education system and its main features	73
4.1.1.1 HMI and central government	78
4.1.1.2 HMI and local education authorities	80
4.1.1.3 HMI and the teaching body	81
4.1.2 Organisational structure of Her Majesty's Inspectorate, Communication within HMI and with the DES	83
4.1.2.1 The organisational structure of HMI	83
4.1.2.2 Communication within the inspectorate	88
4.1.2.3 Communication with the DES	89
4.1.3 Forms of inspection	90
4.2 HMI and the local advisory services	94
4.3 The effect of the 1988 ERA on HMI's future work	100
<b><u>Chapter Five: The position of the Chinese inspectorate in the educational administration system</u></b>	<b>106</b>
5.1 General background: educational administration system	106
5.1.1 The composition of central government	106
5.1.2 The central educational government -- the State Education Commission	109
5.1.3 Four tiers of local education authorities -- provincial, prefectural, county and township	114
5.1.3.1 The provincial education department	116
5.1.3.2 The prefectural education bureau	118
5.1.3.3 The county education bureau	120
5.1.3.4 The township education office	122
5.1.3.5 Summary	123
5.2 The position of the inspectorate in the educational administration system	127
5.2.1 Brief history of the inspectorate prior to 1986	127
5.2.2 The nature of the newly emerged inspectorate	132

5.2.3	The organisational structure of the Chinese inspectorate	134
5.2.3.1	The leadership issue	134
5.2.3.2	Internal division of the inspectorate	137
5.2.3.3	Relationship among inspectorates of different levels	139
5.3	Summary	142

## **Chapter Six: The present development of the Chinese inspectorate – achievement and issues** 145

6.1	Some facts about the Chinese inspectors	148
6.2	The functions of the inspectorate	151
6.3	The work of the inspectorate	155
6.3.1	Administrators' evaluations	155
6.3.1.1	The function of the inspectorate with regard to its employing education authority	155
6.3.1.2	The cooperation mechanism between the inspectorate and its employing education authority	164
6.3.1.3	The influence of the inspectorate on the the work of the education authorities	169
6.3.1.4	The inspectorate and the Teaching Research office	173
6.3.1.5	Summary	175
6.3.2	School heads' evaluation	176
6.3.2.1	The function of the inspectorate with regard to schools and lower level education authorities	176
6.3.2.2	The work of the inspectorate in schools	181
6.3.2.3	The influence of the inspectorate on schools	188
6.3.2.4	Summary	193
6.3.3	Forms of inspection	194
6.3.3.1	Full inspection	196
6.3.3.2	Aspect inspection	200

6.3.3.3 Routine visit	200
6.4 The expectations of the roles of the inspectorate	201
6.5 Conclusion	205

**Chapter Seven: In what way and to what extent can the Chinese inspectorate learn from HMI** 208

7.1 The differences and similarities within the inspection system	209
7.1.1 Comparing roles and functions	209
7.1.2 Comparing authority and power	219
7.1.3 Comparing objects of inspection	226
7.1.4 Comparing the relationship between the central and local inspectorates	228
7.2 The differences and similarities outside the inspection system	230
7.2.1 Comparing the relationship between central and local government	231
7.2.2 Comparing territory size and level of economic development	233
7.2.3 Comparing the internal structure of the education authorities	237
7.3 Summary	240

**Chapter Eight: Proposals for the development of the Chinese inspectorate** 243

8.1 To diversify the means of educational administration in the development of decentralisation	244
8.2 To provide legislative backing for the inspectorate	249
8.3 To increase the influence of the inspectorate	254
8.4 To establish closer and clearer links with education authorities	260
8.5 To strengthen the cooperation between the inspectorate and the Teaching Research Office system	266
8.6 To strengthen other functions other than enforcing policy implementation	272

8.7 To establish a dynamic and effective national network of inspectorates	277
<b><u>Chapter Nine: Conclusion</u></b>	<b>288</b>
9.1 Summary	288
9.2 Possible directions for the development of the Chinese inspectorate	295
9.2.1 To speed up the completion of organisation	295
9.2.2 To provide a statutory base for carrying out inspections	297
9.2.3 To improve the inspection system itself	298
9.2.3.1 The function of enforcing the Law will remain dominant	298
9.2.3.2 Other functions will gradually emerge	299
9.2.3.3 More working methods will be invented and employed as a result of the rise of other functions	301
9.2.3.4 The inspectorate's influence on education authorities will increase	302
9.3 Conclusion	303
<b>Appendix A: The outline of the field work</b>	<b>306</b>
<b>Appendix B: Observation on HMI full inspections</b>	<b>308</b>
<b>Appendix C: Observation on an aspect inspection by the Chinese inspectors</b>	<b>312</b>
<b>Appendix D: Interview former Chief Inspector of HMI</b>	<b>315</b>
<b>Appendix E: Interview Senior Chief Inspector of HMI</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>Appendix F: Questionnaire for school head teachers</b>	<b>330</b>
<b>Appendix G: Questionnaire for administrators in education authorities</b>	<b>336</b>
<b>Appendix H: Questionnaire for inspectors</b>	<b>341</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>349</b>

## **LIST OF TABLES AND DIAGRAMS**

<b>Diagram 4.1</b>	The organisational structure of HMI	84
<b>Diagram 5.1</b>	The basic composition of central government in China	109
<b>Diagram 5.2</b>	The structure of the State Education Commission	114
<b>Diagram 5.3</b>	Dual leadership system of education authorities	116
<b>Diagram 5.4</b>	The organisational position of the inspectorate in the administration system	135
<b>Table 6.1</b>	General summary of the field work in China	146
<b>Table 6.2a</b>	Breakdown of inspectors	147
<b>Table 6.2b</b>	Breakdown of administrators by level and position	147
<b>Table 6.2c</b>	Breakdown of school heads	147
<b>Table 6.3a</b>	Age distribution of the inspectors	149
<b>Table 6.3b</b>	Academic qualifications of the inspectors	149
<b>Table 6.3c</b>	Positions before joining the inspectorate	149
<b>Table 6.3d</b>	Years of teaching experience	149
<b>Table 6.3e</b>	Years of administrative experience	150
<b>Table 6.4</b>	The functions of the inspectorate with regard to its education authority -- views of the administrators	158
<b>Table 6.5</b>	The functions of the inspectorate with regard to its education authority -- views of the inspectors	158
<b>Table 6.6</b>	The frequency of contact between inspectors and their education authorities	165
<b>Table 6.7</b>	The level of the inspectors in contact with administrators	166
<b>Table 6.8</b>	The inspectors' and administrators' answers to the question: "the influence of the inspectorate on the work of the education authorities	169
<b>Table 6.9</b>	The functions of the inspectorate with regard to schools -- views of the school heads	178
<b>Table 6.10</b>	The functions of the inspectorate with regard to schools -- views of the inspectors	178
<b>Table 6.11</b>	The frequency and duration of school inspections	

	and visits	182
<b>Table 6.12</b>	Number of days that inspectors spend in schools or lower level education authorities	183
<b>Table 6.13</b>	The main concerns of the inspectors during routine visits	186
<b>Table 6.14</b>	Ways of contact between school heads and inspectors apart from inspections and visits	187
<b>Table 6.15</b>	The school heads' view of the inspectorate's influence	189
<b>Table 6.16</b>	The inspectors' evaluation of their influence on schools	189
<b>Table 6.17</b>	The administrators', inspectors', and school heads' preferences of the role of the inspectorate	202
<b>Table 6.18</b>	The inspectors as encouragers of school innovation	204
<b>Diagram 6.1</b>	The major work of the inspectorate	153
<b>Diagram 6.2</b>	Three components of administration	156
<b>Diagram 6.3</b>	Comparison between the views of the inspectors and those of the administrators	160
<b>Diagram 6.4</b>	The degree of influence estimated by the inspectors	170
<b>Diagram 6.5</b>	Comparison between the inspectors' and school heads' views	179
<b>Diagram 6.6</b>	The comparison between inspectors' and school heads' views	190
<b>Equation 6.1</b>		153
<b>Equation 6.2</b>		157
<b>Diagram 7.1</b>	Division of areas of responsibilities	239

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 The Restoration of the Chinese Inspectorate**

The years from 1966 to 1976 were a disastrous period for the Chinese people in which endless political movements, dominated by ultra-left ideology, seriously damaged the national economy as well as cultural development. The education service was no exception. Its sole aim was to serve the so-called class struggle and proletarian dictatorship. Advocates of economic development would be accused of admiring capitalism. The political turmoil finally ended at the end of 1976, when the "Gang of Four" was overthrown and a new generation of politicians came into power. They saw the need to end the class struggle and the urgency of accelerating almost every aspect of national development, particularly economic development. In 1979, shortly after the fall of "Gang of Four", the politburo of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) announced the shift of its work focus from the "class struggle" to the economic construction of the nation. The goal of "Four Modernisations" (industry, agriculture, national defence, and science and technology) was set up and the economic reform was launched on a spectacular scale at the beginning of the 1980s.

Radical economic reform characterised by looser central control and broader local and individual initiatives made great demands on the education system, which had to respond in order to produce an appropriate labour mix for economic growth. It became increasingly

obvious that a revolutionary reorganisation of the education service would be essential to economic success.

In brief, economic reform demanded a qualified labour force with a well balanced ratio of professional, skilled and semi-skilled workers and a reasonable subject combination. However, the educational system at that time could only offer, either professionals with higher education qualifications, or secondary school graduates who were academically but not technically qualified. In other words, the system could not provide people with vocational training who could quickly acquire work skills on joining the labour force. This weakness demanded rapid expansion in secondary vocational education from low levels to that necessary to meet the economy's needs. In addition, too much attention had been paid to natural science subjects in higher education institutions. Modern and social science subjects like economics, computing, business studies and law only occupied marginal positions. Therefore, the remedy lay not just in expanding higher education as a whole, but also in increased investment in subjects like those mentioned above.

It was believed that, apart from the restructuring of existing education sectors and the adjustments within each of the sectors as a result of the economic reform, the most important task for the education system was to ensure that every child received a satisfactory education. By doing so, it could provide the basis of a quality labour force from the very beginning --- primary education. Therefore, making nine year basic education compulsory gradually became the agenda of the State Education Commission (SEdC), the highest educational administration authority in the country. Several circulars were issued during the first

half of the '80s. Finally in April 1986, the National People's Congress, the nation's highest legislative body, adopted the most significant educational legislation since the foundation of socialist China in 1949 -- "The Law of Compulsory Education".

The Law and other relevant documents issued by the SEdC planned to achieve the task in three steps. The first was to ensure that economically and culturally advanced areas (25% of the whole population) fully implemented the nine year compulsory education by 1990. The second step was to let the middle-level areas (about 50% of the country) realise compulsory **primary** education (six years) by 1990 and **junior secondary** (three years) education by 1995. The last 25% of the country comprises economically backward areas which were expected to make **primary** education universal by the end of this century. Due to its historical significance as well as practical necessity, the compulsory education law, passed by the highest body of state power, was given great value by the SEdC and became one of its top priorities.

In reality, education was treated as a "soft task" and had always been neglected in many places. Compared with other sectors like industry and transport, education received much lower priority. In many places, funds earmarked for education were often diverted to other uses, leaving the provision of education in a poor state. Even in the places where the funds had been allocated to the education sector, diversion of funds still existed. For example, "Hei Long Jiang Daily" (Hei Long Jiang is the name of a province) announced in 1985 that educational expenditure had increased by 21.2% compared to the previous year, but in reality, considerable funds had been secretly spent in a way which benefited the education authorities instead of the schools themselves. One county

education bureau used the money set aside for school capital construction to buy a large building as its office.

Apart from the problem of diverted education funds, there was also a worrying dropout rate in the compulsory education age-group, caused by reasons such as parents wanting the child to earn money as early as possible, or because what the child was taught could not be applied to actual life, the child felt it was useless to go to school and became a child labourer instead. This phenomenon was more serious in rural areas, where the new "contract system" was in operation whereby farmers were totally responsible for their output; and in coastal areas where the economy was rapidly developing and labourers were desperately needed. In a report produced by the central inspectorate, an intake of students in a junior secondary school lost 67% of its students after three years in school.

In addition to these problems, there was also the problem of many good teachers giving up their profession and entering other vocations as a result of low pay. In some places teachers could not even get paid regularly. Furthermore, due to the extremely competitive selection system, many schools put undue emphasis on the proportion of students entering schools of higher grade and neglected and got rid of the academically poor students even before graduation.

All these and other pressing problems breached the legislation and relevant national regulations, and seriously imperilled the accomplishment of compulsory education. Although the SEdC and local education authorities noticed the problems long before and issued various circulars to try to remedy the situation, they failed to do so

because there were not enough people available to go to lower level education authorities and schools to enforce the legislation and regulations. This may be because the administrators were too busy to go, or too lazy to go, or that the areas were too wide to cover. Allowing this trend to grow meant the possible failure of this first most important piece of educational legislation. Therefore, an enforcement force seemed increasingly desirable.

It became more difficult to ensure the implementation of the Law when educational administration began to change to let the governments at various local levels be responsible for administering universal education. Early in 1985, the "Decision on Educational Reform" was passed, which marked the beginning of a radical education reform. In the document, the CCP and the State Council (equivalent to the Cabinet) admitted that one of the current problems in educational administration was that "government authorities devote too much energy to the controlling of schools, especially higher education institutions. This causes the schools' lack of necessary freedom whilst those responsibilities which the government should have undertaken are not fulfilled properly" (CCP, 1985, p3). Therefore, one way to improve it was "at the same time of strengthening **macro** administration, to firmly delegate power and give more freedom to school management' (ibid).

Since 1985, educational management has been undergoing various changes. The return of the "area dictates" principle has given various levels of local government greater responsibilities and freedom in managing educational service, especially the nine year basic education. It was stipulated in the law of compulsory education that local

governments (provincial, prefectural, county and township governments) should be totally responsible for making the nine year education universal within their areas. In addition to the delegation of power among different levels of governments, the "Head Teacher in Charge" system began to transfer some power from education authorities to schools and give the latter more freedom in deciding school budgets and staffing. The new situation created new vitality as well as posing new questions. How are the lower level governments getting on with their compulsory education plans? Are they working within the framework of the legislation? Are there any cases of breaching the Law? Do they administer the education service in accordance with national educational principles and requirements set by the SEdC? Is educational development really geared to the economic needs of the locality? What changes have taken place as a result of the "Head Teacher in Charge" system? Are there any difficulties in redistributing power between the school and the education authority? What problems have the local governments and schools encountered in the process of reform and what are the best solutions? In brief, the fluctuating situation made it necessary to strengthen communication channels in order to keep the higher level education authorities well informed about current practice to enable them to guide development promptly. As ordinary administrators were absorbed in dealing with daily business, they could hardly spare much time visiting schools and lower level education authorities regularly. Therefore, an agency was needed, in the process of decentralisation, to take responsibility for ensuring the successful implementation of the legislation, and for monitoring the state of educational administration in education authorities as well as the educational standards in schools, i.e. to inspect and visit lower level authorities and schools regularly to see that

things were going well and that the provision of education was satisfactory. Furthermore, this group of people were expected to promote communication between higher and lower levels of education authorities, and between education authorities and schools, to help solve problems in practice.

As a result of the delegation of power, lower level governments had taken over many responsibilities from their senior authorities, e.g. making plans for universal education, deciding its budgets for educational provision, appointing school heads and teachers, compiling references and supplementary materials for nationally unified textbooks. Therefore, education authorities directly senior to them could free themselves from very detailed administration, which they used to do before. Under these circumstances, education authorities, especially those at central and provincial level, saw the need for changing their roles. As a result, those education authorities were trying hard, having delegated some power to their junior authorities, to strengthen the function of overall planning and collaboration with financial and economic bodies, of forecasting short-term and long-term manpower needs, of research on developmental strategies, and of inspection and monitoring.

In practice, however, the traditional educational administration placed emphasis on the implementation function of the authorities. i.e., to interpret and carry out the tasks assigned by the higher authorities and to report back. The functions of independent policy making and monitoring (especially within the broad framework of legislation) were, rather weak. Before the education reform, the feedback function and the implementation function were concurrently performed by the same

group of people, so the staff had not have sufficient time to go to the schools and lower level education authorities. (Zhu,1988,p19; Liu,1988,p72; Xia,1989,p7; Xiang, 1988,p2; Lu 1987,p2). No wonder the situation of " it will not stop even if you demand it to; it will not move even if you order it to"( i.e. loss of control) was widespread across the country. This insufficient monitoring and feedback function not only made it difficult for higher level education authorities to ensure implementation of policies, but also had unfavourable effects on their decision making. The statement made by one Chinese leader, Mr. Wanli, revealed the nature of the shortcoming: "Until now, we still have not established a strict decision-making system and procedure. We do not have advisory, commentary, supervisory and feedback systems to support decision making. Today, decision-making by experience and sometimes on assumptions is still very common. There is no method to examine the correctness of the decisions. Mistakes in decision-making cannot be discovered until big problems emerge." (Wan, 1986, Speech on a political reform meeting).

In short, the delegation of power resulted in the necessity to change the functions of education authorities. Only when the function of more independent policy making and the function of monitoring and feedback were performed well, could the education authorities succeed in administering education in the new situation of decentralisation.

To summarise, the need for overcoming resistance in implementing the compulsory education law, the need for ensuring that the local governments provide satisfactory education, and the necessity of changing the roles of education authorities after the delegation of power and strengthening the function of monitoring, evaluation and more

independent policy-making has been making educationists and administrators think of solutions. One of the possibilities was to set up a specialised inspection force to help perform these functions.

As soon as this suggestion was proposed, questions emerged: What kind of inspectorate was needed? In what way could the inspectorate help to meet practical needs? Corresponding to the needs listed above, one would expect an inspectorate, first of all, to be a safeguard of legislation--- to enforce and to supervise the implementation of the law of compulsory education; secondly, to be a monitor of the state of education including its provision and its standards, so that it could broaden and speed up information flow to keep authorities informed in order to assist their policy making which was itself a new area of development; finally, in answer to the need for changing functions, one would expect the inspectorate to provide professional advice to decision makers in a less centralised situation.

As there had been no specialised inspectorate in China for 30 years (since its abandonment in the late 1950s), people did not have experience of running this system. In addition, the background and conditions of the work of the inspectorate were very different from those of 30 years ago. Therefore, the Chinese administrators had difficulties in designing a new inspectorate.

## **1.2 Learning From Foreign Inspectorates**

No doubt, one way of building an inspection system is through constant trial and error, "crossing the river by groping stones" --- the

Chinese equivalent of "muddling through". Another possible way, however, is to broaden the field of vision and to take a look at foreign systems. i.e., to use comparison as an instrument to assist policy-making, to look for some models in foreign countries as references for building one's own system.

Among those countries from whom China is asking for help, (including Japan, Germany, Britain), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools in England (HMI) has the most frequent contact with China, and is certainly seen to have the most potential of further cooperation. As early as in May 1986, before the Chinese central inspectorate was set up, the SEdC sent two delegates to England to discuss an exchange scheme. In October 1986, two senior members of HMI and two local advisers were invited to China to introduce their systems of work at a national conference of inspection and evaluation attended by candidates for the Chinese inspectorate. They received a warm response. This initial exchange laid the foundation for the later development of the relationship between these two inspectorates. An exchange programme was proposed and agreed by both sides. The next year, the Chinese SEdC sent two people to attend the inspection course at University of London Institute of Education. They spent some time following HMIs and observing their work. Soon after they went back, they joined the inspector training force. Later in 1987, two HMIs flew to Beijing to give lectures for inspection training courses. In 1989, one Staff Inspector and one Chief Inspector of HMI were invited to visit four cities in China and to hold seminars on reporting inspection. In June 1990, a delegation of six, led by the head of the Chinese central inspectorate, paid a two week visit to England. They not only talked with HMIs and local advisers, but also observed the work of HMI with their own eyes. These frequent and

close contacts indicate that the Chinese inspectorate has a good opinion of HMI, and, probably, the intention to learn further from it.

Undoubtedly, it is always worth looking at foreign experience and lessons to improve one's own work at home, especially at this stage of the Chinese inspectorate's infancy. However, one issue which arises is that since the social and educational systems in the two countries are quite different, how much can the Chinese inspectorate really learn from its English counterpart?

The famous question "How far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign system of education?" (Sadler, 1900) has become the classic question asked by almost every comparative educationist. As explained above, because of the differences in educational administration systems in the two countries, it is unwise and impractical for the Chinese to transfer as freely as they would like because what works in one social setting might not work in the other. Therefore, the central question "to what extent can the Chinese inspectorate learn anything of practical value from the HMI's experience?" can be split further into the following questions: What are the similarities between the two inspectorates which enable a useful comparative study? What are the major differences between the two that limit the imitation of the English experience? What experience of HMI can possibly be transferred to the Chinese inspectorate? To what extent can each 'transferable' merit be borrowed, and finally, how is the experience going to be adapted in the light of the Chinese domestic conditions?

### **1.3 The Feasibility of Using HMI as a Model**

Obviously, this study is one of comparison, of selective borrowing in a contextual perspective. Looking at the growth of comparative education, one can see that there are several stages of development. The origin of comparative education is described by contemporary scholars as a "travellers' tale", i.e., to describe educational activities in other countries as part of a traveller's tale. The information contained in the tales was fragmentary and piecemeal, and usually was obtained casually rather than intentionally. The second stage was educational borrowing motivated by the desire to learn useful lessons from foreign practice. One distinctive feature of that educational borrowing was the assumption that "institutions, even whole systems, could be reproduced at will on foreign soil, given only that their existence abroad was known, that sufficient information about them was available, and that somehow or other the ground at home was prepared for their reception" (Noah & Eckstein, 1969, p32). In other words, borrowing was viewed as unconditional and unlimited. It was because of this situation that Sadler raised the question of how far we can learn anything practical from studying foreign systems (Sadler, 1900), which paved the way for the new era of comparative education --- seeking not only for descriptive information but also for the explanations.

Subsequently, scholars tried to identify factors and forces that shaped the various educational systems. For example, the English scholar Hans suggested three groups of factors: natural, religious and secular, and various sub-factors within each group (Hans, 1950). He believed that an education system must be viewed and interpreted against the natural and social conditions in which it was embedded. At that time, scholars

frequently discussed the passivity of education in the social system, but they did not pay much attention to the methodology of comparative education.

After the second world war, Bereday, who, like Sadler, was a bridge between two phases of comparative education, raised the question of methodology. Meanwhile, he himself proposed a methodology model which received some criticism (Bereday, 1964). In the following period, which we might call a "methodology searching period", many scholars including Holmes and King contributed their views (Holmes, 1965; King, 1979). By the late '60s, there had been two types of methodological orientations, one more inclined to a philosophical and historical approach, the other more in favour of invoking the methods of the social sciences in comparative education in order to make it "scientific"(Noah and Eckstein, 1969). As a result of this fourth stage of development, there had been so many methodological models that many were finally convinced that there could not be only one method in comparative education.

In the most recent phase of development (in the '70s and '80s), there has been an even wider variety of contributions, in terms of methods employed, motivation, and subjects of comparison.

Reviewing the brief history of comparative education, one can see that from travellers' tale to blind copying, from searching for facts and forces to searching for methodology, and finally to the present pluralistic period, comparative education has come to a stage of diverse development in approach, aim, and subject. One may use comparative education as a means of discovering foreign systems, or as a way of

deepening the understanding of one's own educational system, or as a tool to assist policy making. One may use historical--philosophical approaches, or empirical methods, one may compare two or more countries, or two or more regions within one country, or quite often, the comparative educationists do not compare at all: they describe the cases in different countries, and leave the readers to make the comparison.

It seems to the author that characteristics of each stage described above indicate only the new trend in ways of thinking about comparative education, or the relatively outstanding position of that trend in that particular period. For example, the third stage was characterised as searching for the explanation of foreign educational systems. This means that, during that period, looking for reasons was a new trend and perhaps more attention was paid to that type of work than to others. But it by no means suggests that other types of work did not occupy any position. Some people were still interested in borrowing and even describing foreign systems. This parallel--moving--phenomenon (although one of those several lines is perhaps more popular than others) is even vividly reflected in today's comparative education researches. Admittedly, there are many scholars who are keen on collecting cross-national data and participating in international cooperation, but an important dimension remains that of using comparative education as an instrument of assisting policy making. This is the case in this study.

Since this study is designed to propose some tentative suggestions to the newly emerged Chinese inspectorate based on the examination of HMI practice, a discussion of the degree of adaptation of HMI experience is believed to be both necessary and appropriate at this stage

in order to lay down the foundation for the remainder of the study. The discussion is divided into three parts: (1), is borrowing desirable for China? (2), why HMI? (3), how much can the Chinese inspectorate learn from HMI?

### **1.3.1 Is Borrowing Desirable for China?**

The heated debate on educational transfer might provide some answers to this question. As one research area in comparative education, the study of educational transfer represented by dependency theory and its opposite arguments opened up new perspectives on educational borrowing among different countries in the world, particularly among developed and developing countries.

The original dependency theory was advanced to explain the lack of economic growth in former colonies. It argues that colonial relationships could still exist even after the colonies have gained their political independence, because they have already been led into a neocolonialist structure where foreign investment facilitates their primary products (including agricultural produce and minerals) instead of promoting their manufacturing abilities. These primary products are exported to the metropolis and manufactured there. By exporting these manufactured goods, the metropolis makes a great deal of profit. Thus, there is no opportunity for the third world to develop its economy within this centre-periphery relationship. This dependency, a stage in the process of industrialisation of ex-colonised nations, is regarded as undesirable by some theorists but desirable and inevitable by others. Applying the economic dependency theory, educational

dependency theorists suggest that because of the difficulty in breaking with past patterns of behaviour and established institutions, few former colonised countries have been able to escape from the influence of the educational system inherited from the colonial metropolis. Thus, a primary purpose of schooling in the developing societies is " to produce and reproduce a modern educated indigenous elite; and to incorporate indigenous peoples into the world market, producing those conceptions of work and patterns of consumption which are concomitant with the social and economic imperatives of the capitalist social order" (Ball, 1981, p304). In other words, education is to incorporate people outside the advanced countries into the sphere of influence and control of these metropolitan countries. This is done by dominating book publications, by controlling most of the research fields, by hosting third world overseas students, and by transferring metropolitan educational practice to the peripheries.

To sum up the theory, third world countries, despite the acquisition of their political freedom, are still suffering from the unbreakable economic and cultural ties with metropolitan nations. Their national development remains slow because *de jure* independence is subordinate to *de facto* dependence. Education is seen to contribute to neocolonialism by inculcating local elites with metropolitan values and by incorporating indigenous people under the control of the metropolis. In spite of its strong influence, this theory has come in for strong criticism. Acknowledging its success in discovering the mechanism of classical colonialism (as opposed to neocolonialism), scholars such as Mclean reject it as a satisfactory theory for explaining post-colonial and non-colonial development. (Mclean, 1983). In addition, it is criticised for its failure to identify the special characteristics of educational process as

a result of the direct borrowing and unmodified application of the economic dependency theory. It is further accused of oversimplifying the phenomenon of educational borrowing and calling every transplant "cultural dependency" (Ball, 1981).

How can we assess the soundness of the idea of transplanting foreign experience to China from the perspectives discussed above? In other words, is borrowing desirable for China? The answer, the author believes, is "yes". The first justification for doing so is that China has survived for thousands of years and has never been completely colonised by any other nations. There have been many invaders who only succeeded in taking control of one part of this huge country for relatively short periods. Thus, China was by no means a colony of any metropolis. In addition to its political independence, the Chinese economy is self-reliant and does not depend on anyone. Moreover, compared with ex-colonies, its educational system, though influenced by other foreign models, is the product of its indigenous political, economic and cultural systems. Added to this is the fact that the Chinese are very proud of their history and culture. The borrowing of foreign experience is extremely unlikely to turn China into a cultural dependency of some industrialised countries, especially when there is no economic dependency. The second reason, as Mclean argues, is that educational borrowing is a worldwide phenomenon existing not only between developed and developing countries, but also between developed countries as well. (McLean, 1983, p32-33). Dependency is part of the price that has to be paid for being a part of the world system. "One cannot simultaneously be integrated into such system and preserve one's independence from it. This applies to any such system, capitalist or otherwise." (Hurst, 1984, p9). Some western countries learned some experience from the Chinese imperial

examination system and applied it to their civil service selection systems. But they are not dependent on China at all! Educational transfer is believed by the author to be both reciprocal (perhaps not so direct and straightforward) and necessary in order for a country to integrate itself as a member of a world community. Thirdly, dependency theory overestimates the influence of the metropolis by assuming that the peripheral countries were passive recipients and by neglecting the capacity of developing countries to adapt foreign practice. In addition, as mentioned briefly earlier, transferring educational experience and practice is not the same as transferring capital or technology. Educational transfer usually entails the involvement of government agencies. Government's political awareness of independence, especially that of the Chinese communist government, largely reduces the possibility of educational dependency. Finally, China has opened up her door to all the countries in the world. Its aim is to learn whatever is good from whichever country, advanced or less advanced. In order to re-enter the world educational community and catch up with the developed countries, it is inevitable and also imperative for China to acknowledge its backwardness and to learn from foreign experience to speed up its own development. Learning from all the countries in the world certainly will not result in China depending on a single nation or a group of nations. The task facing China is to achieve the integration of eclectic foreign experiences on Chinese soil and to assure greater benefits for the Chinese education system rather than to concern itself as to whether it is being culturally colonised.

### **1.3.2 Why HMI?**

Having agreed that borrowing is not dangerous but desirable for China, one needs to identify the experience from which it is worth learning. At this stage, it is important to be clear that the aim of this study is **not** to find a best model for the Chinese inspectorate, indeed, there is not one. Instead, it chooses one system in order to discover what can be learned and how it can be learned. Of course, some models might be more relevant to the Chinese situation than others because they have more in common. But no model is totally relevant and transferable to the Chinese setting. Thus, the feasibility of using any model would vary between zero and one hundred percent. In other words, there will always be something that can be learned. Since this study is carried out in England, the English educational inspection system naturally become the first consideration because of the better availability of information and the feasibility of field work. But equally there will always be some aspects of any system which can be improved even in their own environment and others which are inapplicable in a foreign country.

One might ask "why choose HMI instead of local education authority advisory services as they both are English systems?" It will be perfectly legitimate to pick up LEA advisory services and study their possible applications to China. Regrettably, because of the limited time and resources, the author has to leave out the LEA advisory services and concentrate on HMI. But this is certainly an interesting area for further research. In addition, because HMI and the local advisory services are legally and organisationally separate systems, leaving out LEA advisory services will have little effect on the analysis of HMI practice. Nevertheless, because it is an important part of the quality control

system in England, LEA advisory services, especially their relationship with HMI, will be briefly discussed in the following chapters.

### **1.3.3 How Much Can the Chinese Inspectorate Learn from HMI?**

How far one system can assimilate the experience of the other depends partly on the degree of similarity between these two systems. Here, the system not only refers to the direct objects of the comparison, but the indirect factors that affect the two direct objects. In the case of the inspection systems, the differences outside the inspectorates matter as much as those inside, probably even more. It is believed by the author that the role of an inspectorate is directly determined by the educational system especially the educational administration system that surrounds it. It is also influenced by the political and economic conditions which determine the education system though less directly.

Obviously, the amount that the Chinese inspectorate can learn from HMI cannot be expressed in a simple quantitative way. On the whole, because of the differences both inside and outside the two inspection systems, which will be revealed in the following chapters and be particularly discussed in Chapter Seven, the feasibility of using HMI as a model for China is limited. But one cannot deny that there is some applicable experience, modification of which would be very helpful in improving the Chinese inspectorate.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

The thesis examines the functions and the structure of the recently restored Chinese inspection system, and proposes practical suggestions for its future development, using the experience of HMI in dealing with similar issues for references.

After the Introduction which analyses the background of the study, and questions the degree of feasibility of using HMI as a model, the thesis turns directly to HM Inspectorate. It looks into HMI's functions and the ways of discharging these functions, its relationships with various educational partners, and its organisational structure in historical as well as contemporary administrative perspectives. This examination is designed not only to draw HMI's experience, but also to obtain a better understanding of the educational and administrative context which has a decisive influence on the system of HMI.

A scrutiny of the above mentioned aspects in the Chinese context is then conducted. After the examination, several shortcomings and issues in the present Chinese inspection system are identified.

Before embarking on making suggestions to help improve these shortcomings, a lengthy analysis is carried out to decide the extent to which, and the ways in which the Chinese inspectorate can learn from HMI, by finding out the differences and similarities between the two inspection systems as well as between the two educational

administration systems, and other major factors.

The final part of the thesis puts forward practical proposals for the future development of the Chinese inspectorate, based on the examination of relevant HMI experience.

This thesis has three features. First, it is contextual. It takes into account the different social factors in the two countries: the political and economic conditions, and the educational administration systems, which have a significant influence on the two inspection systems. Second, it is practical. As a comparative study, it is not only concerned with understanding and explaining the dissimilar factors which shape the profiles of the inspectorates in both countries, but also designed to provide practical help to the Chinese administrators and inspectors to improve their work in the process of establishing and perfecting their inspection system. Finally, it uses triangulation. Triangulation is defined by Cohen and Manion as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour (1980, p254). They argue that single observation provides only a limited view of the complexity of human behaviour and of situations in which human beings interact. In other words, exclusive reliance on one method may bias or distort the researcher's picture of the particular slice of reality he is investigating. Therefore, when he employs different methods of data collection and they yield substantially same results, the researcher can have confidence in his results. Among various types of triangulation, the author adopted "methodological triangulation" to check validity of data, i.e., used different methods on the same object of study. Other types were obviously unsuitable such as the "time triangulation" which utilised longitudinal designs and the "investigator triangulation" which

involved more than one investigator. When deciding what methods should be used in this thesis, the following aspects were taken into account: (1), in order to fully understand the contemporary HMI system, one must consider its development as a historical process and trace its relationship with other social conditions and educational factors; (2), since the focus of study is the contemporary inspection systems, documents and other written material are essential sources of data; (3), since official claims sometimes do not necessarily match factual practice, the views of inspectors in the field, school teachers and administrators have to be explored. Because of the necessity of the information mentioned above, the author employed historical method, documentary method, survey and observation in her thesis.

## **2.1 Historical and Documentary Method**

Cohen and Manion define the historical method as "the systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and conclusions about past events."(Cohen and Manion, 1980, p31).

While using the historical method, the emphasis of this study was not confined to a description and discussion of the history of the inspectorates (mainly the HMI system, since the one of China has only recently been restored). On the contrary, the interest lay in showing how the contemporary inspection systems had come about, and further, how the functions of the inspectorates and the ways of performing them were changed as a result of the changing circumstances surrounding them. It is believed by the author that a review of the growth of HM

Inspectorate and associated factors could help people, especially the author who is an overseas student with little knowledge of English history and English education history, not only to understand the current practice and issues, but also to predict future trends.

Emphasis was put upon the development of HM Inspectorate between 1944 and 1988. The changes before 1944 had comparatively less influence on the contemporary system. In addition, considering the difficulties in analysing constantly changing situations in the present educational system and the new but unstabilised relationships among various educational partners (as a result of the 1988 ERA), and the difficulties in examining HMI's changing practice, the author decided that the examination of HMI's functions and organisation should be focused on the system as it was before rather than after 1988. Nevertheless, although there are some changes in what the inspectors are specifically doing, the functions and organisations have not been altered much. Therefore, most of the discussion about HMI's practice around 1988 is still true today.

As to the sources of historical research, various categories have been identified by researchers. Cohen and Manion, for example, divided sources into two parts: primary source including relics and those items that have had a direct physical relationship with the events happened, such as written and oral testimony and actual participants; and secondary source which is obtained from other persons or sources (Cohen and Manion, 1980, p38). Borg and Gall group sources into four parts: documents, quantitative records, oral records, and relics (Borg and Gall, 1983, p807). Within the document group, researchers further classify them, from different viewpoints, into those for personal use and

those for nonpersonal use. (Bailey, 1982, p303); deliberate (intended to keep records) and inadvertent (not-intended). (Fox, 1969, p412).

As far as this research is concerned, among various historical sources, the main effort was devoted to documentary analysis due to limited time and resources. In fact, documentary analysis was the most important tool in the historical search in this study. The relics or oral records were relatively unimportant though they might have some value. Hence, the documents which the author dealt with belonged to two categories: those primary documentary sources such as inspectors' testimonies and biographies, minutes of committee meetings, government documents, inspectorate publications and reports; and those secondary documentary sources such as printed books, journals, dissertations, and newspapers. Moreover, other methods like interviewing former inspectors or inspectors with long commitment to the career were also employed to enrich the data.

The documentary method not only had significant meaning in exploring history, but also played an indispensable role in the discussion of present issues. So the documents mentioned above, especially those government papers, inspectorate's reports, books and journals were still very important in the examination of the present practice. However, the documentary method could not retain its monopolistic position in the discussion of the present system as it had in the historical search. As current data were more accessible, other methods were also employed to collect more comprehensive and more in depth data.

## **2.2 Observation Method**

The observation research method is generally viewed as a technique of collecting information by watching and listening.

This method has been used in the present study for the following reasons. Firstly, the search for documentary material had shown that secondary sources describing and analysing the work of the inspectorates were, to some extent, rather limited and fragmentary. This was especially true in the Chinese case because the inspection system had only recently been restored. As a supplement to the limitations of the documentary method, observation provided a first-hand and more detailed picture of the work of the inspectorates. Observing the inspections carried out by inspectors in England and in China helped the author to discover many aspects of their work. For example, how the inspectors organised their inspections, the attitudes of the teachers and the inspectors, inspection procedures and time allocation among various procedures --- aspects not contained in the documents.

Secondly, observation in this study was also used to check the validity and reliability of documentary materials. On one hand, it helped to obtain a deeper understanding of what had been said in the documents, on the other hand, it could help point out those aspects that had proved to be unreal and provide the basis to replace them by firsthand data.

Thirdly, with the help of observation, the author, a newcomer to research with no previous experience of being an inspector or a teacher, would be able to familiarise herself with inspection practice, which

further helped in the interpretation of other sources of information.

Finally, related to the third reason, observation study served as a preparation for formulating appropriate questions in the surveys.

Most researchers divide observation into two types: participant-observation and non-participant-observation (Bailey, 1982,p248; Forcese and Richer, 1973, p143; Cohen and Manion, 1980, p99). But two researchers made interesting classifications. Bailey assumes two lines of continuum according to the degree of structure in the environment (natural or artificial), and the degree of the structure imposed on the setting by the researcher (structured or unstructured). Combining these two continuums gives four types of observation design: completely unstructured field study, unstructured laboratory analysis, structured field study, and completely structured laboratory observation. (Bailey, 1982, p250). In contrast to Bailey who is concerned with the environment and the form of observation, Borg makes the division based on the content that the observer records. He distinguishes three types of observational variable: descriptive (content recorded is factual and requires little inference to be made by the observer); inferential (content needs the observer's inference such as the number of people showing self-confidence); and evaluative (needs an evaluative judgment before recording, for instance, good answer or not). (Borg,1983, p468).

Based on three variables mentioned above, (participant or nonparticipant observation; natural or artificial setting and structured or nonstructured design; and content variables), the author determined the type of observation that she wanted to conduct in this study. Firstly, because of the author's age, nationality, experience, and limited

research time, it did not seem possible to undertake participant observation. In practice, if the non-participant observation were designed carefully, similar results could be obtained. In other words, nonparticipation observation was considered to be more suitable and flexible for this study. Secondly, the observation setting must be as natural as possible since the aim of observation was to get a real view of actual behaviour during an inspection. Any possible reactions of the observed objects (teachers, inspectors) caused by the presence of the observer should be minimised. Thirdly, since what the author was looking for were actual facts about the various events and relationships during the inspection, the records most needed were those of description and inference. Finally, the structure of observation was neither completely structured as the author was not familiar with the observation setting, nor totally unstructured because some guidelines had to be prepared for the purpose of later analysis. To conclude, the author played the role of an outside observer in a natural inspection environment with a semistructured observation design. The main aspects observed included the procedure of an inspection, the inspectors' activities in the schools, the frequency and coverage of teachers met and the criteria for judging educational quality and so on.

### **2.3 Survey Method**

Survey methods are useful for gathering verbal answers from the people being investigated. Interview and questionnaire are two main tools.

Survey techniques have some advantages in collecting data about

people's expectations, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and other subjective orientations. The use of the survey methods in this study was mainly designed to obtain an evaluation of the work of the Chinese inspectorate in the eyes of administrators, teachers and inspectors themselves, as a supplement to the data from printed materials. Secondly, it was considered to be helpful to know the expectations of administrators and teachers and improve the inspection work in those directions. Since the purpose of this study is to improve inspection system in China, a large proportion of the field work was aimed at the Chinese inspectorate, and, of course, conducted in China.

### **2.3.1 Interview**

Interview was adopted as a research method in this study for the following reasons:

First, merely using documents to examine the functions of the inspectorates is likely to miss some important details. Interviews with inspectors to obtain knowledge and information about their work greatly enriched the overall data.

Second, semi-structured interviews with the administrators and school teachers were the best tools among all research methods for collecting a wide range of ideas, expectations, and opinions in depth. During the interviews, the researcher would be able to explore intensively and ask questions exhaustively.

Third, the major advantage of interview is its adaptability. Compared

with questionnaire, interview can get immediate feedback from the respondent. Based on this, the interviewer can probe for clarification of the response, ask new questions that emerged during the talk, and get a thorough and in-depth exploration of the topic.

There are numerous ways of classifying types of interview. The most popular one, from the interviewer's standpoint, is represented by Phillips (1971). In his book, Phillips suggested three categories of interview: the standardised interview, the unstandardised interview, and the semistandardised interview. In the standardised interview, the interviewer is held to the specific words in the interview questions schedule. He is not free to adapt his question to the specific situation. In the unstandardised interview, the interviewer is free to develop each situation in whatever way he deems most appropriate for the purpose at hand. In the semistandardised interview, the interviewer may have to ask a number of specific major questions, but he may be free to probe beyond the answer to these questions. (Phillips, 1971, p128). Other authors have made similar classifications although slight differences exist. (Forcese, 1973, p169; Gorden, 1975, p60-61).

In this study, data was needed to fill in some missing details of the work of the inspectorates, and to assess the attitudes of teachers and administrators towards the work of the Chinese inspectorate. Because it was important to be able to summarise and compare the responses, the interviews in this study composed the elements of both standardised interviews and semistandardised interviews. That is to say, most of the interviews comprised specific and fixed questions, but there was still some room for probing details and deeper ideas.

### **2.3.2 Questionnaire**

The main advantage of the questionnaire over the interview is that it enables responses to be generalised to an extent that cannot be achieved with a limited number of interviews. Considering that the expectations and attitudes of both school heads and administrators obtained from interviews and documents should be as representative as possible, the questionnaire method was adopted as a complementary tool to the interview. In addition to the advantage of economy, the questionnaire "provides a type of anonymity not provided by the interview" (Gorden, 1975, p77). Some opinions about the work of the inspectorate which could not be expressed in the interviews for various reasons would be more likely to appear in response to the written questionnaire.

The purpose of adopting the questionnaire was to find out and generalise the evaluations of the work of the Chinese inspectorate and suggestions for improvement, as little has been studied and published on these topics. Moreover, questionnaires made it easier to compare the differences and similarities between different evaluations by teachers, administrators, and inspectors in China.

As to the method of selecting samples, the principle was to use a combination of cluster and stratified sampling. According to Bailey, stratified sampling is "separating the population elements into non-overlapping groups, called strata, and then selecting a simple random sample from within each stratum --- " (Bailey, 1982, p95). Cluster sampling is defined as "a simple random sample in which each sampling unit is a collection, or cluster, of elements." (Bailey, 1982, p96).

Applying this rule, the author chose the samples according to the following procedures: first, the whole country was stratified into two groups: urban and rural, thus each group was a cluster of urban regions or rural regions. Then, chose several units (several urban cities and several rural counties) from each cluster. Finally, each unit was stratified again by different subjects (teachers, administrators, inspectors).

The questionnaires were designed for three groups of people: school head teachers, administrators and inspectors. Each group contained 110 samples selected from 10 provinces. The response rates were 70%, 47% and 69% respectively. The detailed report of the field work is in Chapter Six and in the appendix.

## **2.4 Summary**

The research methods employed in this study were historical and documentary methods, observation and survey. Each of them was particularly helpful in obtaining one particular set of data. A combination of them collected all the necessary information needed to conduct this study.

As to historical and documentary methods, the author studied most of the literature related to both HMI history and its contemporary practice. In addition, substantial amount of literature about educational administration system, and a fair amount of literature about public education in England was reviewed. Apart from academic contributions, government publications, e.g., DES publications, various

committee reports, HMI publications and many inspection reports were paid special attention. With regard to the Chinese part, almost all the published materials were diagnosed. A large number of unpublished documents such as SEdC's regulations of inspection work, job descriptions of inspectors in several inspectorates, inspection reports, reviews of inspectorate's work, governmental circulars (SEdC's and some local government's), lists of evaluation criteria used by various levels of inspectorates, and inspector training programmes, are all collected and thoroughly reviewed. Therefore, historical and documentary methods, particularly the latter one, were extensively employed in this study.

Considering the relatively less important position of observation method in the whole study, the author conducted seven observations. Two were observations on HMI full inspections which each lasted one week. One was an observation on Chinese aspect inspection which lasted two days. Others were observations on school visits carried out by Chinese inspectors, HM Inspectors and English LEA advisers.

Special attention has been paid to interviews and questionnaires. 33 interviews were conducted of which 10 were done in England and 23 were in China. The interviewees included HMI (SCI, CI, SI, and HMI), school head teachers and LEA advisers. In China, interviews were carried out with inspectors at all levels, some administrators and school head teachers.

Finally, as mentioned above, three questionnaires were sent out for three groups of people: inspectors, administrators and school heads (in China) to collect their evaluations of the work of the Chinese

inspectorate and their expectations. The response rates were satisfactory.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **A BRIEF HISTORY OF HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE OF SCHOOLS**

An inspection system is usually a product of the educational administration system within which it is embedded. The feasibility of using HMI as a model depends on the similarities and the differences between not only the two inspection systems, but also the two educational administration systems. In order to obtain a better understanding of the HMI system, this chapter is designed to trace briefly the process of the growth of HMI, to examine the changes in functions and methods which have taken place during its development, in particular, the factors that caused such changes.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate, a national body set up in 1839 to check the usage of central government grant, has gone through one hundred and fifty years' of vicissitudes. Although its tasks today are in some ways similar to those at its birth, there is a difference in priorities accorded to these tasks. The methods of working have also changed significantly. Both internal and external changes in the educational system such as philosophical changes, ideological evolution, educational administrative reallocation and the growing complexity of education, have had an enormous impact on the system of HMI. It has had to constantly redefine its functions and adjust its organisational structures.

Because the Inspectorate has been developing alongside the

increasing state involvement in education, a brief account of the growth of the state school system (particularly the primary and secondary sectors) and the evolution of the educational administrative framework provides a background against which the development of HM Inspectorate can be better understood.

### **3.1 A Brief Account of the English Primary and Secondary Education**

English primary and secondary education was not a continuous process in the past. Instead, they were separate systems and tended to cater for children of different social classes. Central government was not involved in financing education until 1833. Before that year, elementary education was dominated by industrial organisations and the Churches. The former ran schools for the purpose of giving children the basic knowledge and skill to cope with work and the latter were inspired by the belief that education was a plan for the "salvation of souls" (Morrish, 1970, p3). Secondary schools existed in the form of endowed or private grammar schools which, with some exceptions, only the children of wealthy families could afford to attend. Since the 1810s, central government became increasingly interested in educational affairs as a result of the acceleration of industrial development and the franchise reform. In 1833, Parliament gave a grant of £20,000 towards elementary school buildings. In 1839, the Committee of Privy Council for Education was set up to administer the increasing government grant. But till the 1870 Act, central government was content to offer grants to voluntary elementary schools instead of setting up schools owned by the state itself. In 1870, the Forster Act was passed in order to meet the

demand for popular elementary education. Though it failed to make elementary education either compulsory or free, it did make them possible by creating the School Boards at local level which set up elementary schools to fill in the gaps which the voluntary organisations could not cover. This was the beginning of a state system of schools. The secondary schools, pathways to higher education, were still open mainly to rich people. However, the agencies administering secondary education were many and sometimes they conflicted with each other. In addition, although the School Boards had no right to administer secondary education, they virtually did so as they created higher elementary schools or added higher classes to the normal elementary classes to accommodate pupils who wished to stay on after compulsory schooling. This led to a conflict for responsibility for secondary education between the School Board and other relevant agencies. Through a series of Acts at the turn of this century, the Board of Education at central level was empowered as a sole authority to supervise educational affairs nationally. Moreover, Local Education Authorities were created at the local level to be in charge of the primary as well as secondary schools in their areas. Therefore, the basic framework of partnership in educational administration was established at the beginning of this century.

A considerable number of secondary schools were set up as a consequence of the 1902 Education Act. They followed the pattern of grammar schools which focused on classical subjects and allowed less room for science and modern technology. Meanwhile, most poor children were still excluded by entrance examination because there were not sufficient free places. They could only go to trade schools or technical schools to prepare for entering the labour market. Various

reports of different committees (Hadow Report, 1926; Spens Report, 1938; and Norwood Report, 1943) strongly suggested that children should be transferred to the secondary schools which suited their abilities and interests. After 1944, grammar schools, technical schools and secondary modern schools were the three available types of secondary schools which the children went to based mainly on their 11+ examination results. The 1944 Butler Act terminated the separation of primary and secondary education by distinguishing three successive stages of education, namely, primary, secondary, and further. In addition, central government wielded greater responsibility and power to promote educational standards in the country.

In the post-war years primary education has been in the position of "Cinderella" (Evans, 1985, p126). It did not change much structurally except for the fact that education has been receiving more attention than before.

But secondary education underwent radical reforms. As the 1944 Act failed to eliminate the influence of social class on education, students of the three types of secondary schools were stamped with the brands of class. The 11+ examination became a competitive and bitter experience. In 1965, the Labour Party issued circular 10/65 and launched a radical movement for comprehensive schools which took all kinds of pupils in one school. Its aim was to break down the existing class distinctions and bring about "Secondary Education for All". Having experienced several political contentions, the comprehensive schools nowadays make up the majority of state schools while the number of grammar and modern schools has dropped dramatically.

Between the early 1970s and the late 1980s, the English education system suffered greatly from falling rolls and consequent outcomes. The reorganisation of schools and redeployment of teachers have brought about enormous pressure on central government, local education authorities, and teachers. Since the '70s, central government has been gaining greater power. The 1988 Education Reform Act introduced the national curriculum and financial delegation, bringing about some significant changes in the current English education.

### **3.2 The History of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools**

HM Inspectorate, created in 1839, at about the same time as the first state educational authority -- the Committee of Privy Council for Education, has gone through all the changes mentioned above. It was those changes that produced today's HMI.

There is a substantial amount of literature on the system of HMI ranging from historical review ( Lawton and Gordon, 1987; Rhodes, 1981; Edmonds, 1962) to examination of the contemporary role of HMI (Browne, 1979; DES, 1979; Lawton, 1988). From role analysis (Lawton, 1988; DES, 1983a) to descriptions of organisational structure and methods. (Pearce 1986; DES, 1970). Some of the literature makes a study of HMI against the overall context of educational system, some devotes itself entirely to describing or analysing the HMI system.

All studies dealing specially with the history of HMI have divided the process of HMI's development into several periods. For instance, Rhodes distinguishes three periods: the 19th century, 1902 to 1944, and 1944

onwards; Lawton and Gordon mention five phases that HMI has gone through, but they still divide the history into two parts: the first 100 years of HMI and HMI since the Second World War; The Board of Education, when reviewing the growth of HMI up until 1922, analysed the role of HMI in three periods: 1839-1862, 1862-1902 and 1902 -1922. Most of the other literature in this area refers broadly to the evolution of HMI without dividing it into specific periods (Mann, 1979; Pearce, 1986).

This study focuses on a review of the various functions performed by HMI and their priorities since its establishment. Therefore, the division of periods must depend on the changes of functions and changes of the central government's power and responsibilities. Keeping these criteria in mind, the past of HM Inspectorate can be broadly divided into the following five periods, namely: (1). the period of initiation (1839 - 1861); (2).the period of tension (1862-1902); (3). the period of shaping (1902-1944); (4).the period of frustration (1944-1968); and (5). the period of revitalisation (1969-1988).

### **3.2.1 The Period of Initiation 1839-1861**

The acceleration of the industrial revolution and unprecedented population growth made it necessary for a younger generation to be both disciplined and literate. The voluntary organisations which monopolised educational service were no longer able to meet this requirement. With the purpose of assisting education, central government agreed, for the first time in the English history, to supply a sum of not exceeding £20,000 in aid of private subscriptions for the children of the poor classes in Great Britain. The force of the Church

was so strong and the ideology of non-intervention of government in education was so deeply rooted at that time that the grants provided in the first six years were used by the schools without being checked and justified. It was given through the Treasury on the recommendations of the then National Society and the British and Foreign School Society. But along with the annual increase in the grants, (from £20,00 in 1833 to £30,000 in 1839), central government felt it necessary to create an effective agency for grant administration in order to justify this expenditure. By an order of the Queen in Council, the Committee of the Privy Council for Education was set up in 1839 and at the end of that year, after bitter arguments, two inspectors were appointed to inspect grant-aided schools.

The Privy Council used the inspectors as a means of checking and controlling the usage of grants because it believed that if the state spent money, it had the right to see that it was spent in a manner of which it approved.

It was because of this that inspectors began to visit schools and observe their merits and demerits. Meanwhile, the Privy Council made other demands on the inspectors. They were asked to provide information on the state of education to the central authority in order to enable it to decide further grants offered and the level of intervention needed. In order to fulfil this function, inspectors contacted grant-aided schools and wrote reports on individual schools and on particular districts. In 1840 the instruction to inspectors divided the responsibilities of the inspectors into three parts: (1), enquiring into applications for grants; (2), inspecting schools aided by grants; (3), enquiring into the general conditions of elementary education in particular

schools.(Instruction to Inspectors of Schools, 1840).

Although voluntary organisations had no alternative but to accept grants, they were very strongly against government intervention since they had monopolised education for so many years. Therefore, on one hand, they expected the inspectors not to interfere in their work (Lawton and Gordon, 1987, p9; Rhodes, 1981, p97), so they preferred inspectors to offer advice and suggestions which were not strictly enforceable but were free to be adopted. On the other hand, they had to treat inspectors seriously as the recommendations of the inspectors weighed quite heavily in deciding grant allocation.

This conflict of ideology about whether the state should be involved in educational service and whether schools must be inspected did not put inspectors into a very difficult position. Because the influence and power of two parts was so imbalanced at that time, the central authority, which had neither great ambition nor actual strength of control, limited its action within the right derived from offering grant. The appointment of inspectors had to be approved by the Archbishops, "without their concurrence, we should recommend no person to your Majesty for such appointment" (Order in Council, 1840). One copy of the inspection report had to be sent to the Archbishop of the province. The inspectors organised their work on the basis of sectarian types of schools --- Church of England, Non-conformist and Roman Catholic. Inspectors were clergymen who were viewed not as expert professionals but as "gifted amateurs" (Lawton and Gordon, 1987, p102) who were well educated with good character and reputation, which partly explains the fact that their inspection reports were more concerned with social conditions than with the state of education of a school. All these features which

have now disappeared reflected the compromise of the central authorities. The most representative evidence was the Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education which asked the inspectors to bear in mind that inspection "is not intended as a means of exercising control, ---, It is not to be regarded as operating for the restraint of local effort but for their encouragement.----" (Instruction to Inspectors of Schools, 1840). Nevertheless, central government did hold the right to issue grant on the condition of inspection, which was a powerful influence on the schools.

In 1846, as a result of the new teacher training apprenticeship system, the Committee of Council introduced a new task for inspectors --- to inspect the quality of teacher training. HMIs were expected to select suitable teachers to train apprentices, and every year they examined the pupil teachers in their subjects and observed them teaching a class. Based on their inspection reports and other criteria, grants would be paid to the apprentices and the instructing teachers. Here, the inspectors not only influenced the provision of grants to schools but also the grants to participants of the apprenticeship system. But this was only work expansion, the role remained the same.

To conclude, 'the role of inspectors in the early days has to be viewed against the background of government intervention in education' (Rhodes, 1981, p97). Because the only means of state intervention was the provision of grants, the inspectors were concerned primarily with inspecting and checking the usage of public funds, and reporting to central government about the state of education in a particular school or area to enable it to justify this expenditure and to decide further grants. The "financial watchdog" and "ears and eyes of central authorities"

termed by contemporary scholars aptly describe the role they played. At the same time, when the inspectors went around schools, they acted as the liaison between the central authority and grant-aided schools. In addition, because the central authority was only in a position of offering assistance, the inspectors had no right to question or criticise the work of schools and teachers, but only to offer encouragement and advisory suggestions.

The organisation of the inspectorate at that time was simple (non-hierarchical) and the channel of communication between the central authorities and schools was quite primitive. The inspectors worked mainly by visiting schools and writing reports. They dealt directly with individual schools and teachers, their scope was confined to elementary education since the Committee of Privy Council for Education was set up only for the purpose of assisting affairs in the elementary education sector.

### **3.2.2 The Period of Tension 1862-1902**

The rapid growth of elementary education increased government expenditure from £30,000 in 1839 to £80,000 in 1861. Both the economic retrenchment following the Crimean War and the serious problems in grant-aided schools accelerated central government's determination to make education cheaper and more efficient. In 1862, the Revised Code was introduced based on the recommendations of the Newcastle Commission. It was stipulated in the Code that one third of the grant should be paid on the basis of pupil attendance and two-thirds on the performance of each pupil in the annual examination in three subjects--

reading, writing, and arithmetic. "If it is not cheap, it shall be efficient, if it is not efficient, it shall be cheap" remarked Robert Lowe, the then head of the Department of Education.

The Revised Code did contribute to a considerable increase in the school population and more frequent pupil attendance, and ensured a minimum level of attainment for all pupils. More significantly, it increased the power of central government as against the Church. However, scholars observed that by using economic laws and competition to operate education, the Revised Code narrowed curriculum and strangled school innovation. (Edmonds, 1962, p79; Lawson and Silver, 1973, p293). It also put great pressure on pupils and teachers.

HM Inspectors played a key role in the implementation of the Revised Code. In the instructions to HMIs issued by the then Department of Education, inspectors were entrusted with the task of examining registers and conducting the annual examinations. There was no other period in which the functions of the inspectors were so precise and definite. "It became the instrument of central government control, and primary control over the way in which money was spent" . (Rhodes, 1981, p113). Conducting examinations and reporting results to the central authorities as the basis of offering grants obviously became the primary function of HMI in that period.

The consequence of HMI becoming the conductor of rigid examinations was that its role in that period was totally reversed. The inspectors had to devote most of their time on these tasks. Although the practice of normal open-minded inspection and reporting continued

(Browne, 1979, p37), it only constituted a small proportion of their work.

Another more serious consequence was that, instead of being friends offering sympathetic advice and encouragement to teachers and managers about school building, teaching methods, learning conditions and so on, which they did before 1862, HM Inspectors became powerful persons who could determine the fate of schools and could make "children tremble at his name", (Edmonds, 1962, p114). Teachers distrusted and hated inspectors because their reports would determine their reputations and salaries. Managers also hated and feared inspectors because the grants were so important to the schools. Furthermore, teaching and learning in school narrowed down to the 3R subjects, other things like experiment with new methods, curriculum innovation and improvement of school facilities had to be neglected.

The establishment of the School Board after the 1870 Act created a corps of local advisers whose role was oriented to advice and help. They showed their sympathy for teachers and their love for children. They had practical knowledge which could be shared with teachers and they were more flexible in their approaches. This intensified the teachers' dislike of HMI. The National Union of Teachers, in its memorandum submitted to the Bryce Committee in 1894, stated clearly that "Whilst the work of inspectors appointed by School Boards has been generally helpful to the teachers, the work of many of the inspectors appointed by the Education Department has, to a very serious extent, been harmful to the schools." (Bryce Report, 1895, Vol.5, p328).

From 1870, the workload of the Inspectorate increased due to the development of elementary education. Inspectors were given the more

important task of inspecting schools and had to leave detailed examinations to their assistants.

In the Code of 1882, the government realised that it was not wise to define education in terms of the 3Rs. School management, classroom discipline and quality of other subjects apart from the 3Rs were of equal importance. Merit Grants were introduced, and inspectors were given the task of examining the general work of schools to decide the merit grant a school could receive.

In the period 1862-1902, the role of HM Inspectorate was distorted by the Revised Code. Compared with the functions it performed in the first period: checking usage of grants and offering advisory suggestions, HMI was now performing a more powerful controlling function: carrying out examinations and informing the central authorities to issue grants. It acted not only as the watchdog but also the instrument of the central authorities. This change of function was in line with the change of power of central government. Since its first involvement in 1833, central government had been playing a more and more active role in educational service. Especially after the 1870 Act which ended the concord with the Churches, the central government's influence and strength was greatly increased.

After 1870, the inspectorate was reorganised according to districts rather than types of church schools. Inspectors were responsible for both church and state schools within their districts which by law (1870 Act) should "open at all time to the inspection of any of Her Majesty's Inspectors". In 1871, eight senior inspectors were appointed to take charge of divisions each consisting of 8-10 districts. The title finally

changed into Divisional Inspector in 1903. Meanwhile, the post of assistant inspectors was created to help with the conducting of examinations. In a word, the hierarchical structure of the organisation was forming, but the methods of work were still quite simple.

### **3.2.3 The Period of Shaping 1902-1944**

In 1895, the system of "Payment by Results" finally disintegrated as a result of the rising influence of progressivism and the rapid increase in the school population which could not be matched by a corresponding increase in the number of inspectors. Inevitably the inspectorate had to modify and even to discard some previous functions. In addition, several great changes took place at the turn of the century. All these forced the inspectorate to think seriously of new roles in order to survive in a changing world.

First of all, the abandoning of the Revised Code meant the elimination of the main duty of the inspectors --- examination of individual pupils. What remained was the visit which varied from district to district and which had no definite procedures and standard modes. The inspectors realised that effective inspection could be better attained by persuasion and influence rather than control and inquisition. Faced with the new circumstances, HM inspectors felt the need for new functions.

Secondly, the Board of Education was set up after the 1899 Act by merging the Education, Science and Art Department and the Charity Commission. The new body was authorised as a single legitimate

government entity to run education -- not only elementary education but also all forms of education including, of course, secondary education. In addition, as a result of the 1902 Act, secondary education developed rapidly. Hence, the inspectorate faced the challenge of broadening its work sphere and finding different ways to inspect secondary schools.

The third change was the realignment of the administrative system through which the Local Education Authorities replaced various local organisations and were given direct responsibility and great discretion to administer the education service. The power of the Board of Education was limited to coordinating and superintending the work of local governments, especially in fields other than elementary education. The creation of LEAs also indicated the birth of a powerful partner in the educational service. The administrative structure emerged at that time has been the basic framework till now. The existence of LEAs had an important effect on the work of the inspectorate. As a part of the Board of Education, HM Inspectorate was obliged to look for new ways to adapt to a changed administrative structure and the new distribution of responsibilities. In addition, the local inspectorates began to develop which became one of the causes of HMI's role changing in the late 1960s.

The last change was the pedagogic revolution. Since the 1870 Act, education began to be viewed as "a vital element in the development of social policy. Education was now of more importance than the army or navy because it affects the physical, intellectual and moral progress of the people". (Lawson and Silver, 1973, p323). Worldwide interest in children's development was reflected in the work of the pioneers of progressivism such as Froebel, Herbart, and Dewey. The new approach

which emphasised child-centred teaching and learning began to exert its influence on teachers and inspectors. The change of official attitude was shown in 1905 "Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others Concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools" (three of the writers were inspectors). It argued that the acquisition of the knowledge should be in relation to the experience of the children. In 1931, the Hadow Report stated clearly that "curriculum is ...to be thought of in terms of activity and experience, rather than knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored". Influenced by the current of progressivism, some HMIs began to move towards the new ideas, though not all of them followed unanimously.

In short, at the beginning of the century, significant changes both inside and outside the inspectorate led to HMI being faced with the urgent need to redefine its role and to modify correspondingly the methods of working. The outcome of its reform laid the foundations for the modern inspectorate.

All the changes mentioned above resulted in important changes of direction. One was the shift from assessing pupil achievement to observing teaching and learning. The other was the shift of purpose of inspection from evaluating individual schools' work as a basis of offering grants to evaluating overall educational standards and ensuring value for money for the nation since the grant now was given to LEAs rather than individual schools. Another change of emphasis was that the duty of inspectors was no longer to test and assess teachers, in contrast, inspectors were expected to observe the methods pursued by the teacher, "any questioning that may be employed should be confined to the purpose of ascertaining how far these methods have been

successful" (Instruction to HMIs, 1898).

Hence, the functions of the inspectors could be analysed as follows. Firstly, inherited from their predecessors, their primary duty still remained to see that public money was well spent, and that full value was obtained for it. Yet, the inspectorate was now more concerned with the overall quality of education rather than the limited academic achievement of pupils. Furthermore, as well as judging value for money for individual schools, the inspectorate tended to be more interested in efficiency on a national basis.

Secondly, HM Inspectors were expected by central and local authorities to inform them of the state of education in the country or in particular LEAs. The speedy development of secondary education brought about substantial problems, such as the management of schools, the organisation of teaching and staffing, the provision of equipment and facilities and so on. There consequently was a need for the inspectors to go into schools, find out problems and inform central or local authorities in order to enable them to take actions. Since educational service was actually run by each LEA with the Board of Education in the position of coordination, central government also hoped to be informed not only of the state of education nationally but of the actual educational provision in each LEA. In this case, HMI was expected to be the liaison between the centre and the local authorities, which was a new role in the history of HMI.

However, the Board of Education seemed to acknowledge that "there are, of course, definite positions on which the Board must be informed, but to deal with these is only a small part of the inspectors' duty." (Board

of Education, 1924, p20). Another notable aspect of their duties, as expected by central authorities and schools, was to suggest improvement and stimulate development by using their professional knowledge and experience and by making the school aware of good practice which had occurred in other educational establishment. (Board of Education, 1924, p19). The uncertainties surrounding the new pedagogic approach, innovation after the removal of the constraints imposed by "Payment by Results", and other difficulties derived from the rapid development of the education system, called for the inspectorate's advice and help. So that a large proportion of inspectors' work was devoted to visiting and inspecting schools on the basis of which they made reports and gave advice.

Finally, there was a tendency to increase the administrative workload placed on inspectors especially on those who were directly dealing with LEAs as divisional and district inspectors. As the Board recognised, this administrative work was the outcome of the direct communication and correspondence between the LEAs and the inspectorate.

Briefly, HM Inspectors performed many functions in this period. Firstly, they acted as a check on the public funds in order to ensure value for money on a national basis; secondly, they were the liaison between central authorities, local authorities and individual schools in terms of policy and practice; thirdly, they used their professional expertise to influence and encourage local innovation and practice. This was quite a change compared with the situation in 1839 -- the object, the purpose and the scope of their work were very different from those of before. Moreover, the priorities of the roles, as the Board of Education

Annual Report (1922-1923) implied, were also shifted towards the advice side. This might be due to the fact that the inspectors paid more attention to another component of their roles (i.e. advice) after the abandonment of the Revised Code and their corresponding control role. However, a more important cause, was the practical need to solve problems resulting from the rapid growth of education. One more reason could be that central government at that time had neither direct responsibility nor strong legal backing (compared with the Ministry of Education after 1944 Act) to regulate education, it only performed the function of coordination and encouragement. Limited by the activities of the Board, it was impossible for HMI to exercise control. Thus, in that period, information, advice, professional stimulation and encouragement, as well as spread of good practice became an indispensable agenda of the inspectorate.

Relevant organisational adjustments had been made in order to adapt to the new tasks. First of all, the inspectorate was now divided into three branches corresponding to the three branches in the Board -- elementary, secondary, and technological. This meant that HMI's information and help could be classified and more direct according to different branches. In addition to this, through several modifications, England and Wales were divided into nine divisions each with a Divisional Inspector who acted as communicator in the two directions. On top of that, a Chief Inspector was appointed to oversee the whole inspectorate and to act as a senior professional adviser to the Board, as well as the organiser of his own division. Thus the information flow became more direct, accurate, quick and flexible. Another notable feature was that HM Inspectorate began to attach great importance to professional knowledge and teaching experience. The inspectorate

recruited more and more men and women who had some experience as teachers and also had a university degree. (Edmonds, 1962, p50), because the new circumstances required professional expertise, knowledge and experience to deal with curriculum, teaching methods and school management issues. Clergymen were no longer always the right men for this job. Finally, the invention of "full inspection" was regarded as something necessary in addition to the informal visit as it enabled inspectors to look into every aspect of school life. It was claimed to be an important basis on which the judgment of educational standards in the country could be made. The Board of Education made great efforts to ensure the three yearly visits to each school. This method was originally designed to inspect secondary schools when it became a new task of HMI, but it has spread to other sectors of education such as primary and further education.

### **3.2.4 The Period of Frustration 1944-1968**

During the Second World War, the 1944 Education Act was passed and it framed the post war English education system until 1988. Post-war education enjoyed a high priority and favour in the society at large, and every aspect of education was developed. Firstly, education was no longer a matter of philanthropy, it was regarded not only as a public welfare service, but also as a means of social control. "The belief that education is a prerequisite of politico-economic security is widespread and apolitical" (Midwinter, 1980, p33). In addition, having suffered from the wars, the whole nation was eager to invest resources to its children in order to build an advanced country to achieve collective survival. Apart from the function of social solidarity, education was also believed since the 1960s, to be a human capital investment which could gain return in faster economic development. The urgent need of manpower for advanced science and technology after the Second World War called for the rapid expansion of education. All this meant that post-war education enjoyed a high priority politically and publicly.

The statutory base for the work of HM Inspectorate was section 77 of the 1944 Education Act which stipulated that it was the duty of the Secretary of State to cause inspection to be made of every educational establishment at appropriate intervals. In practice, its role became one of adviser. This phenomenon can be tentatively explained by three important factors: coalition among educational partners; higher professional status of teachers and the continuance of progressivism. Firstly, one distinctive feature after the 1944 Act was the formation of a political and administrative coalition among central government, local governments and teaching body. The social and economic problems left

over by two destructive wars created unity in the efforts of every partner in the educational network. Although the then Ministry of Education assumed the potential control power by the law, it did not use its power in the form of control. As Evans argues, "generally speaking, the Ministry of Education ...treat the LEAs and the teachers as real partners... and even took considerable notice of them". (Evans, 1985, p206-207). Education in England was a national system, locally administered. In a climate of cooperation and consultation among partners, HMI was naturally expected by central government, the teaching body, and LEAs to emphasise an advisory and intermediate role rather than the role of control. This also resulted in some overlap with the work of LEA advisers and partly accounted for the 1968 Select Committee Inquiry which questioned the very existence of HMI. Secondly, after one hundred years' development of teacher education, teachers were no longer the daughters of working class people as was the first generation. They had a degree and had received special pedagogic training. So that the status of teachers was increasingly high and became even higher because of the post-war teacher shortage. In the context of a national drive for better education, teaching became an attractive vocation and consequently the teachers' union occupied a very important position in the partnership network, a much more influential role than today. Under these circumstances, teachers' professional autonomy was much emphasised. Curriculum, teaching methods, and the internal organisation of schools were left to the discretion of school teachers. Since teachers were not subject to any dictatorial oversight of their work, HMIs could only influence teachers by disseminating good practice and assisting teaching innovation. The third factor explaining why HMI took this advisory role was the continuance of progressivism. Effective inspection was supposed to be democratic and humane, so the

positive way to achieve this goal was through persuasion and consultation rather than sanction and control.

To summarise, because of the fact that the government's power was confined by its role in the partnership, central government did not interfere much in matters such as curriculum and school organisation. HMI had little to question but spent much of its time on full inspections as a means of helping and advising individual schools, and also as a means of gathering information in order to keep Ministers well informed. Edmonds concludes the role of HMI like this: "yet it is the advisory side of inspectors' work which today is most evident"(Edmonds, 1962, p185).

In the post-war period and up to the 1950s, HM Inspectorate was engaged in clearing up all the arrears of inspection that had piled up due to the wars. It wanted to keep the inspection at fixed intervals, which resulted in it being accused of perfunctory visits and decline in the quality of inspections. Along with the rapid demographic growth and the consequent rise of the school population, the fixed inspection intervals could no longer be maintained.

In the '60s, HM Inspectorate was engaged in the comprehensive school movement. It was "involved in scrutinising schemes for comprehensive education submitted by LEAs and advising Ministers on the soundness or otherwise of the plans." (Lawton and Gordon, 1987, p6). Because the real operation of comprehensive education was left to the individual LEAs, central government was not very active in controlling detailed development. The information gathered by HMI and the opinions proposed by it were not fully made of use.

Apart from full inspections and routine visits on the basis of which HMIs could suggest improvement and recommend sound practice, HM Inspectors developed other forms of advice based on their unique professional expertise and collected first hand evidence. Various influential publications were published to be freely adopted as teachers' references. Moreover, HMI-run in-service teacher training courses were further expanded in order to help teachers from all over England and Wales to keep abreast of educational development.

The emphasis of HMI's work in that period was advice through inspections, visits, publications, and INSET courses. But the problem was that local education authorities had gradually developed their own advisory services. Ever since the School Boards were created in the 19th century, local government had been developing their own forces of inspection and advice because the local politicians and administrators also needed to be informed of the state of education in their areas and needed help on decision-making. In addition, because the LEAs had direct responsibility for education in their areas, whilst the curriculum and school management were at the discretion of individual schools, local inspectors were concerned more with the advice and assistance to schools. Men and women called advisers or inspectors acted as consultants and advisers to work alongside the schools and teachers within their areas. Compared with HM Inspectors, they went to the same school more frequently (for example, once every term by LEA adviser compared to once every eight years by HMI). In addition, LEAs' supervision was more detailed and direct. In this respect, HMI was less competent to bring practical benefits to schools although its advice had the advantage of including good practice outside a particular LEA. In addition to this weakness, the stress of HMI's advisory role resulted in

certain functional overlap with LEA advisory services which led to the appeal for abolishing HMI or changing its title in the late '60s. In 1961, for example the NUT Conference called for a "Ministry of Education Advisory Service of Schools" to replace HMI. (Lawton and Gordon, 1987, p105). The 1968 Select Committee also received similar suggestions. (Select Committee Report, 1968, pxi).

Meanwhile, HM Inspectorate, as a professional adviser to Minister and later the Secretary of State, was supposed to keep him well informed and give judgments on any educational matters. In reality, however, central government at that time relied very much on the initiatives of local authorities and teaching body, it did not spend much effort in policy making which would have needed the help of HMI. When the Select Committee was appointed in 1968 to examine the activities of the DES including HMI, some HMIs complained to the Committee that their opinions were not fully used by the DES. Furthermore, at that time the status of the Senior Chief Inspector was under the Deputy Secretary in the DES, so that the organisational arrangement hindered HMI from playing its role fully. In the investigation of the Select Committee, the former SCI said to the members of the Committee, "I think he (SCI) should at least have an equal entree and be able to speak at first-hand level". (Report of Select Committee, 1968, p47).

The Report of the Select Committee admitted that inspection itself was no longer regarded as the main function of HM Inspectorate. It also noted that the growth and progress of local advisers would probably affect the establishment and function of HM Inspectorate, i.e., the probable heavy duplication of functions performed by two inspection forces (Report of Select Committee, 1968, x-xi).

This examination of the HMI work and the recommendations of the Select Committee made HMI realise the urgent need for role changing, that is, to leave the detailed advisory role to local advisers who could do better than HMI, and to "establish a role which was national and professional, and which did not duplicate the work of LEA advisory service." (Lawton and Gordon, 1987, p108).

As early as the early '60s, HMI had already begun to seek new roles to adapt to the new circumstances. When the inspectors became involved in the work of the School Council, they found that the School Council was enthusiastic about curriculum development rather than curriculum planning. Consequently, HMI began developing its interest in national planning in terms of core curriculum. In addition, it started to try out the survey method as an alternative to full inspection which became increasingly difficult to keep at desirable intervals. For example, for the 1967 Plowden Report, the whole body of HMI responsible for the inspection of primary schools took part and inspected 2,000 primary schools as samples of the whole population. Although HMI was later criticised for the methods of sampling and evaluation criteria, it had made the first step towards a new and exciting stage of its development.

The report of the Select Committee helped HM Inspectorate and the latter was further determined to direct its development towards a national and professional role.

### **3.2.5 The Period of Revitalisation 1969-1988**

As analysed above, in the post-war period, particularly in the 1950s and the 1960s, because of the functional overlap between HMI and local advisory services and also because of the inactivity of central government in policy making, the influence of HM Inspectorate was quite weak. But since 1970s, there had been an increasing politicisation of education leading to the break down of partnership between central government, local government, and teaching body. The Department of Education and Science became more and more active in making nationwide policy especially in matters of curriculum and financing of education whilst the power of local education authorities was continuously on the decrease. Meanwhile, teachers' professional freedom had been under attack and the debate about accountability resulted in the decline in teachers' power and the increase of parents' influence. Three factors contributed to such changes in education: faced with a severe oil crisis and economic slump in the '70s, both youth unemployment and social order became very serious problems that frustrated the public and politicians. People found that education failed to produce the manpower needed by industry and could not solve social problems either. Thus the belief in education gradually changed into the doubt about the usefulness and the efficiency of the existing educational practice, such as curriculum, teaching methods, and school management, which, at that time, were still mainly in the hands of the teaching body and local government. As a result of this doubt of the social function of the educational system, the ideological base of English education was also under attack. Progressivism was accused of bringing down educational standards. In addition, some research results showed that traditional teaching methods were more effective

(Sockett, 1980, p7; Richmond, 1978, p61). The inquiry into William Tyndale School further intensified the conflict between progressive and traditional camps (Sockett, 1980, p7; Richmond, 1978, p61; Evans, 1985, p161). In 1976, the Prime Minister's famous Ruskin speech indicated the change of official attitude towards progressivism and indeed the then educational practice. Moreover, caused by the public suspicion and the political dissatisfaction with education, educationists were required to account for their professional autonomy. Gradually, local authorities and the teaching body were being deprived of much of the freedom which they had acquired for some 30 years. In addition to this, the decline of the school population and consequent redundant teaching staff made the situation even more complicated. Teaching was no longer an attractive occupation and the position of teachers in the partnership became weak.

Hence, the role of HM Inspectorate since the '70s should be analysed in the context of an increasing zeal of the DES in policy-making and also the politicisation of education on the one hand, and the decreasing profile of education in the public mind and also the diminishing power of the teaching body and LEAs on the other. On the whole, HMI moved its way in the direction of performing a national and professional function.

It was quite clear that the more active the authority was, the more information it needed in order to make proper decisions. Added to this was the fact that the politicians and administrators in the DES were not expert at educational affairs. Therefore, professional advice became essential for sound policy-making. As stated by ex-SCI Sheila Browne, "the Secretary of State... and senior members of the Department of Education and Science expect to have their attention drawn promptly to

matters of concern and new trends identified by HMI. In addition, they ...expect quick and reliable answers from HMI to their own questions arising from day-to-day work." (Browne, 1979, p37-38).

The functions performed by HM Inspectorate can be uncovered through a series of DES publications over the years. In 1970, "HMI: Today and Tomorrow" was issued by the DES in which the function of HMI was vaguely described as "ultimately answerable to the Secretary of State for Education and Science... help to accumulate and to sift the evidence and so to provide those who need it with the foundation on which to make reasonable decisions."(DES, 1970, p1-4). By 1978, the major functions of HMI seemed to have clarified. The 1978 DES Management Review claimed that the prime role of the inspectorate was to "assess standards and trends throughout the system and, on that basis, to report to the Permanent Secretary and to the Secretary of State and to advise on the state of the system nationally." (DES, 1979, p23). And then, in 1982, the Rayner Report described the primary function of HMI which had been mentioned in the DES Review as "the first and overriding duty" (DES, 1982, p8). "The Work of Inspectorate in England and Wales: A Policy Statement" which shortly followed the Rayner's scrutiny of the inspectorate was the document which more clearly defined the role of HMI, "firstly, assesses standards and trends and advises the Secretary of State on the performance of the system nationally; secondly, identifies and makes known more widely good practice and promising developments and draws attention to weakness requiring attention; thirdly, provides advice and assistance to those with responsibility for or in the institutions in the system through its day-to-day contacts, its contributions and training and its publications." (DES, 1983a, p2).

The event which revitalised HM Inspectorate, according to Lawton and Gordon, was the DES' replacement of the Department Planning Organisation for the Planning Branch in 1970 (Lawton and Gordon: 1987, p26). An important part of that system was the Policy Steering Group which was concerned with guiding the planning of educational policy. The Senior Chief Inspector became a member of this key committee. (Lawton and Gordon, 1987, p75). At lower levels of this system there were Policy Groups and sub-groups concerned with various educational sectors which also contained relevant Chief Inspectors and Staff Inspectors. That is to say, at every level of the planning system, relevant inspectors were involved. Further, the position of the SCI not only became equal to the Under Secretary, but could also have direct access to the Secretary of State. Thus the organisational restructuring of the DES facilitated HMI in exerting its influence. At regular meetings of the planning groups, the inspectors could promptly draw attention towards the concerns or issues identified by HMI's field work. They could also provide factual information based on their first hand evidence. More important, the inspectors could influence the process of decision-making and put forward professional suggestions and judgments which could affect the outcome of national policy. From the standpoint of the inspectors, especially the senior members of the inspectorate, joining in the policy groups would help them to be aware of the context in which the inspectorate worked and they could direct its activities correctly.

To perform the function of providing information on the state of education meant that the information given to the DES must be prompt and reliable. In order to meet this challenge, HMI adopted the survey as its important tool of collecting evidence. Knowing that nowadays it was

unwise to dream of keeping fixed inspection interval because of the imbalance between the number of schools and the number of inspectors, the inspectorate largely cut down the number of full inspections. At the same time, it made great efforts to improve the quality of sampling in surveys to ensure the representativity of these samples. Apart from careful subjective judgments, quantitative approaches and statistical tests were increasingly employed. In 1978 and 1979, national survey reports by HMI published, "Primary Education in England" and "Aspects of Secondary Education in England" were regarded as successes and they exerted a great influence on the work of educationists as well as administrators. Besides the large scale national surveys which could last several years, survey methods were also used for collecting data about one particular division, sector, or aspect of educational system. Its flexibility and concentration could very well meet the requirement of new situation provided survey itself was of high quality.

Full inspections, on the other hand, were not done away with. They were still conducted every year. Apart from being used for assisting individual schools, as in the '60s, it served two further important purposes. Firstly, it was one of the means by which HMI could keep track of the overall state of education in the country, based on which it could provide a general context for policy makers. Secondly, it was treated as preparation for survey. From the routine full inspections, HMI identified the possible trends and issues which were vital for the development of education, thus, it conducted surveys according to necessity and available conditions. While concentrating on playing the role of "watchdog" and "professional adviser", HMI still performed some functions of advice. Different from before, its advisory work was

not solely reflected in the detailed inspections or assistance to individual schools, it played its role nationally. For example, a large number of publications were published every year, especially in the period of developing national curriculum. In addition, publishing all the inspection reports since January 1983 was another form of disseminating good practice. INSET courses still continued although the amount had been reduced.

Apart from the influence on the policy-making process, HMI took a very important part in curriculum planning. Lawton and Gordon comment that " some kind of national guidelines are desirable, but they should be produced by professional educationists rather than by politicians or civil servants. "(Lawton and Gordon, 1987, p152). As early as in the '60s, HMI identified the trend of national curriculum planning and began to put some effort into curriculum theories and research. Based on its researches and first-hand evidence, HMI expressed its professional opinions about curriculum in its frequent publications. "A View of the Curriculum" in 1980, "Curriculum 11-16" in 1983, "Better Schools" and "Curriculum 5-16" in 1985, and "Curriculum Matters, an HMI Series" since 1986, had effectively influenced the work of local authorities and school teachers. Some of them even became a basis for important educational planning in the LEAs. HMI's contributions to curriculum planning also constrained, to some extent, the interference of politicians and civil servants who were keen on, but not good at educational matters. Things like curriculum-led staffing and areas of experience which were strongly advocated by HMI are now shown in the DES national curriculum documents as a result of HMI's strong influence. Along with the continuance of implementation of national curriculum, the professional role played by HMI in this respect should

become more and more important.

In short, along with the shift of power among educational partners and the increasing activity of central authorities in controlling educational matters since the late '60s, the work of HMI had been more and more utilised as an indispensable basis of DES' work. HMI left the advisory role it played in the '50s and the '60s to the local adviser so that the functions of two systems became complementary rather than duplicating each other. Some HMIs admitted openly that they were advisers of the Secretary of State and they had no official obligation to teachers. That was to say, the role of HMI was the "ears and eyes" and "the professional adviser" of central government more than the adviser of individual schools and teachers. In order to play the role well, it adjusted its methods of working and shifted its work focus. It had been performing a leading role in the area of curriculum. Its advisory role was more reflected in national publications and INSET courses than in detailed assistance to individual schools.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

Looking back on the history of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of schools, one learns that it had been fluctuating between the role of control and the role of advice. Indeed, among functions it performed in every period, there were always some functions which were more inclined to control while others inclined to advice. But the priority among these functions kept changing almost in all five periods, so were the corresponding working methods.

The functions in one particular period were largely determined by the spheres of jurisdiction of central government at that time, as well as the degree of power over those spheres. To take the example of the grant in the first period, (which was not much at the beginning), the inspectors could only work with the right derived from issuing the grants -- check the usage, and generally inspect those grant-aided schools. In the second period, similarly, the inspectors still worked alongside the grant line, as the then central government had not extended its sphere of jurisdiction. However, the grant rose and gradually made up a substantial part of the total funds. Hence the degree of power of central government in this grant aspect increased. HMI was then used as central government's instrument to test pupils' achievement in order to decide the grant allocation. But even so, the inspectorate still did not have power to interfere directly in other matters like curriculum, at least in theory, though the practical impact of the "Payment by Results" on curriculum was very strong because of the importance of the grant.

Although what the inspectorate can do is constrained by the power of central government, it does not necessarily mean that if the government has the power, it must be the inspectorate that uses it. Central government could use other bodies or create new bodies to enforce its policies though enforcement was seldom used in reality due to the partnership in educational service. Most of the time, HMI acts as a watchdog of educational standards instead of an enforcement agency to enforce DES policy.

Secondly, reviewing the growth of HMI, one can easily see that what the HMI's functions were in one particular period was largely

determined by the expectations of central government. As one part of the central education authority, HMI had the duty to help discharge educational responsibilities. When the DES started accelerating its pace of national policy making in the '70s, for example, HMI was very much expected to closely monitor the overall state of education nationwide, and to send prompt and reliable information to enable the policy making. The DES also expected HMI which was composed of highly experienced professionals to advise on policy making so that its national policies could effectively guide the educational development.

Finally, though the soundness and the rationality of the organisational structure and the working methods could, sometimes to a substantial degree, affect the effectiveness of the function fulfilment, it is usually the function that determines the method. So the structure and the working methods should be constantly adjusted in line with the function changes. This was the case in the HMI experience. Looking at the original simple structure of the inspectorate, one can imagine its relatively simple tasks and limited power. Compared with the first period, the structure in the last period was much more complicated. During the first two decades of its establishment, the structure of HMI was non-hierarchical, working methods were simple -- visits to schools divided by religions. In the last period, however, the whole inspectorate was composed of several ranks of status from Senior Chief Inspector to ordinary HMI. In order to collect information promptly and nationally, seven divisions were set up across the England and Wales. Working methods became multiple: full inspection, short inspection, survey and informal visit.

To conclude, ever since its establishment, HMI has been adjusting its

personnel, working methods, organisational structure and its relationships with other educational interest groups in order to better perform the functions which themselves are determined by the needs risen from the practice. HMI's rapid growth itself proved the great success of this system and in a way justifies the decision to use it as a model for comparison.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THE FUNCTIONS OF**

### **HM INSPECTORATE**

The previous chapter analysed the various functions performed by HM Inspectorate and the corresponding organisational structures as well as working methods in five different phases of its development. This, especially the post-1944 discussion, provides some background information which helps the understanding of the current HMI system.

The 1988 Education Reform Act, regarded as the most significant educational legislation since the 1944 Act, dramatically altered two of the most important aspects of educational system: curriculum and finance. For the first time in the English education history since 1862, a nationally unified curriculum sets up the guidelines for teaching and for pupils' achievements. Yet for the first time since 1944, the schools have gained much higher degree of autonomy in school budgeting but lost certain freedom in deciding professional matters. Also, the LEAs have lost some of their entitlement of managing finance.

These major changes taking place in the educational system are bound to have an effect on the functions of HMI, as it did in the past. This time, however, the functions of HMI have not changed very much so far. In addition, because the Act has only recently started being implemented, the changes in the HMI system have not been stabilised. In view of these two factors, focusing the examination on the HMI system closely prior to 1988 would be more productive and more

beneficial to the Chinese inspectorate. Nevertheless, much of HMI's practice, especially its functions described in past tense is still true today, though there is a difference in what the inspectors are specifically doing. At the end of the chapter, a certain length of discussion will be devoted to the tentative prediction of the possible changes that might occur to HM Inspectorate as a result of the 1988 Education Reform Act.

#### **4.1 The Function of HMI (Prior to 1988)**

The 1944 Education Act continued the statutory base for the work of Her Majesty's Inspectorate by providing that "It shall be the duty of the Minister to cause inspection to be made of every educational establishment at such intervals as appear to him to be appropriate, and to cause a special inspection of any such establishment to be made whenever he considers such an inspection is desirable ..." (Subsection 2 of Section 77 of the 1944 Education Act). However, except for emphasising the right to enter the premises and to carry out inspections on behalf of the Minister, the Act and other proceeding legislation did not define the specific role or function of the inspectorate. And indeed, it is difficult to specify functions simply because they cannot be fixed. The entire history of HMI clearly proved this assumption. This part is intended to examine the functions of HMI and its distinctive features around 1988. In addition, it is planned to consider the organisational structure and methods through which the roles and functions are fulfilled. It must be remembered that much of the HMI practice around 1988 still continue to exist at present.

The central inspectorate's ultimate aim is to assist central

government to discharge its responsibilities laid down by law. To achieve this end, there are several roles that an inspectorate can play. But the roles and functions are determined by "the constitutional and administrative settings in which this body is embedded" (Neave, 1987, p3). These roles and functions, in turn, determine the organisation and methods by which the roles can be fulfilled. Needless to say, the role of the English central inspectorate should also be analysed from this standpoint.

#### **4.1.1 The Role of HMI in the English Education System and its Main Features (Prior to 1988)**

The **decentralisation** in the English educational administration system, which will be discussed in more detail later, took the form of **devolution**, i.e., the authority to make some decisions about educational service was transferred to sub-national level. In addition, this transfer was ensured by legislation rather than by administrative regulation. (Conyers, 1983, p101). However, the English devolution was not at the same degree as that in federal systems. The English LEAs and schools did not assume most of the responsibilities for administering educational service, rather, they had to work within the broad framework set by legislation and sometimes by DES regulations. But they had much more power than those LEAs in a **deconcentrated** system, which had only the authority to make decisions about the implementation of central instructions rather than the independence to make their own policies. (ibid).

Generally speaking, between 1944 and 1988, the Department of

Education and Science (Ministry of Education) exercised its control over national education in the following three ways: Financial, building programme and teacher supply. It was not so interested in what was going on inside the school, i.e., what was being taught and how, because it felt it was the freedom of professional teachers throughout the history of English education. Not until the late 1960s and 1970s, when Britain was faced with economic recession and public demands for accountability of professionals did the DES gradually develop its interest in curriculum matters and educational standards. Even so, it still did not have much real power to regulate what to teach until the introduction of the national curriculum in 1988.

In a situation like this where the central government's concern was mainly in allocating resources and training teaching staff (apart from formulating some national policies), and much of the actual power of administering the service was in the hands of LEAs and schools, central government had to have some agency to monitor the educational quality so that the Secretary of State could fulfil the requirement of the Education Act to maintain education standards and to secure the best possible return from the resources. In the author's view, it was this part that HMI played. In other words, HMI essentially played a monitoring role to safeguard national educational quality. It was because of this character that all HM Inspectors were recruited from successful teachers or other experienced professionals, because their professional expertise was crucial for ensuring the success of monitoring.

In short, it was the dilemma between the responsibility of the Secretary of State and his limited power that gave HMI this position (before 1988). It also encouraged HMI to concentrate on everything

related to educational quality, mainly, curriculum and pupil learning, but also school resources and school management in order to accomplish its obligation.

Another feature of HM Inspectorate related to the limited power of the DES was that up until 1988, it was still concerned with effectiveness of the system rather than conformity with some predetermined criteria since the DES had no right to enforce implementation. Therefore, HMI did not have nationwide fixed specific requirements against which it could check. HMIs judged the effectiveness of educational provision very much based on their rich professional knowledge and their experience throughout the country. HMIs exerted their influence on schools by persuasion rather than by enforcement. This feature was also partly due to the fact that effectiveness and quality of education were not clear-cut matters which could be easily judged and unanimously agreed upon.

Apart from the function of monitoring and reporting on the educational standards across the country, which was largely determined by the DES' dilemma between fulfilling the responsibility of maintaining standards and the lack of controlling in professional matters, HMI also played a role of professional adviser, which was the result of another dilemma: the DES' duty of maintaining educational standards and the incompetence of politicians and civil servants in professional matters.

Roughly speaking, the public administration organisations in England were composed of three types of people: politicians, administrators (in the case of central government, they were called civil servants), and professionals. Undoubtedly, the opinions and advice of

the professionals were essential for politicians to make sound policies and for civil servants to implement policies properly and effectively. In the case of the DES, as mentioned above, in the past, it did not involve itself much in professional matters and other activities administered by LEAs, but along with the gradual change of power balance among central government, LEAs and teaching professionals, and the DES' accelerated pace of centralisation and "marketisation", the importance of sound national policies was self-evident. So that the voice of HMI also became increasingly important, especially in those policies associated with professional matters such as the national curriculum. However, on the other hand, the possibility that the HMI's advice would be less important did exist. Because of the "marketisation" tendency, the opinions of the parents and "consumers" sometimes became more powerful than those of the professionals. Moreover, the politicians would sometimes pay little attention to HMI's opinions when making policies for special political reasons. But on the whole, HMI played a very important role in advising politicians on the formulation of national policies based on the evidence they gathered in the field and on the professional expertise they possessed. In addition, this role is likely to increase its weight as central government becomes more and more active in professional matters.

In addition to the two main roles mentioned above, the author suggests that communication among various bodies should be recognised as another significant role played by HMI.

First, HMI greatly facilitated the communication between central educational government and local education authorities and their schools. As the DES had no regional bases in England, HMI's divisional

offices had more meaning than just being an extension of the inspectorate. In a way, it was more like a liaison between centre and periphery. HMI divisions could promptly inform and feedback to its headquarters in London, through their various internal communication methods, on the situation in schools and teachers' comments on national policies, or some serious issues. The headquarters in turn informed the DES if necessary. Similarly, the DES could possibly influence the local authorities and schools through HMIs' daily contact with them and its authoritative advice. This form of function was not as obvious, or as clearly specified as the function of reporting and advising, rather, it was dissolved in HMIs' day-to-day work.

Second, this role of liaison also enabled HM Inspectorate to promote understanding and keeping up-to-date among LEAs. Because the rather decentralised system encouraged close articulation between education and local conditions, thus resulted in variations in educational development in the country, it was essential for individual LEAs to be kept informed about the practice in other LEAs and to keep up with national development. Besides the various approaches of communication between DES and LEAs, the visits and inspections carried out by HMIs were certainly a valuable way of disseminating good practice and increasing understanding among LEAs.

This role of liaison was further reflected in HMI's close operation with various professional organisations, such as the then School Council, and various examination boards. Being inspectors, HMIs were working in the field and had the most up-to-date information about the educational standards in the country. Their valuable contributions to these professional organisations were very helpful to their work.

In 1988, after nearly one hundred and fifty years of changes, HMI was now performing the following functions:

a. Assessing standards and trends and advising the Secretary of State on the performance of the system nationally;

b. Identifying and making known more widely good practice, promoting development, and pointing out weaknesses requiring attention;

c. providing advice and assistance to those with responsibilities for or in the institutions in the system through its day-to-day contacts, its contribution to training and its publications. (DES, 1983a, p2).

#### **4.1.1.1 HMI and Central Government**

Central government was the major determinant of the functions of HM Inspectorate. The DES, more specifically, the Secretary of State and his ministers, expected HMI to carry out two tasks. One was of information provision on the factual state of education including the information on general situation, or on one particular aspect of the educational provision in a particular area. The other expectation was the professional anticipation of a proposed policy, i.e., what did HMIs think, on the basis of present situation, would happen if this policy was implemented? The former task, which asked for HMI's judgment of factual educational performance, served three purposes. The first was to provide general briefing of a local situation in order to help the Secretary of State to deal with local authorities. For example, if the Secretary of State needed to make a decision about whether to approve a plan of an LEA to close a school, he would probably ask the inspectors' advice. The second was to offer evidence to enable Ministers to answer the questions

about education in Parliament or on other occasions. Finally, it gave feedback to the Secretary of State of the effect of his policy on educational system in order to enable him to adjust the policies or take further actions. The other task, which was the HMI's professional anticipation of a proposed policy was needed whenever a policy was to be made. The setting up of the Policy Steering Group and various sub-groups in 1970 opened up one more channel for HM Inspectors to exert stronger influence on the DES officials by participating in the meetings and expressing professional views. A detailed description has been given in the last chapter, more will be discussed in section 4.1.2.3 in this chapter.

The factual knowledge and anticipatory judgment were obviously derived from the same source --- first hand knowledge on the basis of close observation of educational institutions. According to the figures in the Rayner Report, in 1980, HMI visited 9,052 institutions which covered 30% of all schools. The number of published reports in 1980 increased by 34% compared with that of 1975. (DES, 1982, p12). Again, the more recent data available is from the Senior Chief Inspector's annual report. It claimed that in 1989, 13% of maintained primary schools, 47% of maintained secondary schools, 17% of independent schools and 100% further and higher education institutions were visited by HMI, and the number of inspections carried out was 268. (DES, 1990, Annex). In 1988, 55 days out of 80 each term were devoted to "issue-led inspections" in a centrally determined programme in order to keep track of the general state of education as well as to respond to policy priorities set down by the Secretary of State (interview findings). Compared with the proportion in 1986, the percentage of centrally determined inspections had increased nearly 9% (60% was given to policy and routine inspections in 1986 and

68.7% in 1988; interview findings). Although the difference might not be significant by statistical standards, it did suggest that more time and more effort had been put in the activities of monitoring schools and collecting more information in order to respond to the Ministers more accurately, more promptly. This was the result of the DES' increasing interest in the formulation of national policy.

#### **4.1.1.2 HMI and Local Education Authorities**

HMI, a national entity accountable to the Queen in Council, was certainly not under the leadership of LEAs. In addition, the main mission of HMI was to assess educational quality by means of inspecting individual schools. Although in recent years HMI had conducted several inspections of LEAs, it was still not HMI's overwhelming task. In general, the relationship between HMI and LEAs was neither employee and employer, and to most LEAs, nor the inspector and the inspected.

There was no statutory base for relationships between HMI and LEAs. But in fact, HMI, especially its regional divisions had a fair amount of contacts and exchanges with LEAs. Firstly, HMI acted as the liaison between LEAs and central government. In the further and higher education sector, it was even the representative of the DES who had to approve FE courses. Because the DES had no regional base, HMI was willing to offer advice to schools and LEAs on the DES' policies though it was not obliged to enforce the policy implementation. In addition, it served as a communication channel through which the DES could get to know more local information and grass roots opinions.

Secondly, HMI could not complete its mission of maintaining and improving educational standards without contacting the LEAs which were responsible for running schools and colleges. Each LEA was allocated one HMI for schools and one HMI for further education. The task of exchanging information with the LEA Chief Education Officer and sometimes local advisers was very much carried out by these two people known as "District Inspector". They informed the LEA promptly of the findings of HMI's visits and inspections. Furthermore, they advised LEAs in the light of the local context and the national background. However, as there was no standard or clear administrative relationship, this form of assistance and advice depended largely on the attitude of the Chief Education Officer of each LEA. The degree of such exchange varied from one LEA to the other.

Besides this, HMI helped politicians and administrators in LEAs by publishing various pamphlets which described educational work in the country, expressed HMI's professional views on educational issues. With the help of these publications, local politicians and administrators would be able to evaluate the educational quality within their areas and improve their work in the light of the national background.

#### **4.1.1.3 HMI and the Teaching Body**

It was clear that the evaluation of educational provision could by no means avoid evaluating teachers' performance including the selection of curriculum, syllabus, and teaching methods. However, as HMI was not responsible for teachers' employment, the aim of the observation and evaluation of teachers' work made by HMI was generally not directed to

the appraisal of individual teachers, though in some cases HMIs would be called upon by the LEAs to assess probationers. Rather, teaching was evaluated in the light of the pupils' learning and viewed as one part of the overall school work. During inspection or visit, HMIs talked to teachers concerned, gave comments or suggestions if necessary (and about school management to the head teacher). If there was a serious problem worth noting, HMI would tell the head of department or headteacher but never mention the name in the formal inspection report.

With the ratio of 1000 teachers per HMI, it was self-evident that teachers, especially ordinary teachers had few chances to meet HMIs, however, those who met them appreciated their suggestions and regarded HMIs as "very very bright and sharp" (Rogers, 1983, p9).

The indirect contact with the teaching body was through the variety of HMI's publications. Helping teachers in the same way as they helped LEAs, the publications were seen as one form of national advisory role played by HMI.

Apart from these, as the Secretary of State had the duty to supply and to train teachers, HMI was entrusted with the task of running in-service training on a national basis in order to keep teachers well informed about educational developments as well as to help teachers improve their work.

## **4.1.2 Organisational Structure of Her Majesty's Inspectorate, Communication Within HMI and With the DES**

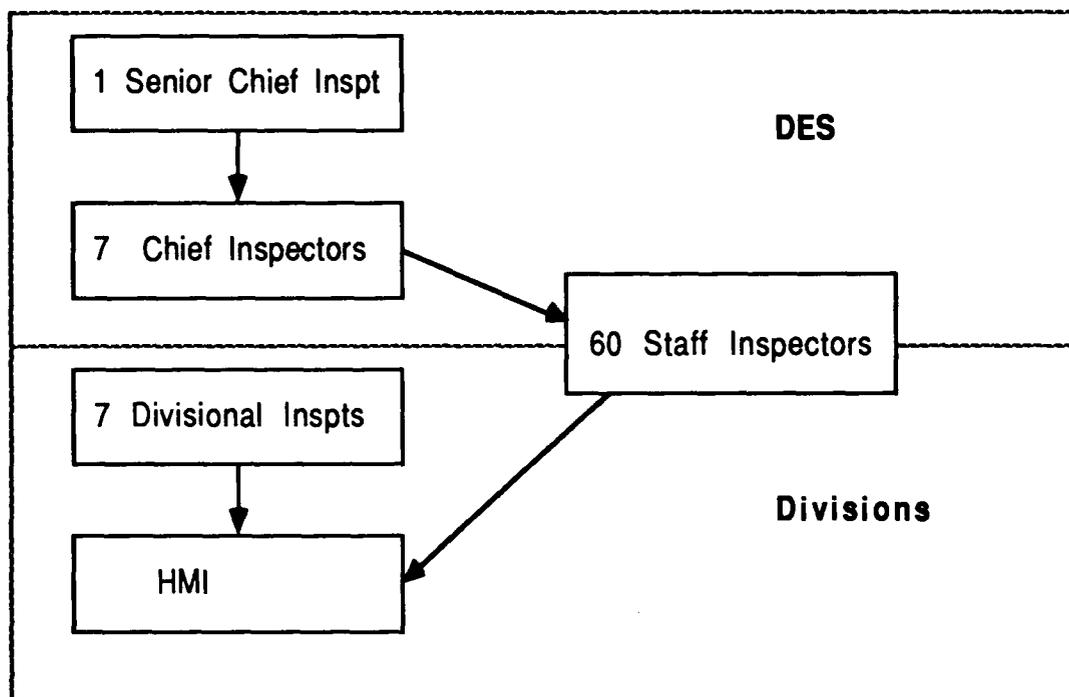
### **4.1.2.1 The Organisational Structure of HMI**

It was essential for an organisation to possess a sound structure in order to effectively discharge its functions. Therefore, the organisational structure of HMI had to meet the requirement of overall monitoring as well as speedy communication.

It was inevitable that HMI set up the bulk of its members in seven divisions which covered the whole of England and Wales. Among 485 members of the whole inspectorate, one tenth stayed in the DES which was a centre of communication. Others worked in regional bases and each division contained roughly 60 inspectors.

Broadly, the organisational structure of HMI in 1988 can be shown in the following diagram.

**Diagram 4.1: The Organisational Structure of HMI**



At the top of the inspectorate was the **Senior Chief Inspector** who was regarded as the senior professional adviser to the Secretary of State. He(she) held the direct access to him/her which facilitated the information flow and promoted professional influence. He(she) also oversaw the overall operation of the whole inspectorate. Below him (her) there were 7 **Chief Inspectors** whose responsibilities were delegated by SCI to cover different aspects of work such as primary education, secondary education, curriculum, teacher training and so on. This group, constituted by these 8 senior people was HMI's central decision-making body which decided the priorities of HMI's work as well as a main professional advisory body to the Secretary of State. Under them, 60 **Staff Inspectors** who performed the key role not only in digesting the decisions of the top management group and making detailed plans but also in processing and summarising the information from divisions. Some of them worked in the London headquarters while

others were in the field. But no matter where the bases were, Staff Inspectors were coordinators in the inspectorate. At the same salary level, there were 7 **Divisional Inspectors** whose main duty was to oversee and co-ordinate all HMIs' activities within their divisions. In the position of linking central home and regional bases, the DIs also gave additional tasks to ordinary HMIs according to local needs. Finally, the DIs were expected to undertake training of probationer HMIs in their divisions.

Ordinary **HMI**s were the people who actually went to schools and colleges and collected first-hand evidence. Their work was mainly determined by central programme and divisional plans. All HMIs in divisions (except DIs and SIs) were divided into school inspectors and FE inspectors. In addition to this, every HMI was allocated a certain number of schools and colleges of which he(he) was the **general inspector** who was expected to look after the overall work of these institutions. Meanwhile, he (she) was also a **specialist inspector** to look after a broader range of schools and colleges in a particular subject or phase. Information gathered by them served all purposes. This information might be used as first-hand evidence for reporting educational quality, or as basis of HMI's publications, or as grounds for answering parliamentary questions. Finally, two HMIs were allocated to each LEA as **district inspectors** to act as a liaison between HMI and the local education authorities. This relationship helped the LEAs to get to know factual state of education within their boundaries, and obtain helpful suggestions for improvement from experienced professionals.

This structure had three key parts: policy-making, planning and implementation which constituted a circle: policy-making =====

planning ===== implementation. The three tasks were respectively carried out by three ranks of people: chief inspectors (including SCI), staff inspectors and ordinary HMIs. The SCI and CIs set the priorities of HMI's work based on the issues identified by HMIs as well as the policy priorities of the DES. Staff Inspectors were the people who turned the general decisions (made by SCI and CIs) into detailed and operational activities so that HMIs in the field could have clear directions for their work. In the other direction of communication, Staff Inspectors acted as a checkpoint to ensure that the tasks of HMIs were completed as well as possible before they reached CIs. Sometimes Staff Inspectors collected "raw" material from the field and processed it into the form required by CIs. Each CI had a team of several staff inspectors, so that at policy-making and planning levels, work was divided according to the aspects of responsibility.

At the implementation level, however, HMIs in the field were not divided into seven teams corresponding to seven Chief Inspectors. Instead, each HMI worked according to the centrally planned programme and carried out all the tasks coming from the higher level. This was the second feature of the English style. Nationally determined activities and divisional activities, plus HMIs' individual activities (for instance, to attend conferences), composed a programme with which HMIs carried out their work. This way of organising manpower avoided splitting the work of HMIs, instead, it made full use of the manpower in divisions. Each HMI was both general and specialist inspector. They could collect both general and specific information when visiting and inspecting schools and colleges. This feature allowed the inspectorate to collect more information in the same amount of time and with the same amount of manpower.

The third feature of HM Inspectorate before 1988, which might be similar to that of other countries, was the regional distribution of its members. The advantage of this structure was quite obvious. It ensured the close monitoring of local situations and prompt action if necessary. The advanced computer system installed in the mid '80s helped to solve the problem of slow information flow as a result of dispersal of manpower.

#### **4.1.2.2 Communication Within the Inspectorate**

It was of vital importance for the inspectorate to gather reliable information promptly and effectively for the reason that information was the evidence of reporting the performance of educational system as well as the basis for making judgment.

The **inspection programme** was the fundamental tool of organising the work of HMI. It was regarded as "a mechanism for defining priorities and reserving time" (DES, 1982, p15). In 1988, of 80 working days each term, 55 days were programmed issue-led inspections including full inspections, short inspections, school visits and so on (interview findings). The Senior Chief Inspector and Chief Inspectors considered the national policies made by the Secretary of State as well as the issues identified by HMIs and then tried to decide the work priorities for the next period. About 25 days were left to HMIs individual priorities, e.g., attend a professional body meeting. The evidence gathered through all kinds of activities would be recorded and stored in computers. When inspectors, especially staff inspectors and chief inspectors needed information, they only needed to look through the computers and relevant information would be easily obtained, though more usually, they were still used to getting paper-written material.

Apart from using the programme as an instrument of communication, HMI had an extensive **network of subject and phase committees**. Phase committees including primary, secondary and further education committees existed at both national and divisional level. At the national level, there were more than 30 subject teams each chaired by a relevant staff inspector. Both phase and subject specialist

inspectors formed different working groups to exchange information and pool experience. In addition, this structure was also a means of identifying trends and discussing priorities. More important, it was an essential tool to sustain this dispersed service.

Besides the projected programme and committee network, the inspectorate employed other administrative instruments such as memorandum (e.g., memorandum to Inspectors, Working Instructions). Also, informal contact like having dinner together, or telephone conversations should not go unheeded as a mechanism of communication.

The causes for adopting these communication mechanisms, formal or informal, were derived from the motivation of achieving prompt information flow and updating professional knowledge and experience. The centrally planned programme was a fundamental instrument to ensure the information required by the centre was promptly collected. The committee network was the valuable means by which up-to-date information and experience could be exchanged and refreshed. After all, these mechanisms served the need for playing the role of monitoring and advising.

#### **4.1.2.3 Communication With the DES**

HMI had the statutory duty of carrying out inspections for the Secretary of State. In fact, it also had the obligation to report to the Secretary of State and to advise on the state of education in the country. In practice, this obligation also applied to other senior officials at DES.

Civil servants other than HMIs had no right to instruct HMI to do something. In effect, HMIs, especially senior inspectors and civil servants worked quite closely on a day-to-day basis. Apart from the policy steering group and sub-groups, there was no fixed formal mechanism for communication between HMI and the rest of the DES, according to the author's interview results. Rather, the communication was largely through minutes, attending meetings and discussions. So that the frequency and the amount of communication varied depending on the degree of importance and urgency of the event. When the national curriculum was under deliberation, for example, much effort, particularly the subject specialists' was put in by HMI and several inspectors spent several hours a day with Ministers and civil servants. Furthermore, participation in the multi-level policy making groups (which has been discussed in the last chapter) enabled HMI to exert professional influence on national policies. On the whole, the communication between HMI and the rest of the DES was not through a fixed formal mechanism, their cooperation depended on individual cases.

### **4.1.3 The Forms of Inspection**

The first two inspectors of HMI started their work by visiting schools. Over one hundred and fifty years, the ways of inspecting schools and collecting information have been unremittingly explored and experimented. Up until 1988, in order to collect different types of information, HMI had adjusted its forms of inspection in various ways, i.e., full inspection, short inspection, survey, school visit, and LEA inspection.

**Full Inspection:** according to the explanation of the former SCI, was "full only in the sense that the school is considered as a whole and a broadly based team of inspectors together sample all that is there to be seen at the same time" (Browne, 1979, p37). Compared with other methods of inspection, full inspection had the characteristics of a longer period of time, more inspectors and more aspects to be looked at. Schools to be inspected were chosen randomly by computers or occasionally on the recommendations of relevant inspectors. The number of inspectors and duration of inspections varied in accordance with the size of the school, the phase in which the school was, and the cause of the inspection. But on average, inspecting a secondary school took one week with a panel of 18 HMIs, and a primary school 3-4 days with 4-5 inspectors. Usually one month notice would be given to the headteacher and preliminary preparations such as filling in standard inspection forms and submitting school documents would be required. During the inspection, almost every aspect of school work was examined as thoroughly as possible. On the Thursday afternoon and Friday the results would be reported to the headteacher, a general view of the whole team would be formed after HMI's Thursday evening meeting. Six months later, the inspection report would be available to the public. This method of inspection was designed to keep monitoring the schools as the basis of accumulating evidence and offering professional advice. In addition, it was the source from which the issues stemmed. It also aimed at providing the school with an overall evaluation from a professional perspective. Although the pressure that the school faced was considerable, most schools found inspection invaluable, as was claimed by the headteachers who were interviewed. HM Inspectors, as the people outside the school and with wide national experience, examined the work from a fresh perspective and with certain degree of

objectivity. On the whole, as one inspector described it, full inspection was an "uncomfortable but helpful experience" to the schools.

Naturally, this full inspection team was purely composed of HM Inspectors whose specialities were supposed to match most aspects of the school work. One notable feature, however, was that all inspectors were from different divisions, brought together by the central headquarters. Some of them did not know each other before the inspection. Having admitted the possible high expenses arising from travel and accommodation, one has to admit that this way of organising inspection enabled the inspectors to broaden their scope and get to know more practice in areas other than their own divisions. In addition, by bringing HMIs from different bases together, the objectivity of the evaluation could be better ensured.

Due to the increasing need for gathering prompt and multi-fold information, the full inspection could no longer meet the needs because of the long duration, high cost and vast manpower it required. As a result, **Short Inspection** (only in secondary schools) was invented. It was an economical and speedy way of gathering information. Only 3 or 4 inspectors went to the school and spent three or four days there. The evaluation was not as complex as the full inspection, but the quality of writing, reading, oral, numeracy and so on would still be judged. Standard forms then were filled in by HMIs at the end of the inspection. Apparently, these forms served the same purpose as full inspection reports with the advantage of being standardised and could be used for quantitative analysis.

Another relatively new and efficient tool of gathering information

was **Survey**. Once the theme of a survey was chosen, the relevant evidence would be collected during school visits and inspections, and then be input into computers by HM Inspectors. Based on this vast amount of information, HMI would be able to report the educational standards of particular aspects. The scale of the survey ranged from reading ability at a certain age in a certain area to the overall national quality evaluation which took several years to complete.

One more tool of gathering information was the traditional **School Visit**. Each HMI was a general inspector as well as a specialist inspector. More than 50 schools or colleges were assigned to him(her) as the scope of general contact. Wider range of schools and colleges were allocated to him(her) where the specialist knowledge would apply. When the inspector found something worth considering but beyond his ability, he could call for the help of relevant inspectors. So in theory, every school had a general HMI to look after the overall work as well as a number of subject inspectors to focus on particular subjects. But in fact, the ratio of teacher to HMI was large, and nowadays HMIs are largely centrally programmed, the time to visit school as a general inspector was more limited. In short, this method had its uses, but it was no longer a sole or prominent method for information collection.

The final form of inspection was **Inspection of LEA**. The overall picture of the national educational standards could be drawn based on all the inspections of individual schools. But what could not be seen directly, was the educational standards in one particular local education authority because the number of samples was too small to generalise anything. In order to reflect the level of educational provision in LEAs since they were the bodies responsible for maintaining schools, and also

in order to assist the Secretary of State to get to know the situation in one particular LEA, HM Inspectorate adopted the method of inspection of LEAs.

During the inspection, a considerable number of schools were examined, so that the quality of those major services provided by LEAs could be generally revealed, though the internal organisation of the LEA itself was not subject to inspection. In this kind of inspection, those aspects which belonged to the LEAs' responsibilities such as capitation, provision of equipment and textbooks, building and teacher qualification and performance, were intensively examined in particular.

Briefly, the inspection of LEAs was created to cater for the needs of drawing a regional picture of educational quality, perhaps as a result of the emphasis on LEAs' accountability. However, this type of inspection was done by inspecting school samples, rather than by examining the organisation of LEA itself.

In short, HMI employed quite a number of forms of inspection. Though the importance attached to them and the frequency employed varied from time to time, they served different purposes. A combination of them provided a very good system by which the functions were satisfactorily fulfilled.

## **4.2 HMI and the Local Advisory Services**

The local education authorities advisory services, composed of corps of "inspectors" or "advisers", form part of the mechanism of quality

control in education in England. Like HMI, they have a long history which started from the end of last century. However, till now, and probably in the future too, the LEA advisory services do not represent a single service organised nationally. Rather, they operate as separate individual local services relating to the needs of individual LEAs. Therefore, variations in terms of number, quality, specialist coverage, functions, and influence of these advisory services are enormous, which manifests the feature of a decentralised system. If HMI works to assist the Secretary of State in the discharge of his responsibilities, the work of the local advisers, or inspectors, assists LEAs in the performance of their functions. However, while admitting some common elements in the roles of these two organisations, one has to reckon that they are two separate but complementary systems.

Leaving aside the history and the future of the LEA advisory services, this discussion concentrates on the function of the LEA advisory services and the relationship with HMI prior to 1988, to be in line with the HMI practice at that time.

In 1984, the then Secretary of State drafted a statement concerning the role of the LEA advisory services. According to this draft, the LEA advisory services carried out the following inter-related functions (DES, 1984).

First, they provided the LEAs with assessments, based on detailed knowledge and first hand observation, of the quality of education provided by its institutions and by their teachers. Bearing the similar task of monitoring and assessing the state of education, the LEA advisory services did it locally. In addition, they did not regard the

formal and in depth inspection, or called full inspection in the case of HMI, as the most effective way of evaluating the quality of educational provision. (DES, 1984, p4). Rather, the advisers preferred to adopt informal visits over time and other supportive means to achieve the goal of collecting information. Another difference in the way of carrying out the same function between LEA advisers and HM Inspectors was that the advisers were expected to be familiar with their institutions to such a degree that each institution was known well by at least one adviser. They should have up-to-date knowledge of its curriculum and organisations, even the quality of the individual teachers. This, was certainly an unachievable goal for HMIs.

Second, they worked in support of schools and other educational establishments. In performing this function, the advisers acted as agents for change. They either initiated the innovation and implemented it in cooperation with the schools, or encouraged schools' move and provided support and advice on improvement. The aspect they were concerned with included almost every aspect of educational provision, in particular, curriculum. They might work alongside school teachers for a period of time, they might bring together relevant schools and colleges and support their cooperation and joint innovation, or sometimes they might even help the schools to obtain extra resources to facilitate their good practice. This, again, seemed to be a difficult task for HMI. Because HMI was heavily loaded with the task of inspection. Plus the factor of large HMI to school ratio, it was virtually impossible to work very closely with each school over a period of time. Thus, apart from the suggestions that HMI could offer on the spot of visits and inspections, other advice and support could only be given through indirect means such as nationwide accessible publications and INSET courses.

Third, the advisory services supported teacher development and advised on teachers management. Apart from inducting and assessing probationers and new school heads, the advisers spent considerable amount of time involved in teacher and headship appointments. By organising in-service training, the advisory services kept teachers up-to-date and helped teachers' career development. All these tasks could be attributed to the simple reason: it was the LEAs not the DES that employed and deployed teachers. In order to maintain educational standards, the quality of teaching staff was undoubtedly vital. Therefore, promoting the professional standards of these teachers became one of the most important concerns of the LEAs. HMI did not have such duty as assessing individual teachers' performance. To HMI, inspecting teaching quality was inspecting one of the elements that affect pupil learning, so its assessment of teaching in schools had nothing to do with the promotion or demotion of the teachers. Though case like that did happen as a result of the HMI inspection, it was the LEAs' decision, not HMI's.

Finally, the function of the LEA advisory services was reflected in its work on local and national initiatives. Locally, these initiatives might arise from the decisions of elected members, or from LEAs' policies. Nationally, they might arise from new national legislation, or from the responses which the LEA made to national policies. Usually under these circumstances, advisers were likely to be involved not only in helping LEAs' policy formulation, but also the subsequent detailed work needed to secure policy implementation. In this respect, HMI worked differently. What was similar to the local advisory service, was the duty to keep monitoring the state of education undergoing changes resulted from the initiatives, and to advise politicians on policy making. But what

was dissimilar to the local advisers was that HMI was an independent body responsible for safeguarding educational standards. It was not obliged to enforce the implementation of DES policies. Instead, it had the duty to observe the implications of these policies on the quality of education. Although in reality, HMIs were seen to advise schools on implementing national policies, it should be seen as part of its advisory functions to schools rather than a gesture of enforcing policy.

The description of the functions of LEA advisory services leads to the following observations:

Organisationally speaking, those two systems were totally separate. Both systems existed to assist their respective authorities in discharge of their responsibilities. As the relationship between central government and the LEAs was not the superior and the subordinate, HMI and the LEA advisory services did not have hierarchical relationship. Rather, the relationship was regarded by the Rayner Report as "partnership" (DES, 1982, p35).

The only organisational connection was the link between the HMI District Inspector and the LEA CEO and advisers. But this link was not a statutory requirement, thus the actual degree of contact largely depended on the attitude of two sides, particularly, the CEO and advisers. Another regular way of exchanging information and ideas was through the National Association of Inspectors and Advisers. Except for these two forms of communication, there was no other official channels available. Nevertheless, there were some forms of joint working on occasional basis. For example, helping assess probationers, assisting with each others' programme of in-service training and

cooperative work on curriculum development.

In terms of functions performed by two bodies, they were, to a substantial degree, different and complementary despite the existence of common interests. The first and obvious difference was the geographical scope. HMI worked across the country and had the duty of monitoring and assessing educational standards on a national basis, while the local advisory services, though bearing the same responsibilities, worked within their LEA limits. Secondly, the function of HMI was more inclined to information gathering whilst the local advisory services laid their emphasis on supporting and advising on school work. Thirdly, the local advisers had some power to facilitate the desirable improvement of schools, for instance, they can influence the allocation of resources for curriculum development. They also played an important role in advising on teachers' appointment and promotion. HMIs had none of these executive powers. They had only the right to offer advice and their advice was purely advisory. Fourthly, as a result of the big difference in HMI school ratio and adviser school ratio, local advisers visited a same school more frequently than HMIs. Similarly, they worked along with the schools over a period of time. So they were able to observe the whole process of development. By contrast, when HMIs walked into the school, what they saw was just a picture of educational performance at that particular moment. The sum of these snapshots formed a national picture of the state of education. Finally, while the local advisers were employees of the LEAs, HMIs were appointed by the Queen in Council instead of the DES. Thus the advisers were obliged to implement LEAs' policies whilst HMIs were free of this duty. In addition, this independence enables HMIs to speak out their views much more openly than their local counterparts.

To sum up, the separation of the two monitoring systems were largely due to the division of responsibilities between central and local government. They performed different but complementary functions in response to the needs of their respective authorities. Though in fact there were some cases of joint work, there was still much room for further cooperation and strengthened relationship.

### **4.3 The Effect of the 1988 ERA on HMI's Future Work**

The 1976 the Ruskin Speech launched an intensive debate on educational standards and on accountability. One of the outcomes of this debate was the emergence of the Education Reform Act in 1988 bringing in five important changes: the introduction of national curriculum, the arrangement for more open enrolment, the delegation of financial control to school level, the establishment of grant-maintained schools and the creation of city technology colleges. For ordinary schools and colleges, the first three innovations had, and still have, enormous impact on their work, as the Act altered two main aspects of educational service: professional matters and management matters. The consequence of the ERA, from the perspective of the power balance among three partners, was that the power of central government and schools increased whilst that of the LEAs decreased. But the professional autonomy of the teachers at the same time was reduced. In addition, the fourth partner represented by school governors and parents emerged though its influence was not as strong as the three better established partners. To the DES, one of its most significant achievements was its entering the "domain" of professionals -- the curriculum and school organisation. Now, it was not any longer

excluded from the professional matters. Instead, it became one of its partners.

To HMI, almost all changes brought about by the ERA have certain effects on its work. Because the Act is being implemented at the moment, many things are not stable. Consequently, HMI's work is changing constantly in response to practical needs. At this stage, one can only try to speculate on the possible changes in its work.

Firstly, two new types of institutions are emerging -- Grant-Maintained Schools and City Technology Colleges. According to the functions of HM Inspectorate, it has the duty to monitor the educational standards in England and Wales, certainly including these two types of schools. Thus, visiting and inspecting these new schools will be taken into account when making central programme, and certain number of HMIs may be allocated to be specialists of this kind. It can be argued that these schools might be paid more attention in the first few years as firstly, these are the new schools with uncertainty and difficulties lying ahead. Secondly, the grant-maintained schools are favoured by the DES, HMI might have to keep a close eye on them and feedback promptly to the DES unless there are another special bodies set up for this task.

Secondly, the role of monitoring might need to be vigorously strengthened. As it is the first time in the English education history that there has been a comprehensive and unified curriculum, the reactions and situations in different schools must be very different, so will the actual process of implementation. In addition, both open enrolment policy and financial delegation are having an enormous impact on the

management of schools, on teaching in schools, and eventually on the learning of pupils. From the DES' standpoint, this is the time that information about the state of education is most needed in order to take prompt and appropriate action and offer guidance. From HMI's standpoint, though it is mainly concerned with educational quality in schools, open enrolment and financial delegation have a strong influence on the pupil learning. So that HMIs must closely monitor the effects of this legislation and DES' policies on pupils' learning, in other words, they indirectly judge the soundness of government's policies by judging the effects they have on educational standards.

Thirdly, another function which might be strengthened by HMI is the function of acting as professional adviser to the Secretary of State. Along with the deeper involvement of central government in professional matters, particularly in the implementation of national curriculum, the DES will have to listen to the opinions of HMI in order to make sound policies. Although other bodies like the School Examinations and Assessment Council and the National Curriculum Council have been set up especially to advise the Secretary of State on assessment and to keep the curriculum under review, the voice of HMI as a body of most experienced professionals will still have an important position. On the other hand, however, the possibility that HMI's views will be neglected also exists. As analysed earlier, the influence of the fourth partner in the educational system -- parents and consumers, is growing, and the government's policies created and encouraged this development. If the political reason plays a major role in deciding policies, or the position of the fourth partner rises too high, national policies might be made by amateur politicians and those "consumers" of the educational service without taking into account the opinions of

professionals.

As to HMIs in the field, an urgent task might be to offer more assistance to schools and colleges on the implementation of national legislation, in particular, of the national curriculum. It can be imagined that facing great uncertainty, how badly the schools need help from experts about teaching and assessment. Being extremely experienced professionals and the supporters of the national curriculum, HMIs are the ideal people to do this job. It seems that it could be their overwhelming task for the next few years. In fact, all the HMIs are so engrossed in helping the implementation of ERA, they are now unable to allocate sufficient time and manpower to continue the inspections of LEAs.

Fourthly, retaining the state of independence is becoming increasingly difficult for HMI. In a way, the independence of HMI is a means of protecting educational standard from being influenced by politics. Nowadays, education is attracting more and more attention, from the public, from the professionals, and from the politicians, because it is a major social service and a big spender of public funds. Thus, the publicisation and politicisation of education, in the author's view, is unavoidable. As an independent body, HMI must try very hard not to be involved in politics in order to retain its unique independence. The announcement by the Secretary of State that he was conducting "a thorough internal review of the structure and role of Her Majesty's Inspectorate" (Hansard, 4/3/1991) occurred too late for consideration in this thesis, however, it confirms the above analyse.

Finally, whether or not HMI will be expected to enforce the

implementation of new educational legislation, was once a most controversial topic. Usually, once central government set up regulatory legislation with specific requirements, there will be some body to take the duty of enforcing implementation. Now that the DES has got a fairly specific national curriculum, the approach to get it implemented could be enforceable. i.e., the means like administrative punishment, or more likely, financial control, or even legal sanction as a last resort could be employed. When the national curriculum was just introduced, there was suspicion that HMI might be given this mission, because though the two recently established Councils had a score of field officers, they were too few to perform the function of enforcing implementation. On the other hand, HMI usually did not perform the function of enforcing the implementation of DES' policies, and it was strongly emphasising its status of independence and trying hard to retain its role only as a monitor and adviser, added to this was the fact that HMIs were appointed by the Queen in Council, not by the DES. Furthermore, the national curriculum was nor yet very specific and detailed, so there were reasons that HMI would not play this role. In February 1990, the Secretary of State clearly stated that the local advisers (or inspectors), not HMIs, who should be responsible for implementing the national curriculum. (Education, 1990, p236). Therefore, the doubt about whether HMI would enforce the legislation was removed. However, along with the more and more curriculum regulations coming out, whether the DES can still succeed in ensuring implementation without its own enforcement body, will remain to be seen. In other words, the fate of HMI in the future still hangs in the balance.

After revealing the functions of HMI and its organisational structures and working methods, we turn the focus to the Chinese

inspectorate and examine similar issues in the Chinese context.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

# **THE POSITION OF THE CHINESE INSPECTORATE IN THE EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM**

As argued earlier, an inspection system is a product of the educational administration system in which it is embedded. Accordingly, the examination of the system of inspection in China should be carried out within a broader scope which embraces the educational administration surroundings.

Therefore, this chapter is designed to analyse briefly the system of educational administration in China, in particular, the organisations responsible for administering education at different levels, their respective duties and their relationships. More importantly, it examines the position of the Chinese inspectorate against the background of the administrative system both in terms of the organisational-structural relationship and in terms of functional relationships.

### **5.1 General Background: Educational Administration System**

#### **5.1.1 The Composition of the Central Government**

As in most countries in the world, the responsibility for providing an educational service belongs to the state. It is stipulated in the Chinese

constitution that "the state is responsible for developing socialist education; raising scientific and cultural standards of all the people in the country. The state runs all kinds of educational institutions, universalises compulsory education, promotes secondary education, vocational education, and higher education, and develops preschool education." (the Constitution of P.R.C., Article 19, 1982). In fact, the state takes nearly all the responsibilities, private schools are extremely rare.

Though bearing a similar obligation to provide educational service, the way of discharging this duty (i.e. educational administration) in China is different from that in most other countries, due to its unique conditions of politics, economy and history. In addition to this, the administration system has been experiencing tremendous changes since the announcement of the "Decision on Educational Reform" by the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council in 1985. In chapter one, the present educational reform was briefly discussed. It resulted primarily from the call to supply more educated and skilled labour to enhance economic development. The basic aims of this educational reform were to encourage the gearing of education to local economic needs and to raise the general standards of education, in particular, of the nine year basic education. The consequences were the delegation of some power from the top downwards as well as the closer link between education and economy in local areas. As a result, there is a considerable diversity of organisational structures and functions of educational administrative authorities in the country. In this thesis, only those most common patterns are to be selected and discussed.

Generally speaking, there are two basic features worth noticing

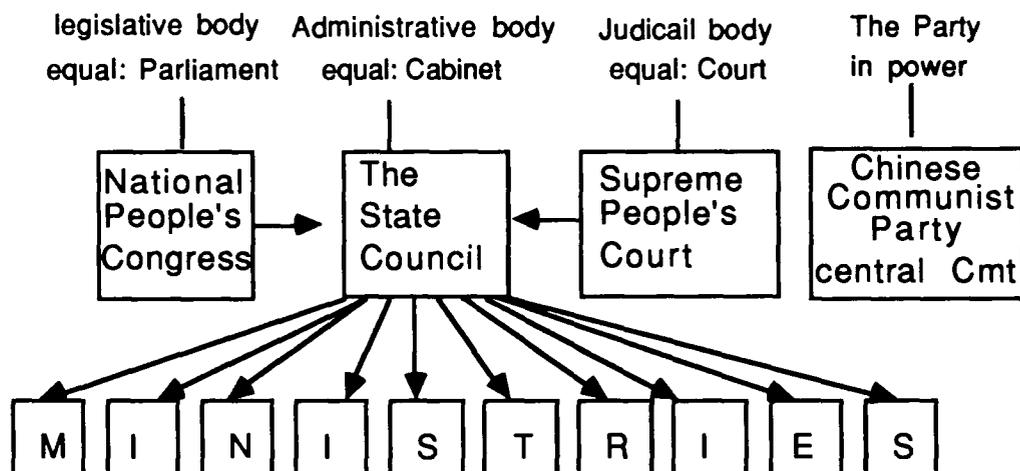
when talking about China. First, China has been a centralised country since it was unified in 221 B.C. Therefore, the basic philosophy of public administration has always been centralisation and bureaucracy though the degree varies from time to time. In addition, China is a large country with several tiers of division of regions, every aspect of public administration itself is a hierarchy, which constitutes part of a greater hierarchical and bureaucratic network in the country as a whole. Second, the monopolistic political party **the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)** plays a dominant role in controlling the direction of national development and in formulating ideological and strategic guidelines for educational development.

Theoretically, the highest organ of state power is **the National People's Congress (NPC)** whose members represent regions all over the country. Supervised by the NPC, **the State Council** occupies the position of the supreme governmental and administrative body in the country. Under its direct supervision, various Ministries, Commissions, and Offices carry out different aspects of public administration, one of which is the State Education Commission. Then comes the judicial organ: **the Supreme People's Court**. On the political side, it is the CCP Central Committee that makes final political decisions for the nation (note: not only for the Party). Theoretically speaking, these bodies are parallel. But because of the overlapping membership and interlocking directorates, and also because of the extremely powerful position of the CCP, these bodies have virtually identical attitude toward almost everything, i.e., those policies approved or initiated by the CCP will always be approved by the NPC, and then get implemented through the State Council. More often, it is the CCP Central Committee and the State Council that jointly issue regulations and documents as political and administrative

directives, without going through the NCP. Moreover, it is also worth noticing that not only central government, but also every local government is constituted by these four components (legislative, administrative, judicial and political). Each component in the local government receives leadership from its corresponding higher level authority.

An illustration of the relationship among these four bodies is shown in Diagram 5.1.

**Diagram 5.1 The Basic Composition of Central Government in China**



### 5.1.2 The Central Educational Government --- The State Education Commission (SEdC)

In China, fundamental educational policies are jointly formulated by the CCP Central Committee and the State Council. More important legislation must be approved by the National People's Congress. In reality, the main approach by which the government exercises its control is administrative rather than legislative. Since the foundation of

the P.R.C. in 1949, only two pieces of educational legislation have been adopted at the NPC level, (one was the Degree System in the 1950s, and the other was the Law of Compulsory Education in 1986). So in reality, most educational activities are done by administrative means. **The State Education Commission** is the body primarily responsible for administering all the educational services in the country. It is directly led by the State Council, and is equivalent to a Ministry. (see Diagram5.1).

Generally speaking, the main duties of the SEdC are to formulate general educational policies, regulations, instructions and circulars (and rarely but increasingly to draft the legislation to be adopted by the NPC) in accordance with the fundamental guidelines set by the Party; to undertake overall planning for educational development in the country; to supervise and guide the nationwide education reform; to strengthen the inspection force; and to coordinate the efforts of other ministerial authorities concerned.

Apart from formulating national educational policies, drawing developmental plans and deciding implementation priority, scale, speed and procedure, the SEdC is also responsible for:

(1). general administration of basic education, (primary and secondary education), vocational education, teacher education, special education, minority education and non-formal education, setting up some general policies and principles;

(2). directly running some 40 universities, drawing up enrolment plans and graduate assignment plans, etc. Generally supervising other higher education institutions run by provincial level governments (but not specialised HE institutions which run by other Ministries, e.g.,

Medicine and Pharmacy universities are run by the Ministry of Public Health);

(3). overall planning for developing teaching force, and generally supervising teacher education in provinces;

(4). supervising the compilation of textbooks, the setting of curriculum, and syllabus which is organised by the People's Education Press;

(5). monitoring but not controlling educational funding for non-directly-run universities, i.e., institutions other than those 40 directly run universities;

(6). inspecting and supervising lower level governments and education authorities to help implement national policies and laws;

(7). international exchange and overseas studies;

(8). administering professional bodies such as the Central Research Institute for Educational Science, and publishing journals and various educational media.

Perhaps quite different from what some people would imagine, the functions of the SEdC currently do not include direct running of any primary or secondary schools. The general responsibilities for providing educational services, especially primary and secondary education, including enrolment, developing plans, teacher recruitment, training and so on, all belong to various levels of local governments and education authorities. Educational funding is also one major item of local government expenditure, which is allocated out of the block grant from central government and local taxation. In other words, on the whole, the SEdC does not exercise direct financial control over educational provisions in localities, though special support grants would be given to pilot trials or to those schemes favoured by the SEdC.

However, the SEdC does retain the power to initiate national policies which local education authorities must carry out. The implementation is ensured by inspections carried out internally through educational administrative hierarchy. If the matter is more significant, then policies will be issued by the State Council on behalf of the SEdC, which confers greater importance on the policies. If the issue is even more important, then the circular will be issued jointly by the CCP Central Committee and the State Council, in which case the decisions must be implemented not only by relevant education authorities but also by relevant levels of local government as well as the political Party Committees placed in these governments and education authorities. (see the illustration of relationship in Diagram 5.3 and relevant discussion on page 114-115). In addition, the nationally unified curricula, textbooks and syllabus greatly reduce the freedom of professional teachers in deciding what and how to teach. The existence of Teaching Research Office network (which will be discussed later) throughout the country helps to ensure the proper implementation of the national curricula. In other words, the professionals at grass roots level only have the freedom to add materials and references which conform to the unified curricula, but have no right to change them. Today several changes have taken place in the curricula, notably, more choice of textbooks, more freedom in compiling supplementary material in the light of the local conditions, and more encouragement to experiment with new and heuristic teaching methods. But still, professional autonomy is relatively limited. By and large, the control over basic education in China is actually shared by two major bodies -- central and different levels of local education authorities. Schools and professional teachers have little say. Local education authorities (provincial, prefectural, county and township education authorities) have great influence in deciding basic

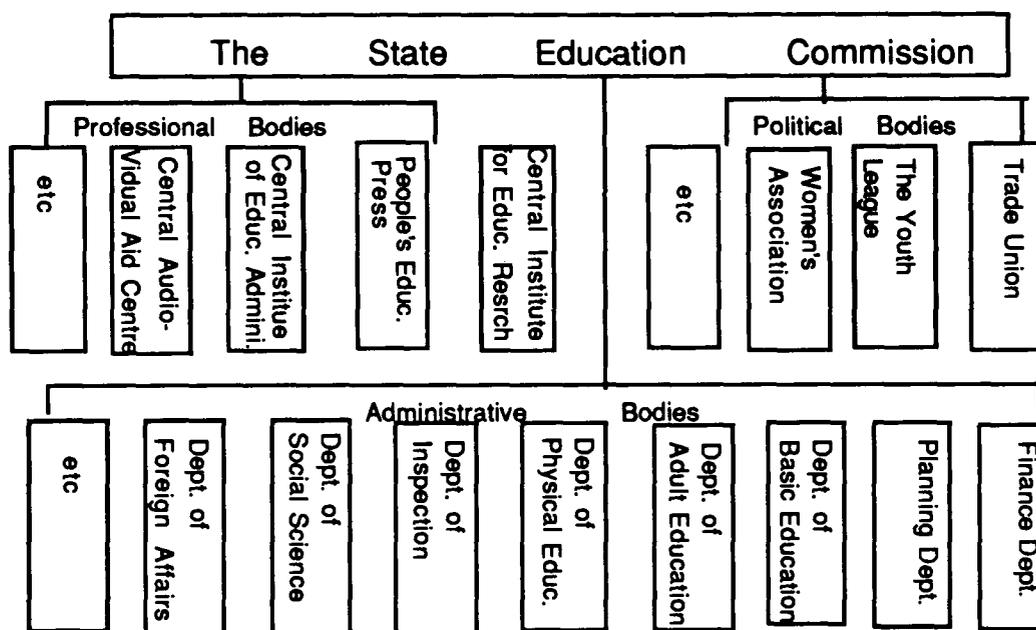
education in their areas; the SEdC exercises its power by formulating enforceable national policies and unified curricula.

There is a Party Committee in the SEdC whose mission is to ensure the correct political direction of every important decision of the SEdC, and to administer its Party members. Apart from that, the SEdC can be divided into two parts-- functional departments and professional units to complete a line and staff system. According to its publication in April 1989, the SEdC has 23 functional departments responsible for different aspects of educational service (Chinese Education Post, 25/3/1989). The Inspection Department is one of these with a staff of 6 at that time. Detailed discussion of the Chinese inspectorate will be carried out later.

The main professional institutions and enterprises under the SEdC are: the Central Institute for Educational Science, and the People's Education Press, (the body responsible for organising textbook compiling and curriculum planning). The units are entrusted with the tasks of educational research, dissemination of research results, supply of educational technology and equipment, training of educational administrators and so on.

A detailed organisational structure of the State Education Commission is shown in Diagram 5.2.

**Diagram 5.2 The Structure of the State Education Commission**



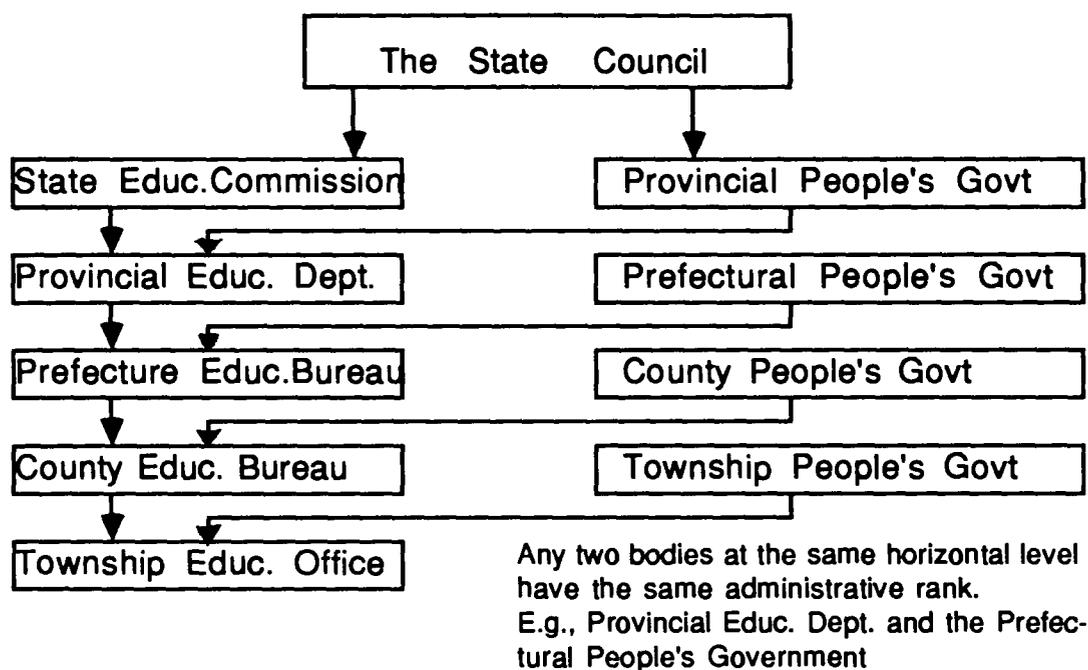
### 5.1.3 Four Tiers of Local Education Authorities --- Provincial, Prefectural, County and Township

Similar to the situation in many countries, educational administration in China is structured in accordance with the nation's division of administrative regions. In addition, at every level, all governmental organisations correspond to those at their next senior level. Apart from the Party Committee, (corresponding to the CCP), the Region's People's Congress (corresponding to the NPC) is the most powerful body within the district. Its executive organ --- the Region's People's Government (corresponding to the State Council and is usually called government) carries out public administration. The educational authority (corresponding to the SEdC) is one of the governmental departments. Due to the vast scale of the country, and probably also due to the long tradition of centralisation, the network of local education authorities in China is much more complicated than that in many

countries. The bureaucracy is composed of four tiers: provincial, prefectural, county and township education authorities, each bearing different responsibilities for educational provision to different degrees. Each education authority works under the direction of both its corresponding local government and the educational authority at its next senior level. The dual leadership system is supposed to ensure that both the central and local interests are properly reflected in the educational service in the locality. However, there have been several swings on which direction should be stressed in these four decades. When centralisation was stressed, the "branch dictates" (Hawkins, 1983, p60) style was favoured which advocated top-down leadership along the educational line. When a decentralisation policy was pursued, the "area dictates" (ibid) style was welcomed which encouraged the education authorities to listen more to their local governments. This time, with the progress of recent education reform, "area dictates" is once again prompted in order to bring closer articulation between the educational service and local economic conditions.

The bureaucratic relationships between the central and local education authorities (four tiers), as well as between the Regional People's Government and education authorities are illustrated in Diagram 5.3.

**Diagram 5.3 Dual Leaders of the Education Authorities**



### 5.1.3.1 The Provincial Education Department

The **Provincial Education Department** is sometimes referred to as the intermediate body in the whole administration system because it is the communication channel between the central planning agency and lower level executive agencies. Before the education reform, the power of administering education used to be shared by several authorities in the provincial government like the Provincial Education Department for Schools, Adult Education Department, and Higher Education Department. Because of the difficulty in coordinating these agencies, (and more difficulties when things like finance and staffing must be dealt with, which required other departments' involvement), many provinces began to set up a comprehensive authority called the Provincial Education Department to administer all the educational services within the province. In answer to the Party's call "education must serve socialist construction and socialist construction must rely on

education", those recently established Departments appoint representatives from other governmental authorities (e.g., the Finance Department, the Provincial Planning Commission) and large enterprises as part time staff to work together in order to bring mutual benefits.

The functions that the Provincial Education Department carries out are more arduous than before, since it is no longer just the "channel". It has to make great efforts in drawing the blueprint for educational development in its region. At present, a considerable amount of effort and manpower is devoted to planning for compulsory education because most of the provinces are expected to make nine year education universal by 1995.

The work of the Provincial Education Department can be roughly classified into the following categories:

- (1). to implement the general policies of the State Education Commission, to formulate additional regulations, concrete measures and to ensure proper implementation by strengthening inspection force;
- (2). to formulate overall development plans in its own province taking into account the available conditions and manpower needs;
- (3). to administer the province-run schools and universities including capital construction plan, enrolment plans etc;
- (4). to be responsible for basic education and other aspects of educational service, cooperating with other bodies if necessary;
- (5). to make plans for in-service teacher training and in-service administrator training;
- (6). to be involved in compiling supplementary teaching materials suitable for local use;

(7). to inspect the educational work of lower levels of government and their education authorities.

Corresponding to the SEdC, the organisational layout of the Provincial Education Department is divided into functioning branches and professional units. However, it has fewer branches than the SEdC. Presumably this is because the province has fewer responsibilities.

### **5.1.3.2 The Prefectural Education Bureau**

The administrative body below the provincial level is either the **Prefecture** or the **Prefecture-Rank Municipality**. The only difference between the prefecture and the prefecture-rank municipality is that, the former, as an agency of the provincial government, is commissioned to carry out certain tasks, whilst the latter is a relatively independent government which is free to make many decisions within its own region. Therefore, comparatively speaking, prefectural commission authorities have fewer bureaucratic organs than the prefecture-rank municipalities and less power and less independence. The recent tendency is for municipalities to take over responsibilities from prefectural commission offices to look after those counties and small cities which used to belong to the prefectures. It is probably because with the delegation of power, provinces prefer to shift some responsibilities to those bodies which can make their own decisions.

On the whole, the responsibilities of the education authorities in prefectures and in prefecture-rank municipalities are similar, as far as the basic education sector is concerned. They are obliged to:

(1). carry out the policies and directives from the state and the province, and make additional policies in the light of local situation if necessary;

(2). draw up plans for the development of education in the areas, coordinate and balance the educational developments in its subordinate counties and small cities;

(3). administer directly-run key schools;

(4). organise in-service training for teachers and administrators, administer training colleges;

(5). ensure that national curricula are properly implemented at county and small city level with the help of the Teaching Research Offices;

(6). organise inspection of county and small city education authorities as well as of the schools run by prefecture itself;

(7). in many places, to manage adult education and vocational education in conjunction with other governmental bodies.

It should be noted that responsibilities for formal higher education, particularly full time HE institutions only belong to central and provincial levels. Education authorities lower than provincial level do not administer tertiary institutions. Their attention is focused on basic education, vocational education, and adult education.

Again, the number of branches in the Prefectural Education Bureau is fewer than that at provincial level. But the education authorities in prefecture-rank municipalities have more branches than those in prefectures because the former take more independent responsibilities than the latter.

### **5.1.3.3 The County Education Bureau**

Being at the executive level in the whole educational administration system, the work of the **County Education Bureau** (and small city education bureau) has crucial importance. It is the county level education authorities that are undergoing the most severe transformation. The shift of responsibility for administering most primary and junior secondary schools to Township Education Offices has created an unprecedented relationship between these two levels of bureaucracies.

In the past, the County Education Bureau was almost at the lowest level of educational administration although the township level did cooperate in operating primary schools. Most powers like finance, personnel management (including staff transfer, promotion, and school headship appointments), and professional guidance on syllabus, timetabling, and INSET were more or less in the hands of the county authorities. Therefore, as the township government did not have much educational duty, it had no separate educational agency. Usually one cultural-educational assistant was sufficient to cope with the daily business. With the deepening of the reform and further delegation of power aimed at bringing closer link between education and local conditions, junior secondary and primary schools nowadays have been transferred into the township's jurisdiction. However, one of the unsolved problems is that, until now, although the township authorities are required to contribute financially to the education provision, they actually do not have much say in matters other than money.

The main tasks of the County Education Bureau are to:

- (1). implement the policy and plans from its government and from senior level education authorities, and make supplements if desirable;
- (2). draw up development plans for universal education, and make great efforts to ensure implementation;
- (3). strengthen the work of the Teaching Research Office and its pedagogical guidance, organise in-service teacher training, organise various "experience exchanging" meetings to disseminate good practice;
- (4). administer adult education, farmer education with the help of other authorities;
- (5). run senior secondary schools and keypoint primary schools, teacher training colleges and vocational schools;
- (6). prepare the annual budget, and allocate funds to schools;
- (7). be responsible for appointing school heads, teacher transfer across the township, and other personnel affairs;
- (8). begin to set up an inspectorate to strengthen inspection force.

Another important feature that needs to be noted is the role of the **Teaching Research Office** (TRO) at the county level as the county is actually the lowest executive level for ensuring proper implementation of the national curricula. Teaching Research Offices are usually located in Teacher Centres or sometimes Teacher Training Colleges. Members of the office are not administrators, instead, they are selected from experienced teachers though the possibility of selecting by political credentials cannot be ruled out. Usually the TRO is divided into several parts in accordance with subjects taught such as moral education, Chinese language, mathematics, science, English etc. Members of the office have the duty, in cooperation with Teacher Training Colleges, to

carry out educational research on pedagogical theory, textbook content and methods of instruction, and to disseminate these results. In addition, they are required to visit schools as frequently as they can and to try their best to know schools well. Moreover, one further function is to organise in-service teacher training to help prepare the teaching programmes.

#### **5.1.3.4 The Township Education Office**

As explained earlier, the state used to employ "branch dictates" policy to administer educational service; local government, especially township government (the lowest tier of public administration) had little influence on educational planning and management. So the township government did not need a separate agency for educational service. Today, the new system of "local responsibility and decentralised administration" has been put into practice. Township government has to (either willingly or reluctantly) accept the financial responsibility for basic education, that is, primary sector and junior-secondary sector. The responsibilities of the **Township Education Office** (in some places only one or two persons) include: (1). admitting sufficient pupil according to the target set by the County Education Bureau. Having accomplished that, the township office then have the right to make their own plans; (2), levying an "extra education tax" on farms and township-run enterprises based on their sales, and using this money to improve school buildings, school resources and teachers' living conditions. Three years have passed since the tax levy was carried out. This method has not proved to be very successful on the whole, because of insufficient cooperation between the education office and the taxation

office, also because of the reluctance of farmers to pay. In addition, it seems that 95% of the township governments only have the duty to contribute money to educational service, they have little right to involvement in matters other than money. Many farmers think that it is because higher level governments want to "get rid of the financial burden", and to "increase the load on farmers". Therefore, after a period of feverish activities, problems have emerged: the imbalance between duty and power, the unsettled distribution of power between the county and the township, and the lack of professional competence of township officials. In short, many scholars believe that the township is the weakest link in the whole administration system. As one researcher claimed, "We should not overestimate the result of administration of education by township" (Tao, 1989, p41).

As a result, at the moment, the major administrative and professional responsibilities are still in the hands of County Education Authorities, though the Township Education Offices have gained some power in funding matters. It is likely that more power will be delegated to township level along with the development of reform and decentralisation, but what power should be delegated, and how, moreover, how the township educational administration should be strengthened so that it is capable of taking not only financial duty but also other responsibilities, still remains to be seen.

#### **5.1.3.5 Summary**

Reviewing the education administration system in China, one can see that, in the first place, it is a network of centralised hierarchies

composed of central and four-tiers of local government. However, it is not a network as rigid as many might imagine. Because of the large scale of the country and the consequent diversities of local circumstances, it is impractical and unwise to set up very detailed national policies and to make every local government conform to the rules. Hence, the responsibilities for some aspects of educational administration are delegated to provincial and various local education authorities instead of being retained in the SEdC. Nevertheless, it is still a centralised system on the whole. Three points justify the above conclusions. First, the decision of decentralising educational administration was issued jointly by the CCP Central Committee and the State Council as an administrative circular. No matter how powerful the circular is, it is still an administrative circular, not a piece of legislation. In other words, these delegated powers can be withdrawn as easily by a joint announcement. So this decentralisation is in the form of delegation, by no means devolution whereby the power and independence of local education authorities are ensured by legislation. Even if it is ensured by legislation, (such as the Law of Compulsory Education in which the responsibility for implementing compulsory education has been assigned to the local governments), it is still probable that administrative directives can alter legislative requirements, because of the overlapping membership of administrative and legislative bodies. Second, most of the policies and decisions are initiated by central government, leaving local education authorities to follow and implement. In fact, a considerable amount of the so-called "local autonomy" is actually the autonomy of deciding the ways of implementing the policies, rather than the autonomy of initiating some policies of their own. Whatever the education authorities do, they will have to be accountable to higher level authorities and ultimately be

accountable to central government. This is not a devolved system or a partnership system in which the central government and local government stand at an equal position and both are accountable to the same body. Third, there is little consultation and negotiation going on between the higher and lower level education authorities when decisions are being made. It is always those of higher rank who issue announcements and tell the junior ones what to implement. However, having said that, one should really point out that since the Education Reform was launched in 1985, more and more powers and responsibilities have been delegated and local initiatives have been encouraged, and it is likely that this trend will continue along with the proceeding of the reform.

The second feature of the administration system in China, which is not difficult to understand, is that the lower down the administrative hierarchy, the less well differentiated and less sophisticated the organisation and responsibility -- a typical feature of a centralised system. For example, there are 23 functional branches in the SEdC, but only about 6 in the County Education Bureau, not to mention the township level which usually does not have separate education offices. Presumably it is because the higher the level, the more responsibilities it must bear since the system is centralised. The SEdC used to make quite concrete plans and the provinces made detailed plans and then "at the subprovincial level, relevant portions of the plans are received, adapted and implemented." (Hawkins, 1983, p26). Along with changes in the distribution of power, and the consequent change of functions of education authorities, it is likely that some branches would be merged whilst some others would be split, and education authorities at lower levels would expand their organisations.

Finally, one can probably feel, from the discussion of the recent changes in educational administration, that the delegation of power may well result in difficulty for the higher level authorities in keeping their junior education authorities under reasonable control, as the Chinese have not yet got used to such a degree of decentralisation. In addition, how the power should be distributed so as to benefit educational development is still in a trial stage. Facing the fluctuating and uncertain changes in the reform of educational administration, how is the newly restored inspectorate going to gain its foothold? What is its present position in the whole educational administration system?

## **5.2 The Position of the Inspectorate in the Educational Administration System**

Theoretically speaking, the chain of educational administration (and indeed, any form of administration) is composed of three basic parts: policy making, implementation, and evaluation. Absence of any of these three components will brake the chain, thus affecting the smooth operation of the system. Clearly, given the already existing policy making group (heads of education authorities and Party Committees) and the implementation groups (various administrative branches within the education authorities), the inspectorate takes the role of evaluation.

### **5.2.1 Brief History of Inspection in China Prior to 1986.**

In China, the **activity** of educational inspection in a broad sense, has been a practice for more than 2000 years of the existence of an education system. But the **system** of inspection was not instituted until 1906, during the Qing dynasty. 12 "supervision offices" were appointed to be responsible for visiting local authorities and schools in the country and for reporting to the central government on the state of education. Each province also had several people who acted as inspectors. Since then, the practice of inspection has developed quickly. (Mao, 1988, p1-4; Zhang, 1987, p175; Bai,1987,p7). For example, in 1913, during the period of the Sun Yat-Sen government, not only was a separate department created within the then Ministry of Education, but also a series of statutory regulations of inspections was issued. In the 1930s, when the Kuomintang government was trying to make basic education universal,

a complete system of inspection from central Ministry to county bureau was set up. Very concrete decrees had been put into practice with emphasis on the inspection of local government about policy implementation and on quality of school education. On one hand, one can say that the development of educational inspection during that four decades (1906-1949) had not been constant due to the frequent and radical political changes, (Qing dynasty-- Sun Yat-Sen government -- Kuomintang government -- Communist revolution). On the other hand, the system did become more and more complete. What is more, one feature which ran through the evolution was that emphasis was always on inspection to ensure policy implementation.

In 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party took over state power from the Kuomintang government, every aspect of the social system underwent a revolutionary transformation including the educational inspection system. An inspection department was set up within the then Ministry of Education immediately after the foundation of new China. In addition, it would be fair to say that, in the '50s, especially in the early '50s, educational inspection was highly valued by many education authorities and professionals. Apart from a central inspectorate, many provinces and counties also had their own corps of inspectors. Others appointed some administrators as part-time inspectors to carry out inspection tasks. The main tasks, according to Jing's 1988 research, were to:

(1), find out the proceedings of schools and lower level authorities implementing government policies;

(2), collect comments and requests from teachers and parents;

(3), get to know the situation of pupils' study and life;

(4), assess the performance of cadres and teachers;

(5), sum up and disseminate advanced experience, and so on (Jing, 1988, p12).

In 1955, the then Ministry of Education specially issued a circular to require local education authorities to strengthen their inspection work. It instructed that inspectors should have a clear goal and a well-conceived plan, and should cooperate well with the inspected local government. It seems from recent research findings and the recollections of some administrators that, though ensuring policy implementation was given top priority, advising on school teaching and disseminating good practice were also emphasised by the state and manifested in practice at that time. (Nanjing Education Bureau, 1988, p1-2, Jing, 1988, p30, Sheng, 1988, p32). The inspection team in Gansu province was even described as a body mainly advising on professional matters such as teaching and textbooks, and carrying out little inspection. (Sheng, 1988, p32).

However, in the late 1950s, the endless political movements have resulted in frequent changes in the functions and organisational structures of educational authorities. In accordance with the left-wing principle, "Party decides everything", educational decisions were made solely by members of Party Committee without much consultation with professionals, or even with administrators. Under that circumstance, the inspectorate was subject to a very difficult position. As the current chief of the central inspectorate said when he was giving a lecture, " it (the then inspectorate) could not inspect the Party Committee and criticise it, otherwise it would be charged with being against the Party leadership. It was also felt to be meaningless to inspect school heads or professional administrators in the education authorities who had no

claim on educational administration' (Zhen, 1989). Apart from political reasons, the lack of sufficient communication and effective cooperation between the inspectorate and other administrative branches (e.g., primary education branch) also accounted for the later abolition of the inspectorate. There was no clear division of responsibilities between these two parts, sometimes the inspectorate interfered in the work of other branches by giving instructions to schools without discussing them with those branches in advance. Similarly, the inspectors sometimes were not able to advise schools promptly because they were not informed about the arrangements of other branches. All these shortcomings, together with the increasing left-wing political current which stressed unified Party dictatorship, brought about the abolition of inspection system in 1958. In the period of the Cultural Revolution, even the Ministry of Education was abolished, not to mention the inspectorate. The left-wing Party controlled everything, political needs became the sole aim of education.

In short, although the inspectorate was set up in the '50s and operated normally for the first 6-7 years, its functions and organisations were soon twisted by several political movements, until its abolition. In addition, the inspectorate lacked sufficient communication with the rest of the education authority, and also lacked sound criteria for evaluating educational standards. (Jing, 1988, p5; Nanjing Education Bureau, 1988, p2; Bai, 1987, p8).

After the Cultural Revolution, as restoration started, so did the educational system. As early as in 1977, Deng Xiaoping instructed the then Ministry of Education to "find some people, at least 20, who are in their 40s to visit schools every day, to sit in classes and find out the state

of policy implementation, then to come back and report. Only in this way can the problems be reflected and solved quickly." In 1981, the then Ministry of Education called for the restoration of inspectorial activity at every level of educational authority. In response to the call, some authorities even established inspection teams whose task was more inclined to advise schools and lower level education authorities and provide feedback to the employing authorities. For example, the inspection branch in Nanjing Education Bureau recalled that its task was to "feedback, guide and advice" (Nanjing Education Bureau, 1988,p4). In 1983, a document named "Suggestions on Setting Up Inspection System in the Basic Education Sector" was published by the State Education Commission. Subsequently, several places, e.g. Ninbo and Tongxian, were selected as subjects of pilot experiments. In 1986, the ex-Party Leader Mr. Zhao Ziyang said clearly in his report that "we must strengthen the administration of education. We must gradually establish a systematic system of evaluation and inspection." (Report on the Fourth Plenary of the Sixth National People's Congress, 1986).

In 1986, the State Council issued the document "Some Observations of Realising Compulsory Education "on behalf of the SEdC. In this document, the education inspection system was clearly mentioned and required to be restored to be "responsible for inspection and guidance on implementing compulsory education in its area, and to cooperate with local governments to solve various problems which have emerged." (East China Normal University, 1987, p361). Finally, at the end of 1986, after several years' preparation and trial, the Department of Inspection was created within the State Education Commission. Six people were allocated to that department. At the beginning of the next year, a guiding circular -- "Summary of Conference on Educational Inspection"

was published. It still serves as a guiding document today though it seems to be a bit out-dated. By the end of 1988, 24 out of 31 provinces, and 138 out of 334 prefectures had set up such organisations. By 1990, all provinces had done so. Meanwhile, those inspectorates already existing had been strengthened. For example, the number of central inspectors has increased from originally six to more than a dozen. More and more county rank inspectorates are being set up.

The reasons for the return of the inspectorate have been discussed in Chapter One. Briefly, it is the natural consequence of a decentralised administration brought about by the Decision of Education Reform in 1985; it is an essential organisational measure to ensure the achievement of compulsory education; it is a means of making educational management more scientific and effective.

### **5.2.2 The Nature of the Newly Restored Inspectorate**

As early as in 1983, the then Ministry of Education drafted some guidelines for the inspection work which already existed in some education authorities. Some of the clauses are obviously inapplicable to the current development. Regardless of those out-dated clauses, the fundamental spirit is still valid. The more recent 1987 SEdC document "Summary of the Conference on Educational Inspection" reconfirmed the most important feature of the Chinese inspectorate -- the administrative nature of the inspectorate. (SEdC, 1987a, p1). Educational inspection was defined as "local governments and their educational authorities at all levels authorising their inspectorates and inspectors to inspect, examine, guide, and advise the educational work of lower level

local governments, educational authorities and schools". (ibid).

The nature of the inspectorate is administrative -- it is **a functioning administrative organisation**. This statement indicates three points: first, the authority of the inspectors and the legitimacy of their carrying out inspections are basically, if not entirely, based on their administrative status and according power. Second, the inspectors have the executive administrative power to enforce, if necessary, the implementation of legislation and certain national policies. It determines that the inspectorate is neither a research nor a consultant body which only perform advisory functions. On the contrary, it has certain powers to stop immediately those activities which violate the national educational principles and legislation. It has the right to recommend education authorities to reward those who perform well. Third, since the inspectorate does not directly participate in decision-making and actual implementation, its administrative power (especially the power to give instructions and directives) is less than that of other administrative branches in education authorities. i.e., comparatively speaking, it has a more advisory and guidance role.

It is not surprising that the Chinese inspectorate is an administrative body within educational authorities (or directly under the supervision of local government in some cases. i.e., enjoying equal administrative rank as the education authority) when one considers the reasons for which the inspectorate was set up. Bearing the prime duty of seeing the national legislation and policies are complied with, especially in the period when resistance exists, the administrative power would be vital for the completion of inspectors' missions. If they had only the right to offer advice which could be turned down by the inspected education

authorities or schools, their task certainly could not be fulfilled. It is, then, also not surprising that the authority of the inspectorate is built upon its administrative power and the inspector's position. In many places, the head of the education authority also concurrently holds the post of chief of the inspection branch.

### **5.2.3 The Organisational Structure of the Chinese Inspectorate**

#### **5.2.3.1 The Leadership Issues**

The Chinese inspectorate is structured in accordance with the administration system. It is composed of four tiers: central, provincial, prefectural and county inspectorate. (Townships do not have a separate inspectorate). There are 31 provinces in the country, 11 prefectures in one province, and 8.6 counties in one prefecture on average (SEdC, 1986, p2). The average number of inspectorate personnel is 13 (national level), 8-10 (provincial inspectorate), 6-8 (prefectural inspectorate), and 5-6 (county inspectorate). The intention of the central inspectorate is to complete the establishment of inspectorates at provincial and prefectural level first, then turn the focus downwards to county level.

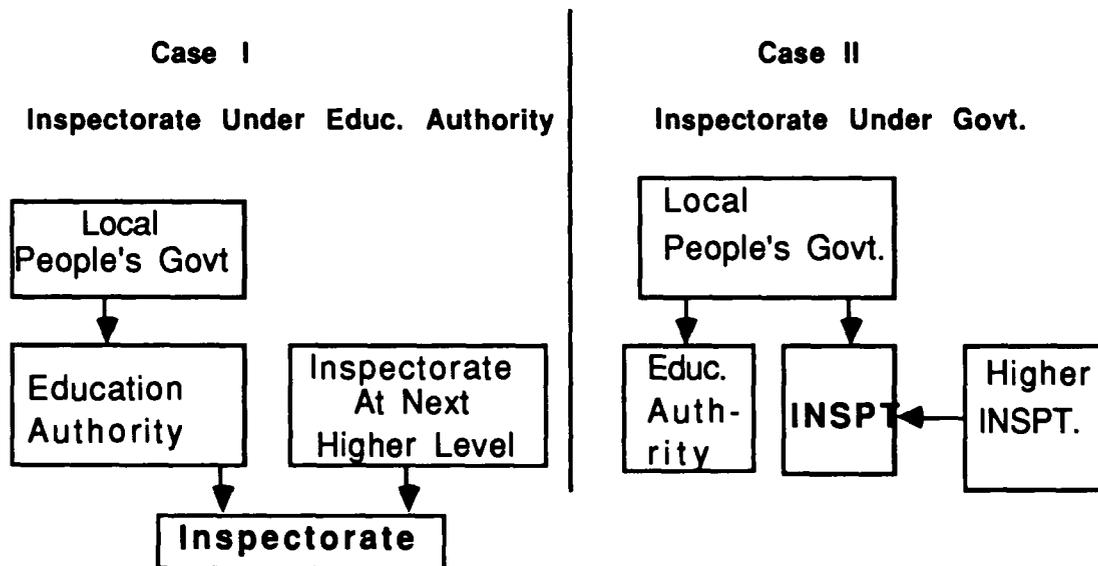
Every local inspectorate has two supervisors. For most inspectorates, one is their education authorities, the other is the inspectorate at their next senior level. For a few inspectorates in the country, one of the leaders is their local governments instead of their education authorities.

In his dissertation, Xia claims that, leaving aside the inspectorate at higher level, there are two ways of putting the inspectorate in

educational administration system. One is to let it work under the leadership of its education authority and be accountable to it. The other is to let it become a functioning body **directly** under the leadership of its corresponding government. That is to say, under the former, it belongs to education authorities while under the latter, it directly belongs to the government and stands at the same administrative rank as its education authority. In reality, both cases exist though the number of latter cases appears much smaller.

The relationship among inspectorate, education authority, and local government, inspectorate at higher level is shown in Diagram 5.4.

**Diagram 5.4: The Organisational Position of Inspectorate in the Administration System**



In cities like Shanghai, Guangzhou, Wuxi, Nangjing and Dalian, the inspectorates are accountable to their employing education authorities. But in cities like Beijing and Shengyang, and a number of counties in some provinces, the inspectorates are directly supervised by the local governments in their areas. The co-existence of these two relationships

has to do with the administrative base of the inspectorates. As mentioned in the last section, in China, the authority and the legitimacy to inspect are almost totally based on the administrative position of the inspectors. If the inspectorate is attached to its education authority instead of the local government, it will find itself one rank lower than the inspected government when it inspects the government (not the education authority) at its next lower level. (see Diagram 5.3). According to the regulations of the Chinese public administration, a department of a government administratively has the same rank as its next lower level government. For example, the provincial education authority is at the same rank as prefectural government, meanwhile, the provincial inspectorate, as one branch, is one rank lower than its employing provincial education authority, therefore, the provincial inspectorate is one rank lower than prefectural government administratively. Therefore, when the provincial inspectorate has to inspect the prefecture government on compulsory education matters, for instance, it will certainly feel odd to inspect its administrative superior. Sometimes when the inspectors carry out such tasks, they are not given due treatment by the inspected government. In an extreme case, the chairman of the government sent his personal culture-education secretary to receive the inspectorate. In view of this embarrassing situation, many inspectors appeal strongly that they must directly belong to their government instead of education authorities in order to raise their administrative status.

However, what administrative rank the inspectorate can have is not up to the inspectorates themselves to decide. It entirely depends on various levels of local government which approve the establishment of inspectorate. On the whole, a majority of inspectorates is still working

under education authorities, just as other administrative branches in the education authorities. But there are a small number of inspectorates backed by their local governments which enjoy higher administrative status, which might well become a model for future development of some inspectorates.

### **5.2.3.2 Internal Division of the Inspectorate**

As to the division of personnel within the inspectorate itself, there are several criteria, according to the author's research findings. They are: phase, district, and current task, though chance of using the last one is quite rare. Although inspectorates are usually small with 8-10 personnel on average, many of them still divide themselves by phase, i.e., a group of inspectors look after the primary sector and others secondary, in order to reach closer cooperation with the primary education branch and the secondary education branch in the education authority. However, there are many inspectorates which do not have internal division at all. A prefectural inspector told the author that they had only two inspectors, so "what is the point of dividing between two of us?"

Another feature of the Chinese inspectorate is that it appoints both full-time and part-time inspectors. The combination of insufficient number of inspectors and vast amount of inspection work account for this feature. According to the regulations of the Chinese public administration, the Staffing Department of each government determines the number of staff that each bureau can appoint. (e.g., Education Bureau, and Public Health Bureau). Hence the number of

inspectors that the education authority can have must be approved by that Department. Unfortunately, the number of inspectors authorised is much smaller than actually needed, because of the current movement to reduce the number of government staff. The solution adopted by the education authorities, therefore, is to reduce the number of staff in other administrative branches in order to subsidise the inspection branch. Meanwhile, they appoint some part-time inspectors to cushion the shortage of inspectors. From the interviews with inspectors from several prefectures and counties, the author got to know that part-time inspectors exist in almost every inspectorate. The ratio of PT to FT inspectors vary from 1:2 to nearly 1:1. In some city districts PT inspectors are more numerous than FT inspectors. Most PT inspectors are chosen from retired administrators and school heads who have quite rich experience in educational administration and school management as well as in teaching.

However, although the central inspectorate has repeatedly stressed that the majority of inspectors must be in mid career, in some places, even full time inspectors are those nearly retired educationists in their 60s whose efficiency is likely to be impaired by their health. One consideration might be that although they are old, they are experienced so that the advantage of being influential is very helpful. In some other cases, however, the inspectorate becomes a "charitable place" full of those who have not reached retirement age but are incapable of hard work because of health problems. On the whole, in a considerable number of education authorities, the importance of having an inspectorate has not yet been understood by many people. In turn, things get worse when the inspectorate cannot justify its existence by showing its importance.

### **5.2.3.3 Relationship Among Inspectorates at Different Levels**

As a typical feature of a centralised system, higher level authorities in a hierarchy are bound to have influence on the lower authorities. In the 1987 "Summary of Conference on Educational Inspection", It was stated that every local inspectorate must accept the leadership of both its local government and the inspectorate at its next higher level. It was also pointed out clearly that the supervision of the latter only took the form of professional guidance. To put it in another way, the higher level inspectorates are not responsible for managerial matters of their next junior inspectorates, such as appointing staff, deciding funding (it is the job of the local government). However, they have certain responsibilities for supervising matters concerning with inspection work proper of the lower level inspectorates. For example, to influence their inspection programmes, and to coordinate the work of their junior inspectorates.

In reality, however, this relationship is very vague and weak due largely to the incompleted construction of the system itself. Every inspectorate is fully devoted to setting up its own business. So far, little effort has been made by higher level inspectorates to coordinate or to supervise their subordinate inspectorates. Thus it is fair to say that the relationship among inspectorates at different levels has not yet been well established. Several inspectorates the author visited were doing work by themselves without any guidance from their superiors, simply because senior inspectorates had not yet been set up, or were just set up a short time before.

On the whole, the current transactions between two levels of inspectorates are limited to the exchange of annual plans and work

reviews, to submission or transmission of the inspection reports carried out by each inspectorate.

The plans of higher level inspectorate do not have much influence on the plans of its junior inspectorates. All inspectorates are working under the leadership of their education authorities or directly under corresponding local governments. When the author asked the inspectors in the questionnaire: "When your inspectorate is making inspection plans, which side's requests are considered most important?, the employing education authority, higher level inspectorate, or schools?" The answer was: 17 out of 61 respondents claimed that the proposal of the higher inspectorate was considered to take first place, 33 claimed that the requests of the employing education authorities and local governments held most weight, and last, 11 of them said that the schools' expectations had major influence. This clearly shows that the main determinant of the inspectorate's work is its employing educational authority's wishes, not its higher inspectorate's. (N.B. the details of the field work design are to be given at the beginning of Chapter Six and in the appendices).

Nevertheless, there is always some influence on the lower inspectorates asserted by the higher ones, especially when the latter decides to carry out an inspection in the lower inspectorate's area, which means that the lower level inspectorate will have to plan its work alongside the intention of its senior inspectorate to cooperate in the inspection. Usually, the lower level inspectorate is made responsible for coordinating all the necessary preparations including pre-reviews, both at governmental level and at school level, or even mock inspections.

For example, in 1989 and in early 1990, in response to the State Council's concern about the state of education, the central inspectorate initiated a nationwide "aspect inspection" (i.e. only inspecting some aspects of the performance of schools, education authorities and local government). Given very short notice, every provincial inspectorate, (and subsequently every prefectural and county inspectorate) had to give up completely their original plans and devote all their manpower to preparing for the national inspection.

Apart from that, however, the higher level inspectorates do not have much influence on their subordinates, partly, as argued before, due to the incomplete system itself, and partly due to the present emphasis on local government's leadership rather than the top-down approach within the educational hierarchy.

In short, the Chinese inspectorate consists of four tiers, one national, three local, in accordance with the educational administration system. Apart from receiving leadership from the inspectorate at next higher level, the inspectorates are at the same time either working under their education authorities, or directly under their local people's governments. In addition, the influence of local authorities seems stronger than that of the superior inspectorate, because of the "ares dictates" principle. The inspectorates at different levels have not yet established stable and systematic relationships as many of them have not yet completed their own organisations.

### **5.3 Summary**

The educational inspection system does not exist in a vacuum. Instead, it is very closely related to, and largely determined by its surrounding educational administration system. This axiomatic assumption justifies the description of the current educational administration system in China as a background for an examination of the inspection system.

The birth of the new inspection system in China, has very much to do with administrative decentralisation and, more directly, with the Law of the Nine Year Compulsory Education. Given the problems in reality and the urgency in realising universal education, the administrative power is very important for the inspectors. Plus the already existence of the professional body --- Teaching Research Office (TRO), the nature of the inspectorate naturally becomes administrative.

The work of the TRO, which will be discussed later, only involves curriculum matters, teaching and learning, and in-service training of teachers. However, this does not mean that the inspectorate can exclude itself from issues such as curriculum, teaching methods, and teaching-learning. Firstly, as a body for monitoring the state of education and evaluating educational standards, the inspectorates, especially those at lower levels and conducting school inspections, can by no means avoid being concerned with curriculum matters as this is one of the most important aspects of school work. In addition, members of the Teaching Research Office do not inspect teaching as regularly as inspectors visit schools. When they inspect, they seldom inspect pupils' learning as a whole (they usually inspect on a subject by subject basis).

Thirdly, the TRO members are not entitled to examine other parts of school performance other than in professional matters. Therefore, the inspectorate will still have much connection with the Teaching Research Office and will still have a very important role to play in judging overall teaching-learning quality in one school or one area, particularly in linking educational quality with educational provision and administration. The question is: to what extent, should the inspectorate be involved in professional matters and how?

Apart from arguing for the professional element in the nature of the inspectorate, as a supplementary to the administrative one, the author would also like to argue for another important role of the inspectorate, apart from the present role as a supervisor of policy implementation. At present, the main task of the inspectorate is to help implement the new legislation. To do this, specific national regulations and legislation need to be enforced and implemented. Hence the administrative authority enables inspectors to carry out their duties. The co-existence of two leaders (education authority or directly local government) and the stronger and stronger call for the promotion of the inspector's administrative rank clearly shows the importance of administrative authority in enforcing policy implementation.

Having emphasised the importance of administrative power, particularly in the next few years, one needs to look at the advisory role that inspectors ought to play, and are likely to play more in the long run. With the further decentralisation, local government will have more freedom in managing education, which the central government cannot enforce. For example, today, planning for compulsory education is almost totally within the discretion of the provincial government. The

central inspectorate can only comment on and give advice to the plan, but can hardly force the plan to be altered in the way preferred by the centre. Therefore, the inspectorate's advisory function should also be paid sufficient attention. Anything concerned with the advisory role should be well considered, for example, inspectors' qualifications and experience in teaching and administration, the method of performing advisory functions and so on.

To summarise, it is the centralised system of the Chinese educational administration, the long history of bureaucracy, and the current urgency in implementing recent legislation that make the Chinese inspectorate very much a component of administration. This is manifested in the fact that the inspectors have power to enforce some national legislation and regulations. Nevertheless, many aspects of administration nowadays have been delegated to local authorities, thus, the inspectors do have some aspects that they cannot enforce, but may advise. Finally, the work of the nationwide Teaching Research Office makes it necessary for the inspectorate to be concerned with professional matters in a different but cooperative way.

Even so, what are the functions of the contemporary Chinese inspectorate? To what extent, does it fulfil its duties? These are the questions that the field research was aimed at. The findings are to be examined in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **THE PRESENT DEVELOPMENT OF**

### **THE CHINESE INSPECTORATE --**

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND ISSUES**

As with any new system in the early stages, the Chinese inspectorate is desperately trying its best to grow up. Sufficient personnel must be selected, training must be given in one form or another, organisations must be set up, working regulations must be laid down, different ways of working must be tried out, and criteria for evaluating educational standards must be drawn up and put into practice. All this work is essential for the effective running of an organisation. But because of the different conditions in different areas, there is a great diversity in the work of the inspectorates across the country. In addition to that, as the actual organisation of the inspectorate only started a few years ago, plus the fact that it is a very new system in which very few people have experience, there is not much literature available to study, or even to describe the present development. Most of the literature found consists only of the reasons for setting up an inspection system.

In view of the shortage of, as well as the importance of the information, the author conducted some field work in 1989 in an attempt to reveal the key issues and problems in the present inspection system so that relevant comparisons can be made with HM Inspectorate and recommendations can be proposed. A detailed summary of the field work, which included observations, interviews, and questionnaires, can be found in the appendix. The general picture is as follows:

**Table 6.1 General Summary of the Field Work in China**

Methods	Number
1.Observation	2 ( 1 inspection + 1 routine visit )
2.Interview	23 (12 inspectors+ 4 administrators+ 7 schoolheads )
3.Questionnaire	205 ( 76 insp + 52 admins + 77 heads)

The field work was composed of three parts:

(1). Observation: 1 aspect inspection of a secondary school in Shanghai, and 1 routine visit to a primary school in Shanghai (**Aspect Inspection:** An inspection which examines only particular aspect(s) of educational standards in schools or educational provisions of education authorities);

(2). Interviews: 23 people from 6 provinces (20% of the provinces in the country) ;

(3). Questionnaires: 3 sets of questionnaires were designed for 3 groups of people: inspectors, administrators, and primary and secondary school head teachers. Each group contained 110 samples selected from 10 provinces in the country. The numbers of respondents are as follows:

inspectors: 76 response rate=  $76/110=69\%$

administrators: 52 response rate=  $52/110=47\%$

school heads: 77 response rate=  $77/110=70\%$

Apart from the 76 inspector respondents, there were another 10 inspectors who sent letters to explain their difficulty in filling in the

questionnaires. They complained that although they had received inspection training, they still remained in their old occupations because the inspectorates in their areas had not been set up. The administrator respondents and school head respondents faced a similar situation. Because of the nonexistence of inspectorates in their areas, some of them were unable to complete the first part of the questionnaire, which was the evaluation of inspectorate's work. Instead, they could only manage the second part, which was the expectations of the roles of the inspectorate.

A breakdown of the respondents by their levels and positions is shown in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2a Breakdown of Inspectors (N=76)**

level %	provincial	prefectural	county	did not indicate
%	6.6	47.4	36.8	9.2

**Table 6.2b Breakdown of Administrators by Level and Position (N=52)**

level %	pro- vin- cial	pre- fec- tural	coun- ty	did not indi- cate		posi- tion %	LEA head	branch head	ststff	did no indi- cate
%	5.8	26.9	30.8	36.5		%	7.7	23.1	32.7	36.5

**Table 6.2c Breakdown of School Heads (N= 77)**

type %	primary school head	secondary school head	did not indicate
%	29.9	33.8	36.4

In addition, the field work unfortunately coincided with the happening of the "Tiananmen Square Event", which enormously affected the research plan. Inter-province interviews became extremely difficult as the railway system was almost at a standstill, and the number of observations had to be cut as there were no buses running around the city. Once the author had to walk for four hours in order to be on time for the observation. In short, though the results on the whole are not as bad as had been feared, they could have been better if the event had not occurred.

## **6.1 Some Facts About the Chinese Inspectors**

It goes without saying that the quality of the inspectors themselves is of prime influence on the successful accomplishment of their missions. In view of the functions that they performed (which will be discussed in the next section), the inspectors were selected either from administrators or from school heads. In the former case, the education authorities transferred administrators from primary education and secondary education branches to the inspection branch. In the latter case, inspectors were chosen from experienced school heads. Having checked the background and performance of the candidates, the Party Committees of the education authorities (or local governments if the inspectorate was directly supervised by the local government) decided the appointments.

The survey conducted in June 1989 revealed some facts about the inspectors themselves.

**Table 6.3a: Age Distribution of the Inspectors (N=72)**

Age	<30	31-40	41-50	51-60	>60
No. of people	0	4	23	40	5
%	0	5.6	31.9	55.6	6.9

**Table 6.3b: Academic Qualifications of the Inspectors (N=73)**

Degree	post graduate	graduate	college	secondary school	primary school
No. of people	0	33	18	21	1
%	0	45.2	24.7	28.8	1.4

**Table 6.3c: Positions Before Joining the Inspectorate (N=72)**

position	schoolhead	school teacher	retired head	retired administr.	adminis-trator	others
No. of people	27	5	0	3	33	4
%	37.5	6.9	0	4.2	45.8	5.6

**Table 6.3d: Years of Teaching Experience (N=71)**

No. of years	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	>15
No. of people	2	7	4	5	53
%	2.8	9.9	5.6	7.0	74.6

**Table 6.3e: Years of Administrative Experience (N=67)**

No. of years	0	1-5	6-10	11-15	>15
No. of people	6	13	14	7	27
%	9.0	19.4	20.9	10.4	40.3

This background information confirms that the administrators and school heads are the two main sources of the inspectors. In addition, these two sources are almost on a half-half basis (school side 37.5%+6.9% versus administrative side 45.8% + 4.2%) (see Table 6.3c). This way of selecting inspectors is reasonable when one considers the fact that the inspectorate inspects both schools and lower level education authorities, in which case both the teaching experience and school management skills, and the experience of working in educational authorities are essential. The figures also show us clearly that the inspectors have very rich experience in both teaching and administration. The majority of the surveyed inspectors claimed that they had worked for at least 15 years as teachers, and half of them had another 15 years as administrators. In other words, half of the inspector respondents had been working in educational field for more than 30 years, which was consistent with the finding that more than half of the inspectors (55.6%) were aged between 50 and 60 years old. No wonder the average age of the inspectors was 51. (refer to Table 6.3a). As to the educational background of the inspectors, although there were nearly 30% who only had high school qualifications, or even lower, the inspectors on the whole could be regarded as relatively highly-qualified, as there are not many educationists who have university qualifications in China. Appointments of inspectors were required by the central

inspectorate to be strict and the inspectorate "would rather go without anyone than have something shoddy" (Zhen, 1989, lecture).

In short, the quality of the inspectors is reasonably high, as far as qualifications and experiences are concerned. The problem of over-age (approximately 30% of the inspectors were over 55 years old) might become an obstacle to the effectiveness and efficiency of the inspection work, which demands good health and vigour. In addition, the good quality of teaching and administrative experience does not guarantee a good quality of inspection as most of the inspectors had little knowledge of the inspection job (no one had been an inspector before!). Therefore, in-service training of the inspectors and learning from foreign inspection systems became two of the central tasks of the Chinese inspectorates at all levels.

## **6.2 The Functions of the Chinese Inspectorate**

The stated functions of the inspectorate is a good indication of what the inspectorate is doing. It is determined by the role that an inspectorate plays, and it in turn determines the methods of performing these functions. To the author, examining the functions of the inspectorate lays the foundation for a further examination of its relationships with different bodies. (e.g., inspectorate with education authority; inspectorate with the TRO, inspectorate with school), as well as for the scrutiny of the methods of working.

Though the SEdC had not issued a formal statement about the functions of the inspectorate across the country after several years'

practice, it did, however, make some provisional suggestions in the "Summary of the Conference on Educational Inspection" in 1987, which still acts as an official guiding document today. After examining the 1987 document, and the job descriptions of several provincial, prefectural and county inspectorates (Shanghai, Ninbo, Nanjin, Wuxi, Nanshi, Guangzhou inspectorates), the author felt that the following descriptions reflected the major functions of the inspectorate:

(1). to **supervise and examine lower level governments and their education authorities, kindergartens, primary and secondary sectors of formal education** (including primary schools, secondary schools, vocational schools, and secondary teacher-training schools) about the implementation of national legislation and important policies;

(2). to **evaluate** the efficiency of educational provision in regions (could be at any level) by inspecting the work of local governments and education authorities, and to **assess** the overall educational performance in schools;

(3). to **guide and advise** on the work of lower level education authorities and schools;

(4). to **feedback** the requests of educationists, to **look into issues** in reality and **make suggestions** to its employing education authority or higher level authorities;

(5). to **inspect and advise** on the work of **lower level inspectorates**.

These were, however, the functions that the official documents claimed to be. Did the reality match the theory? The concerns of the inspectors in reality could be revealed by asking inspectors how much time they spent on each of several tasks. 76 inspectors were requested to tick an appropriate answer on a 5-point scale: spend no time (1 point),

spend a little time (2 points), spend some time (3 points), spend quite a lot of time (4 points) and spend much time (5 points). The average score of each task was then calculated by using Equation (6.1). The results which are presented in Diagram 6.1 show that what the inspectors were doing accorded with what the SEdC document had proposed.

$$\bar{S} = \frac{\sum_{S} S \cdot n_s}{\sum_{S} n_s} \quad S = 1,2,3,4,5 \quad (6.1)$$

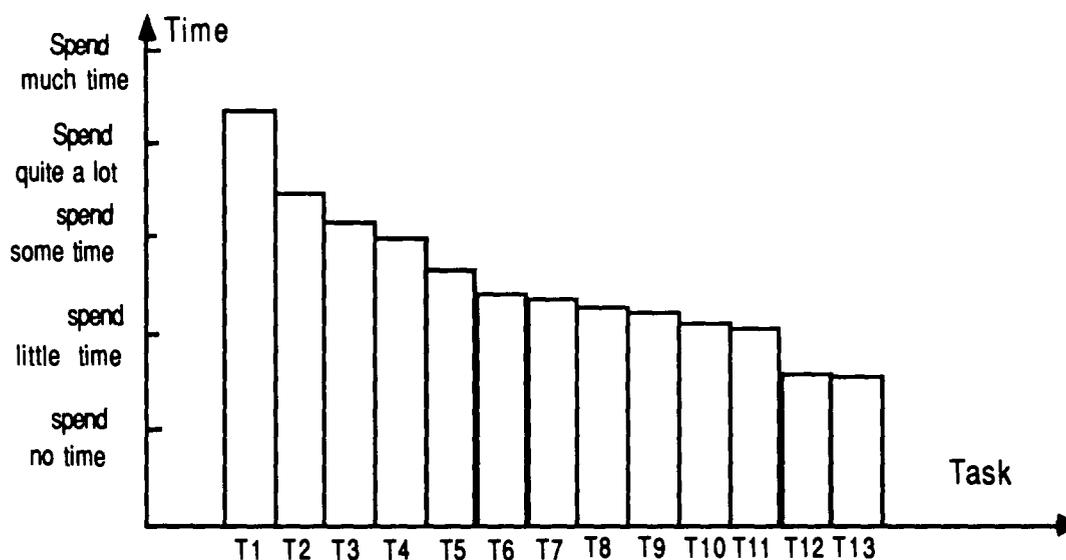
Where

$\bar{S}$  is the mean score of the task,  
which is shown in Diagram 6.1

S is the corresponding point for each individual answer,

$n_s$  is the number of answers having the point of S

**Diagram 6.1 The Major Work of the Inspectorate**



task 1: evaluating the overall work of schools and lower level education authorities;

task 2: evaluation of teaching-learning and management in schools;

task 3: administrative and clerical work.

task 4: discussion with inspector colleagues;

- task 5: time spent on the way to the inspected (visited) institutions;
- task 6: taking part in various external meetings held by the education authority;
- task 7: attending meetings of the employing education authority;
- task 8: attending meetings of higher level inspectorate;
- task 9: helping solve teaching-learning problem in schools;
- task10: helping solve resource problems in schools and in lower level education authorities;
- task 11: school staff appointment and promotion;
- task 12: consulting teachers' individual problems;
- task 13: organising INSET;

From the chart, one can see that the time spent on each task was not at all even. Most of the time was devoted to the evaluation of educational administration in lower level education authorities and of management and teaching-learning in schools. The less important position of those tasks such as organising INSET and helping solve teaching-learning problems confirmed that the Chinese inspectors were more concerned with inspecting and evaluating the overall state of education, in particular, the administrative performance of both education authorities and schools. From that chart, one can also observe that the amount of time sitting in office (including discussions, writing reports and administrative work) was quite considerable. On the whole, the functions of the inspectorate in practice matched the official claims, particularly the first and second function. However, it seemed from the chart that the functions of the inspectorate were dominated by the evaluation of the educational provision of education authorities and the performance of schools. Other formal functions such as advising on the work of lower level education authorities and schools, feeding back the requests of educationists, and looking into problems in reality could not be reflected clearly. Therefore, there was a need for further exploration

of the functions, and the degree to which they were fulfilled. The discussions below are arranged to cover both the relationship between the inspectorate and its employing education authority, and the relationship between the inspectorate and the inspection objects: lower level education authorities and schools.

The first section (6.3.1: Administrators' Evaluations) examines the contributions of the inspectorate to its education authority and the ways of cooperation between them. The second section (6.3.2. School Heads' Evaluations) looks into the functions of the inspectorate with regard to schools and lower level education authorities. Therefore, the overall functions of the inspectorate should be understood on the basis of the discussions in both two sections.

## **6.3 The Work of the Inspectorate**

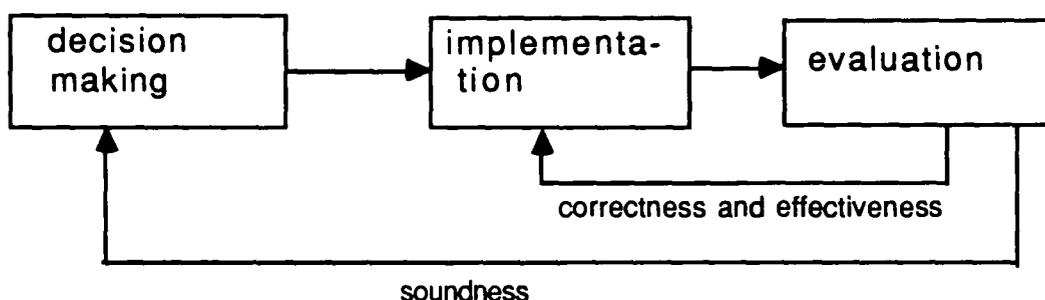
### **6.3.1 Administrators' Evaluations**

#### **6.3.1.1 The Functions of the Inspectorate with Regard to Its Employing Education Authority**

Undoubtedly, the principal purpose of an inspectorate is to help its authority discharge its educational responsibilities. Therefore, the functions of the inspectorate with regards to its education authority can be analysed by examining its position in the education authority management procedure: decision-making, implementation, and evaluation. (see Diagram 6.2 below). Usually, the decision-making body is composed of chiefs of the education authority, Party Committee heads,

and various branch heads. Then come the individual branches that are responsible for planning and implementing relevant decisions. Finally, the task of the inspectorate is to monitor and feedback the state of implementation and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation as well as the soundness of decisions. In view of the close relationship between the inspectorate and administrative branches in the education authority, the author asked the administrators to give comments on the work of the inspectorate. Similar questions were also put to the inspectors.

**Diagram 6.2 Three Components of Administration**



Given 8 choices of possible functions, (which also could be interpreted as inspectors' contributions to their education authorities), the administrators were requested to choose three and put them in order of the degree of contribution (i.e. the biggest contribution (3 points), the second biggest contribution (2 points) and the third biggest contribution (1 point) ) to answer the question "What, do you think, are the three main contributions of the inspectorate to your authority?". The mean score of every function was calculated using equation (6.2). All the results are shown in Table 6.4.

$$\bar{S} = \frac{\sum_s S \cdot n_s}{\sum_s n_s} \quad S = 1,2,3 \quad (6.2)$$

Where

$\bar{S}$  is the mean score of the task,  
which is shown in Diagram 6.4, 6.5

S is the corresponding points for each individual answers,

$n_s$  is the number of answers having the point of S

Table 6.4, 6.5 The Functions of the Inspectorate With Regard to Its Own Education Authority -- Views of the Administrators and the Inspectors

administrators' view

Scale Point Functions	provincial adminis- trators	prefectura adminis- trators	county adminis- trators	score	place
1.to provide info. on the state of educ.In schools administration in LEAs	2.667	2.000	1.917	2.048	1st
2. to advise on policy making of own LEAs	1.000	1.333	0.917	1.048	2nd
3. to supervise policy Implementation on behalf of LEAs	0.667	0.833	1.000	0.905	3rd
4. to collect comments from schools and lower level LEAs	1.333	0.667	0.417	0.620	4th
5. to evaluate policy of own LEAs	0.333	0.000	0.667	0.429	5th
6.to run errands for LEAs	0.000	0.000	0.333	0.190	6th
7. to liase between own LEAs and schools (lower level LEAs)	0.000	0.000	0.167	0.095	7th
8.to trouble - shoot	0.000	0.000	0.083	0.048	8th

Inspector's view

score	place
2.246	1st
1.615	2nd
0.886	4th
1.169	3rd
0.062	7th
0.062	7th
0.092	6th
0.123	5th

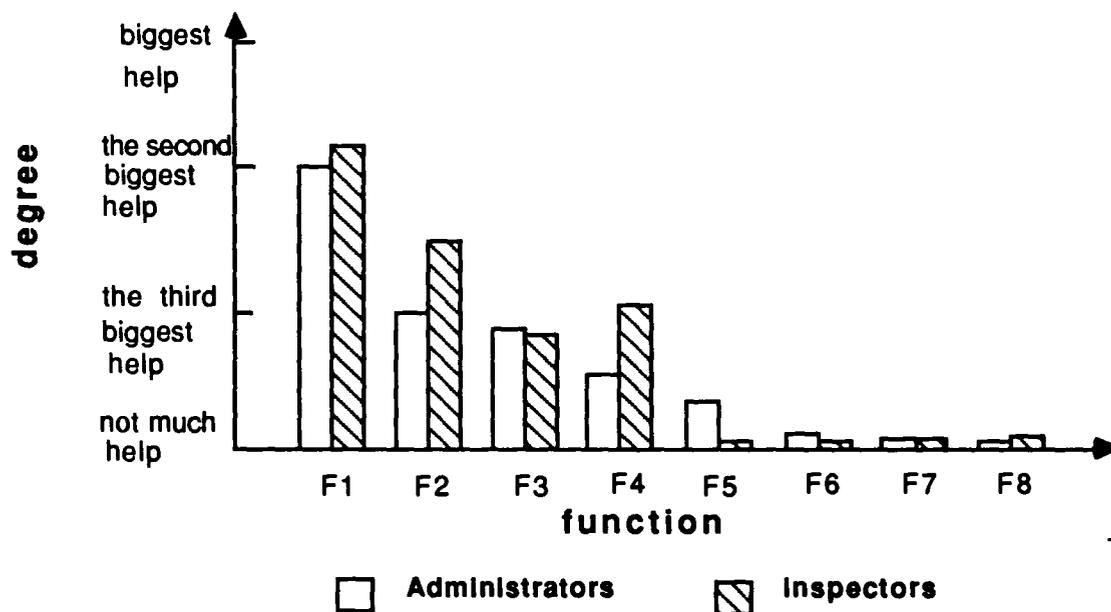
To analyse the whole table above, one can see that the function of providing information on the state of education in schools and on the administration in lower level education authorities occupied the dominant position. Two other functions: to advise on policy-making and to supervise policy implementation carried similar but less weight. The rest of the functions were relatively insignificant. The cases of acting as trouble-shooters or errand running for the authorities were seldom found in the answers of the administrators, which meant that the inspectors were really getting on with their own business, not others. It was also interesting to note that although the function of "advising on policy-making" was the second biggest help to the authorities, the function of "evaluating the soundness of the authorities' policy", which is supposed to be a critical part of advice on policy making, was only regarded by administrators as the fifth contribution. Furthermore, the function of "liaison between the employing education authority and schools (lower level education authorities)" was also not viewed as a main function and received an extremely low score.

The scores of each function were categorised according to the administrators' level (provincial, prefectural and county) to see whether the functions performed were related to the level of the inspectorate. As shown in Table 6.4, the provincial administrators offered higher scores to the inspectorate's function of providing information than did the county administrators, which indicated that the provincial inspectors did more on this function. In another case, more county administrators thought that the function of supervising policy implementation on behalf of the education authorities was a big help than did the provincial and prefectural administrators. In other words, the county level inspectors, being at the lowest level and in the forefront of the inspectorate network,

carried out much work on supervising the implementation of national and regional policies and decisions. However, despite the variations of score, the statistical analysis showed that the score of each function was not significantly related to the types of respondents. Therefore the inspectorates at all levels performed similar functions.

The same question appeared in the questionnaire for the inspectors in order to find out the degree of similarities between the evaluations of the administrators and those of the inspectors themselves. The inspectors' answers showed a similar distribution. See Table 6.5: The Functions of the Inspectorate to Its Employing Education Authority--Views of the Inspectors (presented at the same page with Table 6.4).

**Diagram 6.3: Comparison Between the Views of the Inspectors and Those of the Administrators**



A list of the functions can be found in Table 6.4.

Comparing these two sets of distributions, one can learn that, on the whole, both sides shared similar views about the functions of the

inspectorate. Almost every function was unanimously classified into the same scale by both sides, except for function No.4. But one phenomenon worth noticing is the very low scores of functions like: evaluating authorities' policy, and liaising between the employing education authority and schools (and lower level education authorities). This indicates that while concentrating on evaluating the standards of lower level institutions, inspectors seldom evaluated the soundness of their own authorities' policies. Meanwhile, while concentrating on ensuring conformity to national principles, statutory requirements and authorities' decisions, inspectors usually saw themselves as the representatives of the authorities instead of the liaison between their education authorities and those being administrated. So it is fair to say that the assistance to authorities' administration, from the perspective that Diagram6.2 shows, was primarily realised by monitoring, providing information on, and evaluating the state of education (the result of the implementation of policies) in the field, and rarely by reviewing and evaluating the soundness of the policy itself, which ought to be an important form of assistance to decision-making. The administrators' and inspectors' version of the functions of the inspectorate, shown in Table 6.4 and Table 6.5, is consistent with the findings in Diagram6.1 in which the inspectors claimed that they spent more than 'quite a lot of time' evaluating the overall work of schools and lower level education authorities. This, to a certain extent, verifies the truthfulness of their claims.

One might also be surprised by the low score of the "role of liaison". Under the circumstances of radical reform and the constant changing of the distribution of power between the different levels of education authorities, as well as between education authorities and schools, new

experience and new problems were bound to emerge. Therefore, the task of the inspectors was not only to collect information in the field to report to their authorities, but also to convey their authorities' messages to the lower level establishments in order to keep them well informed, as well as to disseminate good practice to assist their innovations. In comparing function 1 and function 7, one can conclude that in the two way communication, informing the employing education authorities was given a much higher priority than informing the schools and lower level education authorities.

These survey results were supported by the interview findings. Apart from devoting their efforts to the evaluation of educational as well as administrative standards, most of the inspectors limited their work to informing the education authorities about the state of education in the area, but they less often considered the possible professional advice and judgments they could offer to influence the policy-making. In a visit to a model inspectorate, the author found that among 82 articles they had written in four years, 27 were inspection reports and survey reports, 22 were reports of the general state of education, 8 were self-reviews of the inspectorate's work and suggestions to the authority, 25 were inspection plans and speech drafts for inspectors as well as for authority heads. Therefore, one can see that the majority of the material was on information presentation, and there were only 5%-10% of it specially intended for putting forward advice. The situation in other inspectorates varied. By examining the work reviews of several inspectorates, the author found that some inspectorates (e.g. Ninbo, JiangYin, Shanghai inspectorates) were more concerned with inspection and collecting information, but ignored the function of providing professional advice to a quite considerable degree, whilst some other inspectorates (e.g. Wuxi

inspectorate) were quite aware of the latter task, at least in their review reports.

Why was the score for the function of offering professional advice (1.048) far behind the score for the function of providing information on the state of education (2.048) (refer to Table 6.4)? Why was the function of offering professional advice to educational administration (including policy making and implementation process in education authorities) considered less important by some inspectorates? The following might be the reasons: Firstly, many inspectorates were recently set up, their priority was to complete their organisation as soon as possible and meanwhile to try their best to start some inspection work. Therefore, for them, the function of offering professional advice did not become an important agenda. Secondly, some education authorities had not yet got used to the existence of the inspectorate. They regarded the inspectorate as a source of information rather than a source of advice, so there was actually little demand for such assistance. If the education authority retained its old working style, (i.e., the administrative branches were still doing both implementation and evaluation), and the new inspectorate was just a result of going through the motions, then the need for advice from the inspectorate was even less. Thirdly, the overwhelming task of implementing the nine-year compulsory education and evaluating educational standards made the inspectors pay practically most of their attention to the schools and lower level education authorities. Thus the employing education authority side was less considered. Fourthly, it might be that the inspectors themselves did not realise the importance of this function to educational development in the long run, so it was less well performed.

In short, there were many possible reasons to which this problem could be attributed. Practical conditions, education authorities, inspectors themselves, or the combination of them could all be causes, depending on individual cases. Admittedly, there were some inspectorates which performed this function well, like the Wuxi Inspectorate mentioned above, because both the education authorities and the inspectorate attached much importance to it.

In brief, according to the similar opinions of both administrators and inspectors, the roles of the inspectorate with regard to the employing education authorities were primarily that of information collector, secondly, adviser of policy-making, and thirdly, supervisor of policy implementation on behalf of the employing education authorities. The function of acting as liaison between education authorities and those administered institutions (lower level education authorities and schools) was viewed as a lower priority, the evaluation of authorities' policy was seldom carried out by the inspectors.

#### **6.3.1.2 The Cooperation Mechanism Between the Inspectorate and Its Employing Education Authority**

The quality of cooperation between the inspectorate and its employing authority is mainly manifested in the ways by which they collaborate with each other, the frequency of their contact, the extent of involvement by both sides, and the administrative positions of those involved.

**The frequency of contact.** There were considerable variations in the frequency of contact between both sides, due to the different regulations

in different authorities, and also due to the imperfection of the inspectorate itself.

**Table 6.6 The Frequency of Contact Between Inspectors and Their Education Authorities (N=20)**

frequency position	daily	weekly/ fortnightly	monthly/ termly	not fixed
staff	1	4	3	2
branch head	0	2	3	3
authority head	0	1	1	0

The findings show wide variations in frequency of contact. Some administrators met inspectors on a daily basis while others met termly (there are two terms per academic year in China). A few of them did not have fixed meeting frequency.

**Whom they contact.** Again, the inspectors whom the administrators met varied from place to place. Some mostly met the head of the inspectorate, some met the inspectors concerned instead of meeting the head. For example, administrators in the primary education branch often discussed matters with the primary school inspectors. Some administrators claimed that they mainly communicated with the relevant inspectors, and invited their heads if necessary, while others told the reverse story. The general picture is illustrated in Table 6.7.

**Table 6.7. The Level of the Inspectors in Contact with Administrators (N=20)**

object position	only or mainly inspt. head	only or mainly inspectors concerned	always all
staff	3	6	1
branch head	6	2	0
authority head	1	0	1

It seems from this distribution that the heads of the administrative branches usually met the heads of the inspectorate and that ordinary branch staff were more likely to meet ordinary inspectors. But the results do indicate a variety of practice in different inspectorates.

It must be remembered that not all branches in the education authorities had the same frequency and extent of communication with the inspectorate. In the inspectors' opinion, those having most contact were: the **basic education branches** (including the primary education and secondary education branches); the **finance branch** (because most inspectorates did not have sufficient financial support from the authorities), and the **personnel branch** (one reason was to strive for more inspector quotas, the second reason was to recommend the promotion or demotion of school heads or staff in lower level authorities). Some inspectors mentioned the **Teaching Research Office** because they needed its help in full inspections and large scale aspect inspections.

It was quite understandable for the inspectorate to have more frequent contact with the primary and secondary education branches than with other branches (e.g., the teacher training branch) because of

the urgent task of implementing the law of compulsory education and the overwhelming evaluation work on educational standards in schools and in lower level education authorities.

It was also natural for a newly emerged inspectorate to have more contact with such branches as Finance and Personnel to resolve organisational and managerial matters. However, it was disappointing to know that the inspectorate did not have much cooperation with the Teaching Research Office except on the occasions of full inspections and large scale aspect inspections. Because of their administrative nature, the inspectors were already more inclined to the managerial side of school performance. If they had not had a close relationship with the TROs which were mainly concerned with professional matters in schools, how could the inspectors have monitored the overall state of education and present an all-round picture to the education authorities to enable decision-making? In view of the importance of this issue, more detailed examination of the relationship between the two bodies is carried out later in this chapter.

**How They Contact.** An important aspect of the quality of cooperation is the ways in which it was conducted. Again, the administrators and inspectors reached identical conclusions. Both groups claimed that they met each other because of **taking part in the same inspections.** The second most usual way was on a **general staff meeting** of the education authority. Next came a **meeting specially held** by the inspectorate or by the other branches concerned in which both sides invited each other to take part. But memoranda and circulars were seldom used by either side.

Having obtained information on the frequency, extent, and form of communication, one can argue that both sides formally communicated with each other at certain intervals, and the occasions of the meetings were joint inspections or the authority's general meetings which in the Chinese context, are often what is referred to as "political mobilisation", or are sometimes work reviews. There was, however, little communication about serious business between the inspectorate and relevant branches in the education authority. For example, when a primary education branch was making its plans for the next term, it was unlikely for this branch to seek advice from the inspectorate. When administrators were asked "Do you ask for the help of the inspectorate?", 40% answered seldom or never, 32% answered sometimes, and only 27% answered often. As to communication with authority heads, it was done through two channels. One was to invite the heads to attend the inspectorate's meetings, the other was through the authority's board meetings, which were attended by authority heads and all branch heads, including the head of the inspectorate. In some places, the authority head concurrently held the post of inspectorate chief so that communication could be quicker and more direct.

### 6.3.1.3 The Influence of the Inspectorate on the Work of the Education Authorities

It goes without saying that one of the crucial criteria by which to judge the work of the inspectorate is its influence on the work of the education authorities, both on decision-making and on implementation process. In order to find out the weight of the inspectorate, administrators were asked to answer the question: "Does the inspectorate have influence on your authority's or your branch's decision-making?" The inspectors were also requested to evaluate their influence. The results of the statistical analysis ( $\chi^2$  test) showed that the views of the administrators differed from those of the inspectors.

**Table 6.8: The Inspectors' and Administrators' Views About the Influence of the Inspectorate on the Work of the Education Authorities (Ni=62,Na=22, N=84) i=inspector a= administrator**

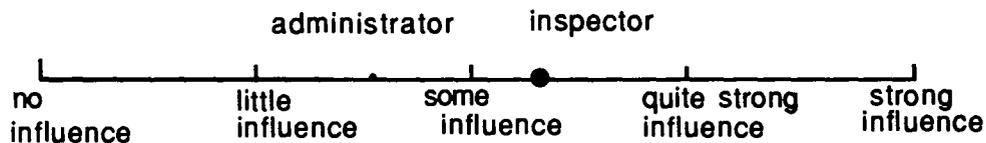
degree sample	no influence	a little influence	some influence	quite strong	strong influence	$n_r$
inspector	2 3.2%	4 6.5%	45 72.6%	11 17.7%	0 0%	62
adminis	3 13.6%	6 27.3%	11 50.0%	2 9.1%	0 0%	22
$n_c$	5	10	56	13	0	N = 84

$\chi^2 = 10.9$ ,  $df=4$ , when  $P=0.05$ ,  $\chi^2$  is significant.

The  $\chi^2$  score shows that the evaluation of the inspectorate's influence was significantly related to the type of respondent. In other words, inspectors and administrators did not share the same view on the influence of the inspectorate despite the similar conclusions they

reached in the previous questions. This time, it was the inspectors who estimated a higher influence than their administrator colleagues.

**Diagram 6.4. The Degree of Influence Estimated by the Inspectors and by the Administrators**



It was surprising but also interesting to learn that the influence estimated by the inspectors was **higher** than the one estimated by the administrators, as modesty is a very important virtue in the Chinese culture. One possible cause might have something to do with the administrator samples. Among 10 people who thought that the influence of the inspectorate was none or little, 4 were ordinary staff of the branches. As there was not as much cooperation and communication at ordinary staff level as at the branch heads level, these respondents may have underestimated the influence of the inspectorate. But more probably, it was because the inspectors thought that they had a considerable contribution to the education authority while the administrators expected them to do more. As the expectations of the administrators showed, (see Table 6.17 and section 6.4), the function of providing professional advice was not performed very well by the inspectors, thus the influence on the education authority was not strong.

Why did the inspectorate not have much influence on the whole authority as well as other administrative branches? The answers discovered in the interviews can probably explain this phenomenon.

Firstly, it was largely related to the current "junior" position of the inspectorate in the authority. In most of the authorities, the inspectorates were only recently set up and the shortage of personnel was very serious indeed in many inspectorates, including those recognised as good ones. In some extreme cases, only two part-time retired school heads were available to inspect 8 counties, not to mention the schools. In circumstances like these, the first priority of the inspectorate was to struggle for a larger quota of inspectors, and more funds to support the inspectorial activities, and at the same time to try to do some inspection and evaluation work. Compared with those well established administrative branches, the inspectorate was really in a "junior" position. Many functions could not be carried out. Naturally the influence on the education authority could not be significant at this stage.

Secondly, even in those education authorities where the inspectorates were relatively well established, many authority and branch heads still had not yet realised the functions of feedback and advice, besides the function of inspection which the inspectorate had. In an interview, a branch chief told the author about his view of the inspectorate "It is just a branch, like us, they do their work, and we do ours. So it is difficult to comment on their work". So although they met each other when they inspected schools together, or at a general meeting of the authority, or even at the authority's board meeting, they usually did not exchange information deliberately. Perhaps the inspectorate provided some sort of information by circulating inspection reports which the administrators read, but they did not yet regard the inspectorate as a source of advice. Having been accustomed to the old ways of administration, they thought of the inspectorate as another ordinary branch which carried out

inspection work, and nothing more. Therefore, when 22 administrators were asked "Does the inspectorate have an effect on your authority's or branch's decision making?", 40% answered "a little" or "none", 50% answered "some", only 9.1% answered "quite strong".

The third possible reason was the lack of proper purposive communication between the inspectorate and the rest of the authority. Sometimes, both sides were unaware of what the other was doing. In some authorities, the head of the inspectorate was the only person who was in regular contact with the authority, by attending the authority's board meeting once a month. Other inspectors did not have a full part to play in offering advice. In some other authorities, the inspectorate was considered so insignificant that some big decisions were made by the authority heads and heads of large branches like the basic education branch and finance branch without much consultation with the inspectorate. Even in those better inspectorates, communication with the rest of the authority was still not a network in which both the inspectorate and the rest of the authority kept each other well informed, nor a network in which all inspectors had a full part to play in contributing professional advice.

The final factor which accounted for why the inspectorate did not have much influence on the decision-making of the education authority was associated with the understanding of the inspectors themselves. Some inspectors paid much more attention to their functions in relation to the schools and junior education authorities than to their own authorities (the functions in relation to schools and lower level education authorities are discussed in section 6.3.2). In other words, they regarded their work mainly as evaluators of the standards in

schools and gave scores to each school they inspected. Some of the inspectors interviewed by the author talked on and on about the recent inspections they had conducted, but seldom mentioned (even when requested by the author) how they interpreted these inspection results in terms of the general state of education in the area, how they identified issues from all the information they collected through inspections and visits, and further, how they offered effective suggestions towards the authority's policy based on these processed inspection results.

#### **6.3.1.4 The Inspectorate and the Teaching Research Office**

In China, the curriculum is unified nationally, though the recent reforms have brought about some freedom in selecting suitable curricula and textbooks among several choices. The **Teaching Research Offices**, a nationwide network of professional groups, corresponding to each level of local education authorities, is the agency responsible for ensuring conformity to the national curricula. Unlike the inspectorate, **the TRO is professional in nature**, though both it and the inspectorate are working in the same education authority. From the education authority's point of view, as introduced in the last chapter, every education authority is virtually divided into two parts: administrative branches and professional units. Usually the professional units are hierarchically under the education authority but do not work in the same building. They prefer to place their offices inside Teacher Centres, or Institutes of Education in order to be closer to the professional community.

Every TRO is divided into several sub-groups in accordance with

specialised subjects, even at the primary school level. Higher level TROs are mainly concerned with research on curricula and textbooks and with compiling teaching reference books. Lower level TROs (county and city district level) usually carry out the executive work -- to go to schools to observe lessons and give advice, to organise inspection of curricula and teaching, to gather teachers to discuss teaching programmes and methods, to give lectures on INSET courses, to organise teachers to exchange experiences, and so on. Thus, one can see that the TRO occupies a somewhat similar position to the inspectorate: feedback, monitoring, evaluation, and advice. The difference lies in the content of the feeding back, monitoring, evaluation, and advice. In addition, with regard to the schools and their junior education authorities, the inspectors have administrative power whilst the TRO members only have the right to advise. That is to say, the inspectors, backed by their administrative power, have the right to give requirements which the schools or the lower education authorities must take seriously whilst the suggestions put forward by the TRO members can be turned down by the schools.

It was clear from the beginning that the inspectorate would not become a body mainly concerned with professional matters in schools and lower level education authorities which are already dealt with by the TROs, but would have different duties. Therefore, it became very much orientated to the managerial and political side of schooling. This administrative orientation was manifested particularly in its routine visits to schools and lower level education authorities. In full inspections and large scale aspect inspections, the inspectors would have to ask for help from their TRO colleagues as the full inspections were supposed to cover every aspect of school performance including curriculum matters.

It seemed, according to the interview findings and questionnaire results, that this was almost the only occasion on which both inspectors and TRO members met together and cooperated.

Is this enough? Having the duty of helping the implementation of the nine-year universal education, the inspectorate ought to have a part to play in maintaining and promoting the quality of the nine-year education. Moreover, the inspectorate has the duty to evaluate the **overall** standards of schooling, not only management and moral education. These duties will have to be fulfilled, either by the inspectorate itself, which seems impossible, or by the joint effort of the inspectorate and the TRO. Therefore, the existing degree of cooperation is far from sufficient. Concrete suggestions for doing this are put forward in Chapter Eight.

#### **6.3.1.5 Summary**

To recapitulate the evaluations by the administrators, one can state that, according to the survey results, the role of the Chinese inspectorate with regard to its employing education authority was very much as an information provider which informed the education authority about the state of education by means of circulating inspection reports and routine communication. Then, to a lower degree compared with the first role, the inspectorate was also an adviser to the authority's decision-making. This role was usually played in a limited way through the participation of inspectorate heads in the regular education authority's board meetings. To a similar extent as the role of adviser, the inspectorate was a supervisor of policy implementation (both national and regional

policies). This was undertaken by inspecting and evaluating standards in schools and lower level educational authorities on behalf of the employing education authority.

The communication between the inspectorate and the rest of the authority was realised mainly by (apart from the inspectorate heads' attendance at board meetings) the joint inspections undertaken by both sides.

Despite the fact that administrators and inspectors had a very similar evaluation of the inspectorate's functions, they had different assessments of the influence of the inspectorate on the work of the employing education authority. The administrators' evaluation was in between "little influence" and "some influence", which was considerably lower than the estimation of the inspectors. The lower score might be attributed to the unestablished position of many inspectorates, the lack of awareness by the employing education authority of the advisory function of the inspectorate, the inadequately purposive communication between the two bodies, and the partial perception of the inspectors of their roles and thus the undue emphasis on evaluation of lower level authorities and schools.

### **6.3.2 School Heads' Evaluations**

#### **6.3.2.1 The Functions of the Inspectorate with Regard to Schools and Lower Level Education Authorities**

Undoubtedly, the quality of the inspectorate is very much reflected in

its work in schools and lower level education authorities since they are the objects of the inspectorate's inspections, monitoring and evaluations. Therefore, a discussion of the functions of the inspectorate needs to consider this side as well.

The functions of the inspectorate with regard to schools and lower level educational authorities were: firstly, evaluating the work in schools and lower level education authorities, and secondly supervising policy implementation. These were the conclusions drawn from the answers of the questionnaire to school heads. The school heads were given 8 choices which described the possible functions of the inspectorate. The score that each function got is shown in Table 6.9, which can be compared with the administrators' answers in Table 6.4. Interestingly, the distribution of the views of the inspectors coincided with that of the school heads (see table 6.10), as it did in the case of the administrators' evaluations. The equation, on the basis of which the scores of each function were calculated, was the same as equation (6.2).

**Table 6.9, 6.10: The Functions of the Inspectorate With Regard to Schools: – Views of the School Heads and Inspectors**

**School Heads' View**

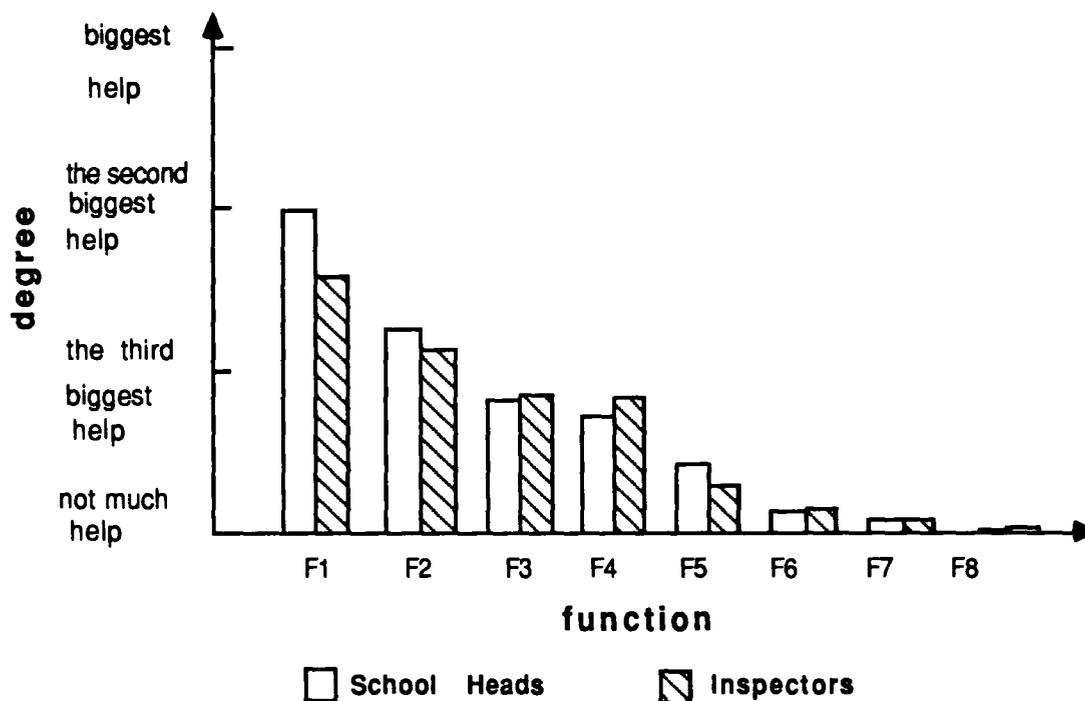
<b>Scores</b> <b>Functions</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Place</b>
1. to evaluate school work	2.000	1st
2. to supervise policy implementation	1.214	2nd
3. to collect comments from schools	0.786	3rd
4. to be a professional adviser to schools	0.750	4th
5. to explain and convey LEA policy	0.451	5th
6. to disseminate good practice	0.193	6th
7. to provide liaison between LEAs and schools	0.097	7th
8. to be a trouble - shooter	0.000	8th

**Inspectors' View**

<b>Score</b>	<b>Place</b>
1.579	1st
1.066	2nd
0.803	3rd
0.789	4th
0.329	5th
0.197	6th
0.092	7th
0.026	8th

Diagram 6.5 shows these two sets of distributions.

**Diagram 6.5 Comparison Between the Inspectors' and the School Heads' Views**



A list of the functions can be found in Table 6.9.

It was very understandable that the main function of the inspectorate was the supervision of national and regional policy implementation by means of inspecting and evaluating school work, because this was the purpose of setting up the inspectorate in China. The annual plans of those inspectorates surveyed all verified this point -- inspection always occupied the first priority in the plans. In some plans, even the number of proposed inspections was stated. In addition to the inspection, a vast amount of the inspectorate's time and manpower was devoted to setting up the criteria for evaluating the educational quality in schools and in individual local areas, which took into account the national mandatory requirements, the higher level education authorities' regulations, the employing education authorities' policy as well as the practical

situations in the locality concerned.

However, the advisory function of the inspectorate was much less recognised by the school heads. It only stood 4th on the function list, which implies that the inspectorate paid much more attention to the function of inspection than to that of advice. To the author's knowledge, advice to schools and lower level education authorities was done mainly through routine visits and inspection reports. Other methods of giving advice and help had not yet been further developed.

What was more surprising was the extremely low image of the inspectorate as a liaison between schools and education authorities, which coincided with the views of the administrators. The fact that both its partners did not recognise it as their liaisons suggested that, either the inspectorate lacked sufficient communication with the authorities and with the schools, were therefore unable to pass on or explain their messages to each other, or the inspectorate did not perform this function at all. But according to Table 6.9, the function of "collecting comments from schools" got higher scores than did the function of "conveying national and authorities' policy". In addition, the administrators also admitted that "to provide information on the state of education" was the biggest help they received from the inspectorate. Therefore, one might possibly infer that the inspectors conveyed more from the schools to their employing authorities than the other way round, because they were more aware of their task of providing information to their employing education authorities.

Finally, the school heads offered very low scores to the function of "disseminating good practice", perhaps because the inspectors paid

most of their attention to evaluations and inspections and relatively ignored other functions. But in reality, there was a growing need for the inspectorate to perform advisory functions. The "Head Teacher in Charge" system (discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Five) which was designed to broaden the freedom of individual schools had been gradually brought into practice, new experience and new problems were bound to emerge in all schools. Schools were in urgent need of help from someone who was expert at schooling or someone who could disseminate the good practices of other schools. The inspectors, who contacted schools frequently, could be the people to play that role. With the further development of the "Head Teacher in Charge" system, the need for liaison not only between schools themselves, but between schools and authorities would inevitably increase. The nature of their work determined that the inspectors were the best candidates for this job.

### **6.3.2.2 The Work of the Inspectorate in Schools**

The work of the inspectorate on the school side is mainly reflected in what the inspectorate inspects, how it inspects, and further, why it is so.

**The frequency of School Inspections and Visits.** The frequency of school inspections and routine visits was very much determined by the inspector to school ratio in any particular area as well as the degree of priority that inspections and visits were given by that particular inspectorate, which again had wide regional variations. The frequency of **each school being visited** varied from monthly to longer than annually. On the average, it was **once every nine months** according to

the survey. In addition, most of the school heads claimed that the visits usually lasted for **half a day or one day**.

The frequencies of the **aspect inspections and full inspections** were understandably lower than that of the routine visits. The majority of the school heads said that their schools were inspected annually, once every two years, or even longer. So on the average, it was **once every year and half**. But inspections in China could last one week, one fortnight, or only one day. The survey showed that the **average inspection duration was 2-3 days**. Here is the summary.

**Table 6.11: The Frequency and Duration of School Inspections and Visits**

Type	frequency	duration
inspection	1: 1.5 year	2-3 days
visit	1: 0.75 year	0.5-1 day

The same question took a different form when it was presented to the inspectors. It was: "How many days do you spend in schools or lower level education authorities every week?". The average time answered was about 2 days. (there are 6 working days a week in China).

**Table 6.12 Number of Days That Inspectors Spend in Schools or Lower Level Education Authorities (N=51)**

No. of days	<1 day	1-2days	3days	4days	5-6days
No. of answer	5	23	11	5	7

From the school's point of view, they preferred being visited to being inspected. In other words, they believed that inspections were carried out more often than they should be whilst in routine visits it was the other way round, which in a way confirmed that the major task of the inspectorate was the evaluation and inspection of schools' performance (see Table 6.9 and 6.10).

**The Main Concerns of the Inspection Teams.** According to the recollections of some school heads, the full inspection team (for schools) was, on average, composed of **10 members** who were **the Chief of the education authority, inspectors, administrators, and retired school heads**, unlike the inspections of lower level local government and educational authorities, in which case the inspection team would normally be larger and composed of more administrators and fewer school heads.

Although full inspection covered almost every aspect of school work, different aspects enjoyed different priorities. As shown by the results of the survey, the aspects on which inspectors centred were: (1): school organisation, e.g. planning, quality of the leadership team, schooling orientation; (2): implementation of national and authorities' policy; and (3): political education, which has recently been renamed "moral

education".

Other aspects were of less concern to the inspectors. According to the survey, the curricula and teaching-learning side of the school work got low scores. Activities like staffing and INSET, curricula and teaching-learning, examinations and records were all very much surpassed by managerial-orientated work. This strong imbalance of priorities was due to several factors. Firstly, it had been a characteristic of socialist countries, at least of China, to stress the socialist direction of schooling. The fundamental aim of education was to produce politically socialist-minded as well as intellectually educated citizens. This spirit ran through all aspects of school work and was especially manifested in school management and political education. Secondly, as repeatedly mentioned in the previous sections, in China the curriculum subjects were unified everywhere in the country (though it has recently started changing), and conformity with the national curriculum was ensured by the Teaching Research Offices at every level of education authorities. As there was another separate system for overseeing this aspect of educational standards, the inspectorate accordingly focused on the managerial side. Added to this was the fact that the inspectors were appointed among administrators and former school heads, based on their political background and management competency, though in quite a number of cases teaching experience was also considered during appointment, but the subject coverage of the inspectorate as a whole was clearly not taken into account. Therefore, the evaluation of teaching and learning was mainly the task of the Teaching Research Office members who were invited to take part in the inspections. Though evaluation of teaching and learning would take place during the whole inspection, its result did not occupy a major part in the inspection report. Even in the

curriculum section of the report, more would be said about the management of teaching instead of the quality of pupil learning itself.

Another important cause for the emphasis on schools' organisation was that serious practical problems existed more in management matters than in curriculum matters. Although the curricula had their own shortcomings and need of improvement in the overwhelming reform process, "hot points" existed in educational administration and in school management. Things like "diploma disease", financial delegation, and the relationship between academic study and the labour market all had close links with administration. Therefore, inspectors were more concerned with school planning, management, political education and the proceeding of policy implementation than with curriculum matters.

The inspection of lower level governments and education authorities is discussed in the "forms of inspection" later in this chapter.

**Inspectors' Main Concerns During Routine Visits.** The inspectors' main concerns **during inspections** were school organisation, implementation of national and regional policies, and political education, as uncovered in the last section. As to the inspectors' main concerns **during school visits**, the author found similar answers. This time, it was the inspectors who were asked the question.

Given 9 choices describing the aspects of school work, the inspectors were requested to tick three and number the chosen answers in order of degree of concerns (i.e., the first concern, the second concern, and the third concern). The results are shown in Table 6.13.

**Table 6.13 The Main Concerns of the Inspectors During Routine Visits (N=31)**

aspects concerned	first concern	second concern	third concern	total
proceeding of policy implementation	11	3	1	15
school administration and organisation	7	10	5	22
staffing and INSET	1	1	1	3
school resources	2	2	1	5
curriculum and teaching	1	2	2	5
examination and records	1	1	1	3
schools' comments on LEA policies	0	1	2	3
pastoral care and dropout	3	2	1	6
moral education	5	4	7	16

N.B. Not all the respondents have ticked three choices. Some have ticked one, some have ticked two.

The results in the table clearly show us that school organisation and administration, proceeding of policy implementation, and moral education are main concerns of the inspectors even during routine visits. These results, therefore, are consistent with the school heads' claims in the last section.

**Communication Between the Inspectorate and the Schools.** It was self-evident that the most basic way for both sides to meet was through the inspectors' routine visits and inspections. But did the inspectorate

employ other methods to fulfil its functions in schools?

First, did the schools themselves initiate additional contact with the inspectors? The answer was: 40.7% of school heads did not ask or seldom asked for the help of inspectors; 55.6% said that sometimes they did, and another 3.7% ticked often. On the whole, the great majority of the schools did not often ask for help. Then, did the inspectors create extra contact with schools, apart from visits and inspections? The answers are shown in Table 6.14.

**Table 6.14 The Ways of Contact Between School Heads and Inspectors Apart From Inspections and Visits (N=30)**

ways answers	inspectors holding meetings of school heads	visiting other schools with inspectors	attending LEAs' meetings and meeting inspectors
do not use this way	86.7%	86.7%	30.0%
do use this way	13.3%	13.3%	70.0%

From the responses of both sides, one can see clearly that apart from inspections and visits, there was almost no direct communication. Even on the occasions in which the school heads met the inspectors when they attended education authorities' meetings together, the possibility of the purposive exchange of information may be questioned.

Leaving aside communication in person, indirect communication was also scarce in most places. The central inspectorate issued regular publications on inspection matters to be distributed to lower level

governments and education authorities but not to schools because those publications were mainly concerned with inspecting education authorities instead of schools. But other levels of the inspectorates (provincial, prefectural and county inspectorates) usually had not yet developed a good system of communication with schools apart from inspections and visits.

Therefore, it is fair to say that schools and the inspectorate did not have much direct contact between them, and the chances of communication were limited. Although the author did not especially explore the reason in interviews, one can still possibly explain it by the answers to other questions. The inspectors viewed themselves firstly as supervisors of policy implementation by means of inspection (see Table 6.10). The role of being an adviser was relatively less important, so that they naturally focused on inspections which was the ideal form of supervision.

This view was shared by the school heads. They viewed the inspectors as evaluators of schooling standards rather than as sources for obtaining advice, therefore they did not bother to contact the inspectors.

### **6.3.2.3 The Influence of the Inspectorate on Schools**

The influence of the inspectorate on schools was acknowledged by the school heads. To answer the question "To what extent, does the inspectorate influence your school's work?", most of the heads thought the inspectorate did have an effect on their work.

**Table 6.15: The School Heads' Views of the Inspectorate's Influence (N=27)**

degree of influence	no influence	a little influence	some influence	quite strong	strong influence
No.	3	2	12	6	4
%	11.1	7.4	44.5	22.2	14.8

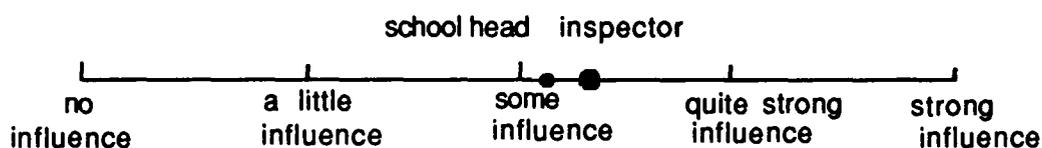
From the above table, one can see that only 18.5% of the schools felt that there was "none or little influence", 44.4% felt "some", and 37% admitted "quite strong" or "strong influence" by the inspectorate. The inspectors shared this view in the following table.

**Table 6.16 The Inspectors' Evaluation of Their Influence on Schools (N=64)**

degree of influence	no influence	a little influence	some influence	quite strong	strong influence
No.	1	3	34	25	1
%	1.6	4.7	53.1	39.1	1.6

Both inspectors and school heads had similar evaluations. Their average scores fell into the same scale (see Diagram 6.6).

**Diagram 6.6 The Comparison of Inspectors' and School Heads' Views**



Why does the inspectorate have **more than "some influence"** on the work in schools, but only had more than "a little influence" on the work of their employing education authorities, as estimated by the administrators (see Diagram 6.4)? This was probably due to the administrative status of the inspectors. Because the inspections were carried out by the education authorities which had full jurisdiction over them, schools always had to pay full attention to receiving inspection teams. This is especially true in China where power centralisation has lasted for thousands of years. Therefore, the comments that came after inspections were usually taken seriously by the schools. Sometimes schools were required to submit plans for improvement after being inspected and to accept reinspection. With regard to the actual effect of the inspection, school heads had different views. One of the heads interviewed described the inspection they had had as very enlightening and very practical. But another head, who happened to be in the same district, felt that the two day inspection that his school just had was very cursory and superficial. "It was just like one of the nine "mothers-in-law" that I have received within these two weeks (the term "mother-in-law" in China refers to those powerful superiors who control your fate, always like to give orders and cannot be displeased). It did not have real meaning for the improvement of schools", he said, " If we had had a smaller number of inspectors and a longer duration (for inspection) and they went deeper into real school life, the effect would have been much better."

In the questionnaire, the question of "What do you think of the inspection you recently had?" was designed to reveal the heads' attitudes towards inspections. The majority of the heads admitted that the inspections did "reflect the reality of the school", but only 13.3% felt they gave clear directions for improvement. In short, because of the administrative status of the inspectorate, schools had to take inspections seriously. Also, inspection as a form of evaluation, would always have some function as a mirror, i.e., to reflect the strengths as well as the weaknesses of a school, especially when it was examined by outsiders. From this perspective, inspections were welcomed by the schools provided the inspections themselves were fair and realistic. But inspection was not only an inspection for its own sake. Rather, it was a means of getting work improved. It was the duty of the inspectorate to put forward constructive and practical suggestions for improvement of the weaknesses. This, according to the answers to the questionnaire, was the weak point of the inspectorate. Having read some reports produced by various inspectorates across the country, the author felt that the central inspectorate's reports were good examples of combining inspection and advice. Apart from evaluation results and requirements for improvement, the reports included a section "matters for discussion" where the issues in reality were identified, explored and discussed, and inspectors' practical and achievable suggestions were proposed. But the reports of local inspectorates were less inspiring in this respect.

Another cause for inspectorate's belief that they had more than "some influence" on the work of the schools was the fact that results linked with rewards. In some authorities, the results of an inspection were treated as one of the criteria for deciding awards at the end of the academic year. For example, whether a school could be assessed as an

"advanced school" would probably be affected by the inspection score it got. On top of that, some inspectorates were entitled to recommend to the education authorities the promotion or demotion of the school head, or even to praise or criticise heads' work. (a special section for praising some administrators for their outstanding work appeared in almost every inspection report of the central inspectorate the author has read). In a report submitted by Wuxi educational inspectorate, for instance, it was suggested that the authorities should provide more funds and better qualified teachers to a quite successful school to further enhance its achievement. But it must be pointed out that not all the inspectorates had this right of recommendation, nor was an inspection score necessarily always linked with rewards. In many places, unfortunately, inspectors' suggestions failed to obtain the expected response from the relevant authorities. So that the authority of the inspectorate dropped in the eyes of the schools. One school head in Shanghai complained to the author: "What is the point of having an inspectorate? We once had a formal inspection from Shanghai educational inspectorate (which has a provincial rank). After the inspection, it decided that because of our excellent achievement in mathematics, our students could be exempted from the university entrance examination on this subject. We were very pleased at first, but we were told later that we still had to sit the examination because the Shanghai Examination Board did not recognise the inspectorate's decision." One can argue that it is not necessary that all the recommendations made by the inspectorate should be accepted by the relevant authorities. But the actual problem in this case was that freeing the school from the maths examination was the inspectorate's decision, not its recommendation. In other words, when the inspectorate made this decision, it felt that it had the right to decide this matter. Unfortunately, the Examination Board dismissed the

inspectorate's right. Therefore, the confusion and disappointment resulting from the ambiguous relationship between the rights and responsibilities of the inspectorate and other authorities led to a decrease in the inspectorate's authority in the eyes of the schools.

#### **6.3.2.4 Summary**

To summarise the evaluations by the school heads, one can see, from the analyses of the questionnaire responses and interview records, that the functions of the inspectorate with regard to schools were mainly those of evaluating educational standards, and supervising policy implementation. These judgments were shared by the inspectors themselves. The frequency of school visits and inspections varied from place to place, as did the duration. But the aspects that were common to most inspectorates were the aspects that the inspectors were particularly concerned with, notably: school organisation, policy implementation and moral education. Curriculum matters were paid relatively less attention because of the existence of the Teaching Research Office network. Both the inspectorate and the schools recognised the influence of the inspectorate, either because of the administrative status it enjoyed, or the weight of the inspection results in deciding the annual award, or both. Admittedly, some inspections and visits were really enlightening and helpful, and thus, had impact on the work of the schools. Finally, good inspections were welcomed by school heads because they gave a realistic reflection of the schools' performance as well as a clear and practical direction for improvement. Unfortunately, many inspectorates had accomplished the former task but the latter one needed much more effort.

### **6.3.3 Forms of Inspection**

The work of the Chinese inspectorate seems to be dominated by inspecting and evaluating the policy implementation and the educational performance in local areas and individual schools, with special emphasis on the basic education sector. With kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, secondary vocational schools and secondary teacher training schools as its scope of inspection, the inspectorate has concentrated itself basically on primary and secondary schools, and occasionally vocational schools, due to the shortage of inspectors as well as the serious problems in the basic education sector.

Though inspection is a predominant function of the inspectorate, the forms of inspection are quite limited, according to the results of the interviews, on-the-spot observations and literature review. At the time of the field work, full inspection, aspect inspection and routine visit were the three main means by which the inspectorate carried out inspections and evaluations. Other methods such as short inspection and survey were not employed.

A very important feature of the Chinese inspection system is its dual objects, i.e., both education authorities and individual schools are subject to inspection. In fact, for those higher level inspectorates (central and provincial), lower level local governments and education authorities, not schools, are their main targets, because it is the local governments and their educational departments that recently assume great responsibility and freedom to make basic education universal. There are many fundamental and macroscopic policies at governmental level (not school level) that have to be properly implemented, and the

state of educational provision has to be closely monitored and maintained. Schools in China, however, are more or less still under the detailed leadership of the education authorities, despite that the "Head Teacher in Charge" system has brought some gradual changes. Therefore, schools are relatively powerless compared with education authorities. In other words, local people's governments and their education authorities are the real decision-makers. Naturally, they become the focus of inspection.

Another interesting characteristic about the Chinese inspections, especially full inspections, is that the inspection team, instead of consisting of purely inspectors, is a mixture of inspectors, administrators from various branches in the education authority, members of the Teaching Research Office, and sometimes retired school heads. One inspector usually plays the role of an organiser and coordinator. For instance, in an report of inspection organised by a district inspectorate, it was mentioned that the members of the inspection team came from the district education authority, the Teaching Research Office, the moral education office, the audio-video aid centre, the Party Committee, the Youth League Committee, and the Children's Palace organisation, in all about 30 people. If the inspection is carried out by central or provincial inspectorates, the inspection team will contain more administrators with different specialities in administration. The main reason given for the participation of the non-inspectors is the shortage of inspectors, and consequently the incapacity of covering all aspects that needed inspecting. Another reason might probably be related to the assumption that the more people (especially officials), the greater the momentum, and accordingly, the higher the authority.

### **6.3.3.1 Full Inspections**

The definition of full inspection is almost identical to that in many other foreign systems. It indicates the overall coverage of the aspects that are being looked into, and probably the large number of people involved, and relatively long duration of inspections. It must be noticed that the objects of inspection in the Chinese system are both local government and their education authorities, and individual schools.

**Inspection of Local Governments and Education Authorities.** The inspections of local governments and their education authorities, or as the Chinese called it, macro-inspection, are organised by the prefectural inspectorate, provincial inspectorate or central inspectorate. The composition of the inspection team was mentioned earlier but the number of team members vary according to the size of the local government to be inspected and the importance attached to the inspection. The inspections usually last from one week to ten days.

Before the inspection, the local government will usually get at least one month's notice. Informed by the higher level inspectorate, local government (i.e., all its relevant departments like the finance department, staffing department, and of course the education authority) have to carry out a review in advance of the inspection.

When the inspection team arrives, the first thing to be done is reporting. The chief of the local government and the heads of the relevant departments give general reports on the educational provision in the area, and the efforts made by the government, which gives the inspectorate a basic picture of the situation.

To go one step further, a series of meetings with relevant departments are then held to explore more extensively the education service in the area. Meanwhile, a huge number of documents are examined.

The third step is to sample one or two sub-local areas (e.g., a county in a prefecture, or a prefecture in a province depending on the level of the inspected government) to actually see the educational service on the ground. After the repetition of the above mentioned procedures at sub-local government level, (but on a small scale), the inspection of several sampled schools will be carried out.

After thorough discussions among the inspectors, provisional conclusions are reached. On the last day of the inspection, the inspectorate chief reports to the government head and seeks feedback.

The evaluation criteria are closely related to the current climate of educational development. At the time of the survey, they were: the linkage between educational planning and the local economic needs; feasibility of the plans for realising compulsory education in the light of local conditions; staffing of the schools; basic schooling resources (like building, equipment) and schooling direction, progress in decentralising administration, and last but by no means least, educational funding, i.e., it had to fulfil the requirement of the state: the expenditure on education must be increased at a higher rate than the increase of the revenue, and the expenses per pupil should also increase progressively.

Some of the criteria are quite specific, such as educational funding

and school building standards, but others are rather general and usually within the jurisdiction of the local government. (such as educational planning). In the latter case, the inspectorates cannot enforce their ideas. They can only offer comments and suggestions which the local government usually takes seriously.

In the inspection report, there are certain specific requirements most likely to appear which required fulfilment within one or two months. The following are some examples of such requirements in a central inspectorate report: (1): 2000 m<sup>2</sup> of dangerous buildings must be eliminated immediately, (2), the problem of 9000 pupils having to bring stools to go to school must be solved quickly, (3): the practice of charging pupils for a share of the capital construction fee for the school must be stopped immediately.

To ensure that the requirements made by the inspectorate are satisfactorily met within the time limit, two methods are usually employed: either to ask the inspected government to submit an improvement report, or to send some inspectors back to check on the spot (reinspection).

**Inspection of Schools.** Most schools are inspected by the lowest tier of the inspectorates --- district inspectorates in urban areas and county inspectorates in rural areas, as they are directly run by district or county education authorities. A few key schools are directly run by, and thus inspected by the prefectural or even provincial education authorities.

During an inspection of school, a meeting between inspectors and

school heads is always the first item on the agenda. An overall review of the school is presented by the head, the purpose of the inspection explained by the reporting inspector, and the arrangements made. A full inspection team is usually composed of the chief of the education authority, members of relevant administrative branches, inspectors, and members from the Teaching Research Office.

Then the whole inspection team will be split into several sub-groups, each responsible for one particular aspect of the overall quality of the school. After examining relevant school documents, reports, plans and pupils' work, those sub-groups go separately to search for relevant evidence. Some meet staff and students, some go to classrooms to evaluate teaching and learning. As a final stage, exchanges of opinions between both sides and writing up will take place.

The score that a school can get usually depends on its performance in the following 8 aspects: (1). schooling direction, i.e., the direction of educating socialist citizen, of helping students preparing for the labour market as well as for higher education; (2). moral education; (3). quality of the leadership team; (4). staffing; (5), teaching and learning; (6). health and hygiene education; (7). pastoral care and supporting service; and (8). school conditions and resources.

It seems, according to numerous inspection reports and the author's own observation of two inspections, that curriculum matters occupy some but by no means the dominant position in the inspections, even though they are school inspections. Political matters and management matters are at least as important as professional matters.

### **6.3.3.2 Aspect Inspections**

This form of inspection is aimed at particular aspect(s) of school performance or education authorities' administration instead of examining the overall standards in the schools (or education authorities). As the Chinese understand it, it is a very concentrated and economic means suitable for ensuring the completion of certain contemporary tasks which are important or urgent in a particular period of time (e.g., to eliminate dangerous school buildings). But in China, a reduction in the aspects to be inspected does not necessarily lead to a reduction of the scale. Some important aspect inspections are as large as full inspections.

Generally speaking, aspect inspection is not much practised as the inspectors were heavily engaged in quite a lot of full inspections at the time of the survey. Furthermore, the uses of the aspect inspection, except for inspecting contemporary tasks, has not yet been further explored.

### **6.3.3.3 Routine Visits**

This is the most common method used by the Chinese inspectors. Full inspection cannot be organised many times a term due to the limitation of manpower and resources. The rest of the information has to be obtained by other means such as routine visits.

According to the survey results, 45.1% of the inspectors responded that they only spent 1-2 days per week in schools or in lower level

education authorities. 21.6% spent 3 days (there are 6 working days in China). This also included the time spent on full inspections. The rest of the time was devoted to administrative work and political study (once a week, nationally unified), and inspector training (see Table 6.12).

To sum up, although there are several forms of inspections and visits, they are not equally employed. Full inspections occupy most of the inspectors' time, which in a way reveals the dominant function of the inspectorate.

#### **6.4 The Expectations of the Roles of the Inspectorate**

Apart from uncovering the factual information on the work of the Chinese inspectorate, the author also used the survey, in particular, the questionnaires to find out the schools' and the education authorities' expectations of the roles of the Chinese inspectorate. The author first asked the administrators, school heads as well as the inspectors themselves to answer the questions. Given 17 choices, they were requested to select five to reflect their preferences of the roles of the inspectorate. (5 points for first preference, 4 points for second preference, 3 points for third preference, 2 points for fourth preference, and 1 point for fifth preference). Then the mean scores for each group were calculated. The results are shown in Table 6.17.

Table 6.17 Administrators', Schoolheads', and Inspectors' Preferences of the Role of Inspectorate (N=205)

17	mediator between LEA and schools	17th	13th	14th
16	trouble-shooter	16th	16th	17th
15	adviser of curriculum	15th	14th	9th
14	adviser to individual teacher	14th	17th	16th
13	participator of teacher appraisal	13th	12th	12th
12	resource facilitator	12th	14th	4th
11	info.collector for higher inspt.	11th	10th	13th
10	disseminate good practice	10th	8th	8th
09	commentator of authority policy	9th	5th	15th
08	encourager of school innovation	8th	6th	3rd
07	adviser of school management	7th	9th	6th
06	collector of info. of state of educ.	6th	7th	10th
05	conveyor of authority's policy	5th	10th	5th
04	execute demand of higher inspt	4th	4th	11th
03	evaluator of school standards	3rd	3rd	7th
02	professional adviser of policy making	2nd	2nd	2nd
01	supervisor of policy implement.	1st	1st	1st
preferences		inspector	administrator	schoolhead

Many tentative conclusions can be drawn from the responses in Table 6.17. Firstly, all three groups had a clear understanding about the primary role of the inspectorate as one of the controlling bodies of educational performance. This controlling function is basically fulfilled by ensuring proper implementation of national and education authorities' decisions by means of inspection and evaluation. Secondly, both inspectors and their partners expected the "professional adviser" to become one of the main roles of the inspectorate. As Table 6.4 and Table 6.9 suggest, at present, the role of professional adviser (to education authorities, in particular, to schools) is not played much. But in reality, because of the great responsibilities all local governments and education authorities assume, and thus the need to make sound policies, the inspectorate, a force possessing rich management and teaching experience, is expected strongly to play the role as a professional adviser. For example, in Table 6.17, "to comment on authority's policies" was expected by the administrators to be the fifth function while the inspectors regarded it as the 9th. As to the schools, the expectation of being professional adviser was further reflected in the demands for "encouraging school innovation", (see Table 6.17). The school heads put this role third whilst the inspectors put it 8th, and the administrators 6th. According to the  $\chi^2$  tests (Table 6.18), inspectors and school heads had significantly different views on the role as a supporter of school innovation with the administrators somewhere in between.

**Table 6.18 The Inspector as an Encourager of School Innovation**

	as 1st expectation	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	not expect	No.
school heads	3	7	10	8	8	36	72
inspectors	1	3	3	7	4	54	72
administrat.	2	1	4	3	8	31	49

**School heads <===> Inspectors:**

$\chi^2=11.38$   $df=5$  Significant at  $P=0.05$  level

**Administrators <===> School Heads**

$\chi^2 =5.76$   $df=5$  insignificant at  $P=0.05$  level

**Administrators <===> Inspectors**

$\chi^2 =6.51$   $df=5$  insignificant at  $P=0.05$  level

As to the role of "evaluator of school standards", the school heads expected it to be the 7th, compared with the 3rd role both administrators and inspectors placed on it.

These two different views between schools at one side, and the inspectors at the other, implies that the school side strongly expects the inspectorate to strengthen the advisory function instead of doing too many inspections and evaluations. Nowadays, the "Head Teacher in Charge" system has been gradually put into practice, though the pace is not as fast as the reform of central-local government relationships. More and more schools have gained a considerable degree of freedom in such matters as budget, staffing. Hence at the school level, reform is also gradually but increasingly unfolding. Therefore, schools need support and advice from the education authority, especially from inspectors because of their frequent visit to schools and because of their

professional experience. Interestingly, the school heads even expect the inspectors to facilitate resource acquisition. (Table 6.17).

One more strong wish of the school heads worth noticing is that they expect the inspectors to offer some advice on curriculum and teaching and learning matters. (Table 6.17). Compared with the inspectors' self-expectation, one can see that the school side gives this function a much higher priority than the inspectorate.

In brief, one thing that is clear from Table 6.17 is that both the expectations of the school heads and those of the administrators indicate the need for the inspectorate to strengthen its role as a professional adviser (to both education authorities and to schools). Clearly, these are the requests which should be taken into account by the inspectorate. More discussions about the balance of functions are carried out in Chapter Eight.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the functions and working methods of the Chinese inspectorate, its work with regard to education authorities, as well as to schools and lower level education authorities, and the schools' and education authorities' expectations of the roles of the inspectorate. Because it is a summary of field work, there could be any of the shortcomings which exist in research field work. Two of these are the representativity and reliability of the collected data. As to the representativity of the results, after realising the impossibility of sampling all the provinces, the author selected, from among 30

provinces in the country, questionnaire samples from 10 provinces, and interview subjects from 6 provinces, representing different levels of development of the inspection system, different types (urban and rural) and different ranks of inspectorates. As to the reliability of the answers in the interviews and the questionnaires, the author believes that there is evidence of some false statements and contradictions in the answers by different sample subjects. For example, although no administrators admitted that inspectors ran errands for them, there was an inspector interviewed who complained about this. To take another example, while one school head gave a high mark to the full inspection his school recently experienced, it might have something to do with the fact that it was the inspector who introduced the author to this school head. In another case, one school head criticised the authority of the inspectorate, perhaps because the inspectorate failed to keep some promises made to his school. On the whole, the author believes that the reliability is satisfactory, because in the interviews and questionnaires, the author stated clearly that she represented a research group in a university, not an inspectorate or anything else. With the promise of confidentiality, the replies to a neutral research group are more likely to be reliable.

Since its birth in late 1986, the Chinese inspectorate has made remarkable progress. Organisations have been set up quickly. Large scale inspector training courses have equipped thousands of inspectors from all levels with the necessary theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills. The criteria for evaluating educational provision in education authorities and education quality in schools have been set up and put into practice. A large number of education authorities and schools have been formally inspected so far. In particular, the nationwide aspect inspections conducted in 1989 and early 1990 have

effectively urged provincial governments to provide better educational service. Preliminary cooperation between the inspectorate and all branches in the education authorities, including the Teaching Research Office, and with schools has been established. What is more important, is that the significance and the importance of the inspection system has started being understood by more and more people.

While acknowledging these remarkable achievements, one must remember that there are still shortcomings that need to be improved. Many weak points uncovered by the survey results forecast the issues and difficulties that the inspectorate is likely to encounter later on, after the establishment of organisational structures is finished. How to improve these weak points and to tackle these issues? The author believes that the Chinese inspectors can find some references in the HMI practice (which has been described in Chapter Three and Four). But before putting forward recommendations using HMI experiences as references, a thorough discussion is needed in order to decide the ways in which and the extent to which the English experiences are transferable to China. This will be dealt with in the next chapter.

**CHAPTER SEVEN**  
**IN WHAT WAY AND TO WHAT**  
**EXTENT CAN THE CHINESE**  
**INSPECTORATE LEARN FROM HMI**

Extensive discussions so far have revealed much about the HMI system, and the recent development of the Chinese inspection system. This chapter examines in detail the feasibility of transferring HMI's experiences, i.e., to decide the ways in which, and the extent to which the Chinese inspectorate can learn from HMI. This analysis, therefore, lays the foundation for the later proposals for the future development of the Chinese inspection system, which, according to the logical framework of this study, is based on the comparisons with HMI.

In order to decide the ways in which and the extent to which the English experience can be adapted to the Chinese practice, one needs to identify: (1). the differences and similarities between the inspection system in China and the system of HMI; (2). the major differences and similarities between the educational administration systems in the two countries which play an extremely important role in defining the role of the inspectorate; and (3). other important factors that have enormous impact on educational systems and ultimately on educational inspection systems.

## **7.1 The Differences and Similarities Within the Inspection Systems**

### **7.1.1 Comparing Roles and Functions**

When comparing the inspection systems, one of the most important and distinguishable aspects is function. Before narrowing down to the function of the Chinese inspectorate and HMI, it is worth examining "function" in a broader context. Clearly, the system of inspection exists in a large number of other fields (not only in educational field). The fundamental aim of an inspectorate is to assist its employing authority to discharge its responsibilities by seeing the organisations or individuals for which the employing authority has certain responsibilities carrying out their duties. This behaviour of "seeing" usually refers to the close examination of the quality or correctness of the overall work, or aspects of work of the inspected object, and implies the possible actions which might arise as a result of this examination.

According to Rhodes, the duty of those organisations or individuals for which the inspectorate's employing authority has certain responsibilities falls into two categories. In the first place, there are general administrative responsibilities, e.g., magistrates are made responsible for running prisons, whilst other entities have to meet more specific requirements (usually statutory) e.g., a shop keeper has to use accurate weights and measures. (Rhodes, 1981, p2).

In accordance with these two different kinds of responsibilities, inspectorates are divided into two types: inspection to ensure compliance with certain specific statutory requirements, and inspection to secure,

maintain or improve standards of performance. That is to say, there are two groups of inspectorates: **enforcement inspectorate** and **efficiency inspectorate** (ibid).

In Rhodes' view, all inspectorates can be divided into these two categories, which differ in purposes of inspection, power, approaches employed, and the background in which the two inspectorates are embedded.

The purpose of the enforcement inspectorate is to ensure that those inspected meet specific external requirements regulated by legislation. Although the efficiency inspectorate is equally concerned with standards and performance, it usually has no precise criteria which must be met. To put it in another way, what the enforcement inspectorate is looking for is the ends of implementing statutory requirements whilst the efficiency inspectorate pays more attention to the means by which the ends are achieved.

As a result of the difference in purpose, the two inspectorates have different powers: enforcement implies an element of compulsion backed by legal sanction, usually prosecution or fines. So that once an inspector discovers a failure to carry out statutory requirements, he can take legal action. By contrast, an efficiency inspectorate only has the power to inspect the institution or individual. Although it is not armed with specific statutory power, it is backed by its employing authority. Its response to an unsatisfactory standard or performance would probably be to use persuasion rather than legal sanctions, or to count on its employing authority to take administrative action. Withdrawal of resource is one example.

Furthermore, as a result of the difference in power, the two inspectorates employ different approaches. One can deduce that although the enforcement inspectors have the power to initiate legal sanctions, their power is more or less specific. On the other hand, the efficiency inspectors would be expected to emphasise more the persuasive approach. So that these people are usually specialists with professional knowledge and skills. In addition, they would try to increase their influence by providing advice and persuasion in other aspects apart from offering suggestions on the spot.

Apart from the differences in role, power, and approach of the two inspectorates, there is also a dissimilarity in the contexts in which inspectorates work. As Rhodes points out, the enforcement inspectorate works under a certain legislation or law, whilst the work of the efficiency inspectorate, as in the case of the British HMI, must be viewed in the light of central-local relationships. In many respects, local government assumes great power and freedom in administering the service within its area, despite the fact this freedom has been reduced in recent years. In addition, regulations in education sector usually cannot be specific, unlike those in some other sectors of public administration, for example, transport and trading. Thus, many educational matters can only be done by persuasion.

Examining Rhodes' theory, one can argue that what he identifies are simply two extreme cases of inspectorates: and certainly the reality is more complicated than the theory. Many inspectorates carry out a combination of these two functions. Take the LEA advisory services in England as an example: local advisers play a supporting role to schools by offering advice and sometimes even by working alongside the

teachers over a period of time. In this respect, their role is more or less that of efficiency promoter. On the other hand, they do have the duty to see that LEAs' policies, sometimes quite specific policies, are satisfactorily implemented by schools. So they are both efficiency and enforcement inspectorates. A more typical example is the Social Services Inspectorate in the Department of Health and Social Security, as studied by Henkel (1991). It is concerned with both compliance with the law and regulations and maintaining and promoting standards of performance. The inspectors carry out inspections to enforce local authorities to properly implement the legal requirements and governmental regulations. In the meantime, inheriting their professional tradition, they act as agents for change. During their inspections and routine work, they identify and disseminate good practice and encourage innovations. Thus, the Social Services Inspectorate is a combination of enforcement inspectorate and efficiency inspectorate.

In addition to the complexity of the nature of the inspectorates, there is another complexity in terms of the methods employed. Efficiency inspectors usually only take persuasive approaches, as Rhodes argues. But enforcement inspectors do not necessarily rely only on legal sanctions. In the case of the Social Services Inspectorate, for example, if the local authorities breach legislation or regulations, the Secretary of State usually does not take legal actions. Instead, he probably refuses or withdraws regulation of certain categories of provision on the advice of the inspectors (Henkel, 1991). Similarly, many educational inspectorates employ both administrative means and legal means (particularly the former) when they enforce the compliance with specific regulations. The Chinese inspectors, for example, often take such administrative means

as withdraw resources and redeploy personnel (through their education authorities, of course) to achieve the aim of enforcing policy implementation.

Therefore, it can be suggested that, instead of dividing inspectorates into two sharply distinguished groups, we can put inspectorates on a continuum with the two extremes as pure enforcement inspectorate and pure efficiency inspectorate. Other points on this continuum have a combination of both functions. But where a particular inspectorate is located on the continuum is determined by the various functions it performs. For example, the LEA advisory services would fall somewhere close to the pure efficiency end but not at the extreme point.

To reconsider the differences in purpose, power, and approach of different inspectorates in line with the concept of the continuum, one can deduce that those inspectorates in between perform some function of enforcement and some of efficiency promotion, the proportion of each depends on where it is located. These inspectorates tend to enforce some specific requirements as well as observe general standards, they have certain executive power in certain aspects whilst in other aspects they can only use persuasion and advice as a means of increasing efficiency.

Coming back to the role of HMI and that of the Chinese inspectorate using the perspective suggested above, one can see that HMI is almost a pure efficiency inspectorate. This can be explained by the feature of central-local-school relationship -- partnership. Before the 1988 Education Reform Act, central government, local government and schools all had certain responsibilities for educational service. Bearing the duty of promoting educational standards in England and Wales, the

DES had the statutory duty to ensure that the educational provision in all LEAs was satisfactory and quality of education in schools was acceptable. But it could not directly interfere in the business of LEAs because the power for day-to-day running of the publicly maintained education service was retained by the LEAs. It could hardly interfere in curriculum matters either, because the professional matters were virtually controlled by the school teachers. Therefore, HMI, entrusted with the task of safeguarding educational standards, acted as a "watchdog without teeth". The purpose behind its inspections was not to ensure that particular institution complied with certain specific DES' requirements. Instead, as it had no power to do so, its inspections were aimed at assisting DES' monitoring of state of education and policy making and the improvement of standards in individual institutions. However, HMI did have very limited power to enforce certain compliance. For example, HM Inspectors had the power to enforce the closure of a science laboratory if the safety conditions were inadequate.

In the case of the Chinese inspectorate, the elements of enforcement carry more weight than in the HMI case. It has the duty to ensure conformity with specific national requirements (in the form of legislation or administrative regulations), with the help of their administrative power. It is also expected to monitor the general state of administration in lower level education authorities and schools, and to maintain and promote standards by persuasion and guidance. Therefore, on the enforcement-efficiency inspectorate continuum, the Chinese inspectorate is neither a pure enforcement inspectorate (because in education, few goals and criteria are specific and clear-cut and can be easily achieved by enforcement), nor a pure efficiency inspectorate (because there are some specific directives which need to be

met). It performs a combination of both functions. In addition, these specific requirements (e.g. the rate of increase in educational expenditure must be higher than that of local revenue) are unlikely to occupy a major position in the evaluation criteria. But at present, as discussed in *Chapter One*, there are difficulties in the implementation of the law of compulsory education in reality, so the Chinese inspectorate carries out relatively more checking and enforcement functions. Apart from that, the inspection and evaluation of a particular school or an education authority is also designed to promote its educational standards or the efficiency of administration, as the English inspectors do in their inspections. Therefore, the purposes behind inspection, in the case of the Chinese inspectorate, are to ensure compliance with certain specific requirements and to maintain overall standards. The former function will be particularly needed in the initial period of implementing the law of the nine year compulsory education when there is some resistance (see Chapter One for details).

The presence of both functions in the Chinese inspectorate can be better understood by examining the central-local relationships in China -- the delegation of power. This means that the central educational government (The State Education Commission) delegates **part** of its power to local educational authorities. But, the ultimate power is still in the hands of the SEDC. Therefore, in those nationally-unified aspects: e.g. national curriculum, the basic educational provision, all education authorities will have to work in accordance with the national requirements. As to the basic national policies and legislative requirements, the education authorities also have the duty to do what they are told. Only those things which within their relatively limited jurisdiction, compared with the English LEAs and schools, can the

Chinese education authorities make decisions on their own. Nevertheless, the education reforms launched five years ago have given the Chinese education authorities more power and freedom in administration, especially in the field of basic education. It is stipulated in the law of compulsory education that "the responsibility for administering compulsory education belongs to local government", which implies a changing relationship -- education authorities are gaining more power and freedom and of course more duty in educational administration.

In short, different educational administration systems result in different relationships between central and local government, and thus the power that each part enjoys. The inspectorates in different contexts play different roles. Nevertheless, because of the nature of the educational service as opposed to that of regulatory administration, e.g., in industry, the non-specific criteria always occupy the main part. On the whole, these two inspectorates are much more concerned with the general administration and overall standards of the service than with specific aspects of requirements. So they do have common features--- they both belong to efficiency inspectorates. However, the transferable points exist in those efficiency promotion functions, not enforcement elements.

More differences exist in the purpose behind the inspections, that is: in the HMI case, to collect information on the state of education to report to the Secretary of State in order to assist the formulation of national policy, and to improve educational standards in individual schools as a result of the inspection; in the Chinese case, to enforce policy implementation, to collect information and to improve educational

standards. What is comparable is the function of collecting information on the state of education, the function of offering advice to those responsible for the educational service, and of course, the function of inspection itself. For example, how do HMIs decide on what should be inspected? How do they organise inspection? How do they balance full inspection, survey inspection and routine visit in order to balance the collection of general information and more concentrated and specific information? How do they manage to deliver information from the headquarters to the field and vice versa? How do they process the mass of information into the kind of information which can assist decision-making effectively? How do they ensure the information communication from the organisational structure point of view? These are points that can be learned to various degrees.

Despite the differences in roles and aims, there are some common features in both inspectorates. Both inspectorates are expected to assist decision making by their respective employing authorities and by the inspected institutions, not only by supplying large amounts of information, but also by offering judgment and advice based on gathered information and evidence and on their professional experience. Here, the transferable points emerge again: who is involved in providing advice? How do they do it? What is the mechanism of this service? Where do inspectors obtain their experience and expertise? How can the Chinese inspectorate adapt English experience in the light of the Chinese administrative context?

As a result of the differences in roles and aims, the methods used by the English and the Chinese inspectorate are also different. HMI usually uses only advisory approaches to influence the people who have

responsibility for the education system, the Chinese inspectorate can instruct the inspected institutions to stop or change the practices which seriously breach the legal requirements or the administrative regulations issued by the SEdC. But things within the scope of education authorities are not subject to inspectorate's directives. They can only use terms like "matters for discussion" in the inspection report to exert their influence. Therefore, the method used by the Chinese inspectorate is a combination of directives and persuasion and the former is in practice not very often employed.

To conclude, **the role of the Chinese inspectorate differs from that of HMI in that the Chinese inspectorate has both efficiency promotion and enforcement functions, whilst HMI is mainly concerned with efficiency through maintaining and promoting general educational standards.** These differences are largely the result of the different central-local relationships. Accordingly, the methods they use are different in some respects. **Nevertheless, they are both efficiency inspectorates on the continuum.** Thus, they have many things in common. Their role of promoting efficiency and standards is similar, their inspecting schools to collect evidence to assist authorities' policy-making is an identical role, both of them are expected to collect information and to contribute professional expertise to help decision making. They have to use persuasive approach to different extents. In addition to these, it can be further argued that the development of the Chinese inspectorate is in the direction of carrying out more efficiency promotion functions. The main reason for the present inspectorate to exercise certain enforcement function by administrative means is the considerable resistance and difficulty in realising compulsory education. After this has been done, along with the further delegation of power, the inspectorate will have

less of an enforcement function and more of a general maintenance function. In short, the similarities listed above and future trends provide the basis for comparison. Nevertheless, it is believed that some alterations must be made even to these "transferable" points.

### **7.1.2 Comparing Authority and Power**

Another difference that makes comparison difficult may be the different types of power that two inspectorates have, and the different bases from which the powers are derived. This is partly due to the different functions of the two inspectorates.

Needless to say, both inspectorates have the legitimacy and authority to carry out inspections and to perform other relevant functions (except for the Chinese inspectorate which encounters some confusion when it inspects its next lower level government, as described in Chapter Five and Six). But the basis of the legitimacy and authority is different in two systems.

According to Weber's bureaucracy theory, authority has three legitimate bases. The first is the traditional authority based on beliefs established over a long period of time. The second base is charisma, i.e., personal qualities that make people accept someone's authority. The last one, usually exist in bureaucratic settings, is the rational legal authority based on organisational rules and procedures. This type of authority is a relationship between jobs and does not depend on the characteristics of the individuals concerned. (Weber, 1947, p328). Another important distinction worth making is the difference between power and influence.

Power is usually defined as the capacity to get decisions and actions taken and situations created which accord with one's interests. (Dawson, 1986, p147), whilst influence is usually thought to be the effect on someone or something without the use of direct force or command. The main feature of influence, therefore, is persuasion in contrast with compliance in the case of power.

Examining the bases of authority of the Chinese inspectorate, it is clear that the traditional base does not exist as the inspectorate was set up not long ago. The charisma base is hardly to be regarded strong. The major foundation is rational legitimacy, i.e., the authority which is derived from organisational rules and procedures.

As discussed in the last few chapters, the Chinese inspectorate organisationally belongs to administrative units in the education authorities. Despite the fact that the SEdC requires at least 15 years of teaching experience on average -- with different requirements for different posts in the inspectorate (SEdC,1983,p2), and that most inspectors are more experienced in school teaching and management in comparison with other administrators in education authorities, **they are essentially administrators**. Therefore, **they automatically qualify for administrative power**. At present, the inspectors are heavily loaded with the task of inspection in order to ensure the implementation of the new legislation, the administrative power becomes even more important.

However, **their administrative power is different from that of other administrators in the education authorities**. Inspectors do not have the power to initiate policy and to require schools to carry out the policy, unlike other administrative branches in the education authorities which

have the power and the duty to make decisions and plans and assign work to the schools and lower level education authorities. To their employing education authorities, the inspectors have no right to directly take part in the process of education authorities' policy making. This is the responsibility of other branches. They could be asked for advice on policy making but they do not have final say. Furthermore, they have no power to decide sanctions or rewards after an inspection, unlike the administrators in other branches. They only have the right to suggest to the authorities that they praise, reward, criticise, or punish some personnel, schools or authorities.

In addition, because inspectors are selected from either administrators with rich teaching experience or directly from school heads, they are comparatively more professional than other administrators both in terms of teaching and administration. So they are in a better position to provide professional advice to lower level education authorities and schools. In this respect, their authority is also based on professional experience and expertise.

In short, the Chinese inspectorate is given administrative power to help to ensure implementation of national and authorities' policies. But its power is not as direct as that of other administrative branches. Meanwhile, its authority is mainly based on its administrative power. **But the relatively richer professional expertise also helps its work.**

Consequently, when the inspectorate asks the inspected schools or authorities to meet certain specific requirements after inspection, they will have to follow these instructions. However, when inspectorate's opinions are presented in the form of "matters for discussion" in the

report, schools or lower level education authorities are not obliged to follow because those are the areas that belong to the discretion of the inspected institutions, they can only be influenced but not decided by the higher level inspectorates though in reality they are taken seriously.

Examining HMI's authority, one can see that HMI's authority is built on almost all the three bases. Its long history and its fine reputation certainly help the HMI's advice to be more willingly accepted. Although HM Inspectors' authority is not built on their charisma, their professional expertise does increase the chance of successful persuasion. It is believed by many teachers, according to Haigh, that to become an HMI is to reach a career pinnacle (Haigh, 1989, p24). Hence, not only the ability of individual HMI, but also the HMI as a collective body is regarded as one of the most professionally experienced and capable groups in the educational field. Undoubtedly, this perception of HMI as a whole makes the HMI's advice more convincing and trustworthy. But one should never ignore the rational ground of HMI's authority. The legitimacy of HMI's existence and its practice rest primarily on various clauses in educational legislation. The empowerment of carrying out inspection and other tasks by law automatically establishes the legitimate authority for the inspectorate. Furthermore, the functions of HMI with regard to the Department of Education and its influence on central policy makers enhances its authority and influence in the country. In short, all the three bases of authority in Weber's theory, particularly the history one and the rational one, are applicable in the case of HMI.

However, although HMI has the authority, it **does not have any administrative power – because it is not responsible for enforcing policy**

**implementation.** It was once rumoured that HMI would probably embark on the task of enforcing implementation of the national curriculum (introduced by the 1988 Education Act), in which case it might be equipped with executive power. But a recent reply by the Secretary of State removed this possibility. (see Chapter 4 section 4.3 for detail). Therefore, its function in this respect remains that of monitoring rather than enforcing. The monitoring may include the task of explaining the policy to LEA administrators and school teachers and reporting the results of policy implementation to the DES, but it is not directly involved in enforcing implementation. In addition, because the day-to-day running of school was left to the discretion of LEAs and schools (particularly before 1988), the DES had little to enforce. Therefore, HMI's authority was and still is largely based on its professional expertise and its independence. The purposes of HMI's inspections are to collect information on the state of education and to help improve educational standards of individual schools. Inspection is not a means of deciding reward or punishment towards schools. However, one thing that should be pointed out is the publishing of HMI's inspection reports. Since 1981, all the full inspection reports are available to the public. HMI's evaluations obviously affect schools' reputations. In this respect, HMI's authority, or influence, has been increased by this decision. In addition, along with the central government's increasing involvement in educational affairs, HMI is expected more and more to offer advice on policy making. Thus, in this respect, HMI exerts its influence on the education system through its influence on the DES. By and large, HMI is trusted because of its high professional expertise and its unique independence. Therefore, although the advice of HMI is purely advisory and the inspected schools can refuse to listen to suggestions, in reality, many suggestions offered by

HM inspectors are still adopted by schools and teachers.

One more difference related to authority is the degree of independence that two inspectorates enjoy. In England, although HM Inspectors are civil servants, they do have a certain degree of independence, partly for historical reasons, and partly due to their prestigious professional expertise. Senior Chief Inspector has direct access to the Secretary of State; HMI's reports cannot be revised by anyone other than HMIs, HMIs are relatively free to decide their working programme by themselves (but they still have to take into consideration the policy priorities of the DES). Although HMI cannot be totally free from the pressure of the DES, this "conditional" independence makes it possible to safeguard educational standards to a certain extent.

The Chinese inspectorates, by contrast, are dependent on their employing authorities. They usually make their working programmes according to the general plan of the authorities. These programmes must be finally approved by the head of the education authority. They are encouraged in theory to criticise the decisions of their education authorities, (in the Chinese expression: "to put on a rival show"), but there is no organisational measure to protect this right. So that inspectors basically are the representatives of their employing education authorities though occasionally the inspectors do raise questions about policies as a feedback of the state of policy implementation.

In short, owing to the different functions that two inspectorates perform, the Chinese inspectorate enjoys certain administrative powers the use of which can enforce policy implementation whilst HMI can only

offer purely advisory advice which could be turned down by teachers and politicians. **The Chinese inspectorates are dependent on their employing authorities whilst HMI has a certain degree of independence.**

It is obviously unrealistic to suggest that the Chinese inspectors should seek the same degree of independence as HMI has. Thousands of years' centralisation and the tradition of lack of public supervision on the work of the government prevent the inspectorate, and indeed, any body in the country, from having any real independence. However, the Chinese inspectorate can certainly benefit enormously from studying how HM Inspectors maintain their high authority and influence without using administrative power. For example, how HM Inspectors acquire their professional expertise? How the inspectorate as a whole balances different kinds of expertise and forms an appropriate mix of specialities? Apart from inspectors' personal qualities, are there any ways of increasing authority by improving the balance of functions?

### **7.1.3 Comparing Objects of Inspection**

As discussed earlier, before the 1988 Education Reform Act, the responsibility for the educational service in England was shared mainly by Department of Education and Science, Local Education Authorities and individual schools. Each partner had its own areas of responsibility which were influenced but not determined by others. In other words, much of the work of LEAs and schools could not be legally enforced by the DES, rather, it could be improved only by means of persuasion. This feature determined that because they were not in a relationship of the leader and the led, the DES could not, in practice, inspect the administration of LEAs itself, it could only reveal the quality of LEAs' work by way of inspecting schools it ran. In recent years, HMI has conducted several inspections of LEAs. Its main concern was the standards of educational provision which were reflected in the educational quality in schools. But this inspection of LEAs was not a major task for HMI, it occupied only a small part of the HMI programme.

Comparing the HMI inspection reports of this kind with the Chinese ones, one can see that the Chinese inspectors have more power to comment on the management of LEAs (financing, planning, staffing etc) than HMI. Because quite differently from the English case, educational administration in China is a relatively centralised and hierarchical system, despite some forms of sharing responsibility. The relationship between higher level authorities and lower level authorities, to a large extent, is the superior and the subordinate. This feature decides that not only the SEdC (the State Education Commission) can inspect local education authorities, but also those higher level

education authorities can inspect lower ones. The Chinese call the inspection of education authorities "macro-inspection" as opposed to the "micro-inspection" -- the inspection of schools. Apart from this, there is often a task of checking policy implementation during inspections because the State Education Commission, unlike the DES which was mainly concerned with allocating resources and supply and training of teachers, often draws up relatively more detailed regulations in addition to the formulation of broad national policies.

The task of inspecting local governments and their educational authorities is a major task of the Chinese inspectorates, especially those at higher levels. Because it is the education authority level that is undergoing dramatic changes, the school has always been, and still is a very weak partner in educational administration. Another reason for the higher level inspectorates to concentrate on inspecting education authorities instead of schools, is the impossibility of conducting inspections of a satisfactory number of schools by their own limited number of inspectors. Thus, they try to maintain educational standards in schools by ensuring the standards of educational provision -- inspecting education authorities to maintain the efficiency of the educational administration.

To summarise, as a result of the different relationship between central and local educational government, the objects of inspection are different. **The Chinese inspectorate has dual targets of inspection.** The higher level inspectorates usually inspect lower level education authorities rather than schools and leave the latter task to the lowest level inspectorates. On the other hand, **HMI usually inspects individual schools and colleges.** Inspecting LEAs is not its major concern.

#### **7.1.4 Comparing the Relationship Between Central and Local Inspectorates**

Another difference in the inspection systems as a result of the different central-local relationship is the relationship between central and local inspectorates. In China, because the relationship between higher and lower level education authorities is hierarchical, the Chinese inspectorates -- the entities within the education authorities, naturally and legitimately form another line of hierarchy from the top down to the bottom. Meanwhile, because they are one branch of the education authorities, they are obliged to accept the supervision of their education authorities. Thus, in the case of the Chinese inspection system, there is a dual leadership except for the central inspectorate which has only one leader. The provisional regulations of inspection issued in 1983 state clearly that inspectorates should work under the dual control of their employing education authorities and the inspectorate at its next higher level. The former is responsible for setting work priorities for the inspectorate as well as for managing the inspectorate e.g., financing and staffing. The latter, as the provisional regulations claim, tends to be only concerned with inspection work itself, i.e., spreading good practice by organising various experience-exchange meetings among inspectorates, organising in-service training for inspectors and so on. Both superiors have different degrees of influence on the work of the inspectorate. At present, it is the employing education authorities that have a decisive say. The leadership of the higher level inspectorates on the lower ones is manifested in the routine submission of inspection reports and annual inspection programmes, and is particularly manifested in the requirement of lower level inspectorate's cooperation when the

inspection is going on. If the prefecture is to be inspected by the provincial inspectorate, for example, this prefectural inspectorate will be made responsible for sorting out all the necessary preparations, including all kinds of reviews by relevant authorities, all kinds of data from economic figures to school enrolment figures, all kinds of mock inspections of various schools. When the inspection team actually arrives, this prefectural inspectorate becomes one of the inspection objects of the provincial inspectorate as well as the member of inspection team when the inspection goes further to the sub-prefecture level. In addition, The Chinese inspectorates at different levels perform similar but not duplicate functions as every inspectorate inspects its next lower level governments and education authorities.

In contrast, the English central and local inspectorates are two totally separate and independent bodies. Working solely for their respective authorities, HMI and Local Advisory Services have no legal or administrative relationship at all, though a certain amount of contact and joint work does exist in reality. Although they are separate monitoring organisations, the two bodies perform different but complementary functions. HMI is more inclined to information gathering whilst the local advisory services lay their emphasis on supporting and clinical advice to schools and colleges (at least before 1988 ERA); HMI works across the whole of England whilst the local advisory services work within their boundaries; HMIs are only entitled to offer advice whilst the local advisers have some influence on resource allocation and teacher appointment.

In short, the relationships between central and local inspectorates in the Chinese and English systems is different. **It is hierarchical in the**

**Chinese case, but separate in the English case. Both the central and local inspectorates in China perform similar functions whilst those in England perform different but complementary functions.**

## **7.2 The Differences and Similarities Outside the Inspection System**

As analysed earlier in this chapter, the functions of both HMI and the Chinese inspectorate are a combination of efficiency promotion and legislation enforcement. The former function possesses a dominant position in the HMI case and a major position in the case of the Chinese inspectorate. However, such similarities do not mean that experiences in one can easily be transferred to the other because factors outside the inspection system matter more than those inside. An educational inspection system is directly determined by its surrounding educational administration system which is again determined by ultimate factors such as political and economic systems. In other words, the inspection system is only a sub-system of a bigger system which itself is a sub-system of an even bigger system. Only when the bigger systems are similar, can fundamental aspects of the sub-system be borrowed. Otherwise, blind copying regardless of the actual conditions can only result in failure of the inspection system itself as well as damage to the bigger system. Therefore, one system's merits could be other systems' weaknesses, and vice versa. One has to be very careful when making comparison and transferring experience.

### **7.2.1 Comparing the Relationship Between Central and Local Government**

The social conditions in China and England are obviously very different. One of the fundamental differences lies in the ideology of government. China, with a long history of centralisation, has always emphasised unity and compliance. Before the Communist Revolution, it was the emperors, since then, it has been the Communist Party and its government that has the supreme power of making national decisions. So that the absolute leadership of the state, seen as an assurance of unified implementation and balanced national development, is repeatedly stressed and continuously manifested in almost every aspect of social life including education. Most policies are initiated from the state, each portion of the tasks is received, adapted and implemented by various levels of local governments. However, things began to change in the 1980s, the economic reform which loosened central control and broadened local freedom has been developing so fast that it requires other superstructures including educational system to match its development. The education reform, started in the mid '80s, has brought the Chinese local governments and education authorities greater power and discretion in administering education (particularly in the basic education sector) in their areas. Though certain elements of partnership have been formed, it is, on the whole, a centralised system.

By contrast, the ideology and practice of the public administration in England was, and to a measurable extent, still is, very much a "national system, locally administered" (though things began to change after the 1988 ERA) as opposed to the Chinese "national system, locally delegated". On many matters, instead of forming a bureaucratic

hierarchy, central government and local government were constitutionally equal, both received their authority from the same parliament, although in fact central government was politically more powerful, especially since the 1970s. It was believed by the state as well as the locality, that sharing responsibility was one way of ensuring democracy and encouraging initiatives of every interest group. In many affairs, particularly in the welfare services, central government was mainly concerned with setting up general legislation and providing funding and other promotional services to local areas. Local government had great autonomy in dealing with overall administration in its area. as Regan analyses, a large amount of power and duty were statutorily assigned to local governments directly, which meant that the centre could not be a dictator. (Regan, 1984, p31). Despite changes of the power balance amongst the partners since the 1970s, English public administration is still a decentralised system on the whole.

As far as education is concerned, it had been the tradition until the middle of the 19th century for the British government not to interfere in educational affairs. This contrasts with the Chinese case in which education has always been one of the realms of the state. Until 1988, the DES formulated national policies and controlled major resources; local authorities were entrusted with building, staffing, and maintaining educational institutions; and teachers in schools were free to decide what to teach and how. However, instead of doing their own business, these three partners influenced the others. None of them enjoyed a monopoly of power. Power over decision-making was diffused amongst the partners. Though things have changed since the passage of the Education Reform Act in 1988 which increased the power of central government and reduced the freedom of the professionals and the LEAs,

the system still remains in a fairly decentralised position as compared with many other countries.

This basic difference in philosophy of public administration leads to more differences in educational administration in both countries, which inevitably affect the features of the English and Chinese inspectorates.

## **7.2.2 Comparing Territory Size and Level of Economic Development**

The second but equally important difference is the geographical size of the two countries. China, the country which has the world's largest population and the third biggest territory, has approximately 937,000 primary and secondary schools together with 8,339,000 teaching staff (The SEdC, 1986, p3), which is about 20 times as many as English teachers and 30 times as many as English maintained schools. The whole country, instead of being divided into two levels -- central and local, is administratively composed of five ranks -- central, provincial, prefectural, county and township. Clearly, **it is utterly unrealistic to copy the English system and to have a huge central inspectorate.** On a proportional base, the number of central inspectors would be more than 10,000 and it would take 3 days for many of them to get to the capital to attend a meeting !

However, it does not mean that the Chinese central inspectorate can not have regional bases. If one considers the dual leadership of the inspection system, it is then not difficult to understand that the hierarchical relationship has, in effect, made all the local inspectorates become to some extent regional extensions of the central inspectorate,

because the local inspectorates have to follow the general plan of the central inspectorate and have a certain accountability to their corresponding higher inspectorates. In addition, because the Chinese local inspectorates actually perform some functions for the local authorities, and some for their superior inspectorate, in a way, they perform both the functions that the English central and local inspectorates perform. Excluding the leadership of corresponding education authorities, there is a need to further explore the relationship between the centre and the regional bases. -- the cooperation and communication among different level inspectorates. In this respect, the HMI's experience of managing the whole force, especially the experience of directing its divisions and collecting information from its regional bases can be tentatively explored.

China's large area also contributes to the division of labour between higher level inspectorates and lower level inspectorates with regard to the object of inspection. As mentioned earlier in this and previous chapters, HMI devotes its main resources and manpower to inspecting and visiting schools. The inspection of LEAs only occupies a small position in the HMI working programme. By contrast, all the Chinese inspectorates except the lowest ones aim at the lower level governments and education authorities as the object of inspection. Of course, the hierarchical relationship among different level education authorities is an important reason, but one cannot exclude the practical factor that the large geographical size makes the higher level inspectorates incapable of inspecting a reasonable number of schools by themselves. Take the second lowest level -- the prefectural inspectorates for example, if they had to concentrate on school inspection, 6-8 prefectural inspectors would have to cover an average of 2750 primary and secondary schools, which

is obviously impossible. Not to mention the provincial and national inspectorates which control much larger areas. Thus, the higher inspectorates, instead of inspecting schools by themselves, prefer to direct their efforts towards the inspection of lower level authorities trying to ensure the educational standards in individual schools by making certain that the education authorities are implementing relevant policies and providing satisfactory resources to schools.

Another difference lies in the composition of the inspection team. In the HMI case, all the inspections and school visits are carried out by HM inspectors themselves. In contrast to the HMI practice, the Chinese inspectors usually have to seek help from the administrators in the authorities to conduct inspections, which is partly due to the imbalance between the large size of the country and small number of inspectors. According to the SEdC plan, a county inspectorate with 6-8 inspectors will have to cover 350 schools on average. But most of the county level education authorities have not yet established inspectorates up till present stage, which consequently adds more inspection load to the higher level inspectorates. Thus, the incapacity of the Chinese inspectorates to carry out inspections, especially large scale inspections, on their own naturally makes the inspectors turn to non-inspectors such as administrators of other branches, members of the Teaching Research Office for help in order to cover the necessary areas. Here, how those different groups of people will cooperate during inspections and how those acting inspectors' inspection skill can be assured in order to conduct successful inspections is left to the Chinese to find out, but the experience of HMI's seconding manpower from different divisions can have some relevance to its Chinese counterparts.

The considerable disparity in the levels of economic development in the two countries inevitably limits the degree of learning. Though its effect is not on the fundamental issues of the inspection system, it does create substantial limitations in practical terms. To a certain extent, the practices of HMI supported by modern technology will not have immediate application to China as similar facilities are so scarce that they are rarely available to inspectors. For instance, HMI was computerised in 1984. The ample number of computers enormously facilitate the communication among inspectors at different levels and in different divisions. By storing notes of school visits and surveys in the computer, and by obtaining useful information through the inspectors' computer network, every HMI, particularly every senior HMI, is able to send as well as to receive information quickly and extensively. This method of communication would be extremely helpful to the Chinese inspectorates which are scattered all over the country. But given the present economic conditions, the possibility of doing so is rather dim. Similarly, other resources easily available to the HM Inspectors such as cars and fax machines will be extravagant hopes for the Chinese inspectors.

In short, being in a developing country where many people are still struggling for bare necessities of life, the Chinese inspectors will have to make the best use of the existing resources. Some of the HMI experience based on advanced economy will have to be ignored despite its potential usefulness to its Chinese counterpart.

### **7.2.3 Comparing the Internal Structure of the Education Authorities**

Despite the fact that the functions of the English education authorities (the DES and LEAs) are different from those of Chinese authorities, their internal structures have some similarities due to the similar nature of administration. For example, there will always be financial branches to allocate funds to schools or to local education authorities, they will probably have personnel branches to manage teaching staff, and there will be various branches to administer different education sectors.

In spite of the similarities in the internal organisation, particularly in those administrative branches, there is a difference in the position of the two inspectorates. To explain, one should look into the internal compositions of education authorities in both countries. In the DES, apart from general administrative branches (e.g. finance) and sector and aspect administrative branches (e.g. primary education branch, teacher education branch), there is HM Inspectorate as a professional wing of the DES. One of its main concerns is curriculum matters including syllabus, textbooks, and teaching methods. In China, curriculum matters are overseen by the TRO network. The Institutes of Education which are also attached to each level of education authorities (except for township) organise in-service training for teachers and administrators. Organisationally speaking, these two bodies are the professional wings of the education authority. The inspectorate, though composed of experienced professional teachers and administrators, belongs to the administrative part of the education authority. Because the curriculum matters are looked after by a long established system, they do not become the priority of the inspectorate. Instead, managerial

matters become the inspectorate's major concerns. Nevertheless, the inspectorate needs the help of the TRO when conducting formal inspections as it has to assess overall educational standards in individual schools and in areas.

The division of areas of concerns between the Chinese inspectorate and the TRO system, together with comparisons with HMI is shown in Diagram 7.1.

**Diagram 7.1 Division of Areas of Responsibilities**

<b>HMI</b>	to enforce legislation and national or regional policies	<b>THE CHINESE INSPECTORATE</b>
	to participate in school headship appointment and assessment	
	to provide information on the performance of schools (lower level education authorities),(mainly management matters)	
	to inspect and evaluate the overall performance of schools	
	to evaluate the educational provisions in lower level areas	
	to advise on school management and LEA administration	
	to liase between its own education authority and schools (lower level education authorities)	Overlap
	to advise on policy making of education authority	
	to oversee and advise on curriculum matters	<b>THE TRO</b>
	to organise in-service training of teachers	
	to provide education authorities with information on the state of implementing national curricula and education quality	
	to publish various booklets and pamphlets	

In brief, there is a big difference in the attitudes of the two inspectorates towards curriculum matters. In England, HMI treats it as one of the most important tasks, whilst in China, inspectorate is not the main body to deal with it since there is another separate system.

This difference suggests that the HMI experience concerned with curriculum cannot all be transferred simply because the Chinese inspectorate is not very much involved in it. And those problems that China is facing cannot find answers in the English model. For example, how the inspectorate and teaching research office members can cooperate well, more importantly, how the inspectorate ensures that the quality of the inspection conducted by non-inspector "inspectors" reaches a satisfactory standard.

### **7.3 Summary**

To summarise the differences discussed above, one can see clearly that:

(1). While HMI is almost a pure efficiency inspectorate concerning with reporting the performance of educational system and promoting efficiency of educational service, a certain amount of the Chinese inspectorate's work is concerned with the ensuring implementation of specific requirements of national legislations and policies. Compared with its English counterpart, the Chinese inspectorate is much more a combination of efficiency inspectorate and enforcement inspectorate. As a result:

(2). The Chinese inspectors have certain administrative powers to enforce legislation and policies whilst HM inspectors have no administrative power. Again, as a result:

(3). The authority of the Chinese inspectors is mainly based on their administrative status and power, though their relatively rich expertise

does help, whilst HMI influences various educational partners largely on the basis of its rich experience and professional expertise though other measures also contribute to the increase of its authority (e.g. publication of inspection reports, the growing influence on DES' policy making);

(4). The nature of the Chinese inspectorate is administrative whilst that of HMI is professional;

(5). The Chinese inspectorate is relatively more concerned with managerial side of the education provision (at least for the time being), whilst HMI plays an important part in curriculum development and planning;

(6). The organisational relationship between central and local inspectorate in China is hierarchical whilst in England it is separate;

(7). The Chinese inspectorate assumes the duty of inspecting both local education authorities and individual schools, whilst in the HMI case, inspecting individual educational institutions is its main concern;

(8). The Chinese inspectorate is employed by its education authority and thus totally depend on the leadership of the education authority, whilst HMI enjoys a certain degree of independence for historical reasons as well as for its unique professionalism.

All these differences, in the final analysis, are due to the basic difference in principles of public administration --- centralisation and decentralisation.

In the case of comparing HMI and the Chinese inspectorate, one can see that some problems that China has cannot find an answer or even a reference in the HMI model, (for example, how to enforce policy implementation more effectively). Moreover, some of the HMI's experience cannot be applied to the Chinese situation, (for instance, the HMI's engagement in curriculum matters). Nevertheless, there are a considerable amount of HMI's experience can be learned on the condition of adaptation. From a functional perspective, the function of monitoring and assessing the state of education, the function of collecting information to report to the education authorities, the function of providing professional advice, all have varying degrees' of similarity between the two systems. From the methods' perspective, the experience of organising a variety of inspections, and their rational combination will be particularly beneficial to the Chinese inspectors. From the organisational perspective, the communication mechanism among different rank inspectors and the communication with the DES are most enlightening and certainly provide various alternatives to the Chinese inspectorate. But still, it may usefully be repeated, learning from HMI will have practical value only when the experience of the HMI can be appropriately adjusted in the light of Chinese domestic conditions.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

# **PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT**

# **OF THE CHINESE INSPECTORATE**

The last few chapters have described the functions and structures of the two inspection systems. The results of the field work have shown some shortcomings in the present practice of the Chinese inspectorate. Efforts have also been made in the last chapter to discuss the differences and similarities within as well as outside the two inspection systems so that the degree to which the HMI experiences are transferable and adaptable can be decided.

As the last but certainly not the least step, this chapter discusses some issues in the present practice of the Chinese inspectorate, based on the comparisons with relevant HMI practice as well as on the field work findings. This chapter also offers practical suggestions for the improvement and future development of the Chinese inspectorate. This, again, is carried out with references to the HMI practice.

Undoubtedly, as argued in the last chapter, transferring HMI experience to China has considerable limitations not only because of the differences in the functions that two inspectorates perform and methods they use, but also because of the differences in their educational administration systems and other social factors. Therefore, a great deal of adaptation is needed when transferring HMI experiences.

## **8.1 To Diversify the Means of Educational Administration in the Development of Decentralisation**

The context in which HM Inspectorate works is a relatively decentralised and partnership system in comparison with many other countries. As argued in the last few chapters, this kind of system is usually operated not only by administrative means, but more importantly, by other means such as legislation and finance control. Before the passage of the 1988 Education Reform Act, for example, the DES was mainly responsible for school building programme, teacher supply and finance. LEAs were responsible for the day-to-day running of schools and colleges. The DES also employed certain administrative means to influence the work of LEAs. But their relationship was not hierarchical, both of them carried out their duties within the framework of the 1944 Education Act. Thus, one can see that during that period, legislative means, financial means, administrative means were frequently used.

The Chinese educational system was administered in a rigid centralised way before 1985 when the Decision on Educational Reform was announced jointly by the CCP and the State Council. The power of making decisions was in the hands of the then Ministry of Education high officials who formulated national policy in accordance with the fundamental strategies laid down by the CCP and the State Council. From provincial level downwards, these decisions were interpreted and transferred, and finally hierarchically distributed and implemented. In that period, administrative means supported by bureaucratic authority and strict regulations and rules was the predominant method, if not the sole method, by which educational administration was carried out.

As a result of the overwhelming economic reforms aimed at loosening central control and encouraging local and individual initiatives, the educational service was strongly affected so that it had to innovate radically in order to respond to the economic developments. The first change in educational administration was the delegation of power from central to local government which was designed to give more freedom to local government to let the education service develop alongside the local economic development. In certain respects, the traditional top-down hierarchy of educational administration (i.e., managing the educational service according to the instructions of the **higher level education authorities only**) is now gradually changing into a kind of two dimensional bureaucracy, i.e., not only does the higher level education authority has an influential say in educational affairs, so does the horizontally corresponding **local government**. In fact, the latter determinant seems to be increasingly powerful.

Under the new circumstances in which central government (in fact, any higher level government in relation to its lower level government, for example: provincial government in relation to prefectural government, prefectural to county) is becoming a key controller instead of a commander of educational service and the rigid hierarchy is gradually collapsing, administrative means which achieves results in a rigid hierarchical system can no longer fully meet the challenges. To take an example, according to the Law of Compulsory Education, the responsibilities for and the freedom to administer basic education have been delegated to local governments at various levels under the macro control of the state. Finance, staffing, by-legislation, manpower planning, and a certain degree of freedom in curriculum matters have fallen into the jurisdictions of these governments and their education

authorities. The SEdC is giving up the power to make detailed plans and begins to shoulder heavy loads in the so-called macro-administration, i.e., organising the drawing up of educational legislation, setting out national guiding principles, formulating general policies, coordinating local efforts and strengthening inspection and monitoring forces. Obviously, these functions can no longer be fulfilled by administrative means alone. In other words, the administrative means (government by rules and regulations) is most suitable for running a rigid hierarchical bureaucracy, but definitely not for a flexible and less rigid system in which both central and local government have a certain degree of freedom. Therefore, reform of the means is essential at the present stage. Using English experience as reference, the author believes that legislative means, financial means, supportive means, and supervisory means need to be greatly strengthened:

Legislation stipulates broad and long term responsibilities and rights of each participant in the educational service. Thus, it can maintain the efficiency of the educational service when many partners do not have a direct or hierarchical relationship. The current Chinese educational administration is developing towards the sharing of responsibilities, especially in the basic education sector. Considering the fact that only one important piece of educational legislation has been passed since the foundation of new China in 1949 (the Law of Compulsory Education), it seems that there is a long way to go before a sound legislative framework can be established.

Secondly, financial means are powerful methods of bringing attention and sometimes even action to the activities favoured by the senior level authorities through allocating more funds or giving

preferential treatments to certain activities by the lower level authorities. This is another powerful means by which a higher level education authority can influence its junior authorities and local services. Because nowadays funding to basic education (and much of the tertiary education) is made directly by the corresponding local government, extra funds from the SEdC (or from higher education authorities) will help it to balance regional developments and to influence the national or regional development in its preferred way.

The third important function which ought to be performed by the higher level education authorities, especially central authority, is support and coordination. As much power has been delegated to various levels of local governments today, many important decisions must be made by them. In order to make sound policies, information and the ability to make policies are crucial. As the delegation of power has just started, local governments are not yet accustomed to formulating legislation and policies on their own after too long a period of obeying and interpreting instructions from their superiors. In order to facilitate the formulation of policy, more information, more training of policy makers and more facilities would be appropriate supportive measures. In addition, by doing this, the SEdC (and other higher education authorities) can influence and coordinate various situations in the country so as to guide the development of the whole nation or whole region.

The final means which needs strengthening is the monitoring and supervisory function. Loosening control through bureaucratic regulations and strengthening rule by legislation challenges the traditional forms of inspection. The inspectorate must play the role of a

monitor to keep looking closely at local situation in order to maintain the efficiency of the service and reasonable educational standards. At the same time, it must play the role of a policeman in order to ensure that, after the rigid central control has been loosened, the specific statutory requirements are still satisfactorily met.

It must be remembered that in the present circumstances, the cases of violating the law of compulsory education are innumerable (see Chapter One for more details), thus it is necessary for some specific national requirements to be enforced. In addition, though the SEdC is giving up its command role, it is still a major controller of the educational service. The administrative method is still useful in many respects, as are the regulations. Therefore, the inspectorate in China cannot avoid performing the function of ensuring the implementation of legislation and national policies.

In short, inspection and supervisory methods in educational administration must be strengthened due to the changing central-local relationship and the emergence of a less rigid bureaucracy. These four methods, (legislative, financial, supportive and supervisory), should be developed strongly alongside the traditional administrative method to meet the new challenges in a less centralised system. This suggestion is directed not only to the State Education Commission, but is also perfectly applicable to every local authority with regards to its lower level education authorities.

## **8.2 To Provide Legislative Backing for the Inspectorate**

All the methods mentioned above are interrelated. For instance, the degree to which supervisory means can be successfully used in practice and bring about effects depends partly on administrative or legislative backing which provides the inspectorate with the necessary legitimacy. The current situation in China is that, while the administrative instrument is being weakened, the creation and strengthening of other means are not keeping pace with practical needs.

As described in Chapter Five, the Chinese inspectorate assumes the task of not only inspecting lower level education authorities, but also inspecting its next lower level government which makes major decisions on universal education and decides funding and other decisive provision to educational service. But next lower level government is administratively one rank higher than the inspectorate (rank: inspectorate < its employing education authority; its employing education authority = next lower level government, therefore, inspectorate < next lower level government, see Diagram 5.3). According to the administrative regulations, the subordinate cannot inspect the superior. But with the gradual loosening of hierarchical control, the administrative regulations are not as dominant and rigid as they were. Inspecting the next lower level government becomes possible. But there is no official document that clearly empowers the inspectorate to do so. Therefore, there is some confusion as to whether the inspectorate has sufficient legitimacy to inspect its next lower level of government. In many places where administrative rank is still vital, and the legitimacy to inspect is still largely based on administrative status, this inspectorate's activity is being challenged.

Due to this kind of awkward position, many inspectors in the country appeal for promotion of the inspectorate's status, i.e., to transfer the inspectorate from under the education authority to under the corresponding government, so that the inspectorate can at least have the same administrative rank as its next lower level government. Beijing Education Inspectorate, for example, enjoys the status of Beijing Government's direct office, and is administratively equal in rank to the Beijing Education Authority. Cooperation between these two is quite close. In fact, nothing is different from other inspectorates except for the administrative status.

Undoubtedly, this measure would enable the inspectorate to accomplish inspection and supervision tasks by raising its administrative authority. In particular, it facilitates the conduct of inspection of the next lower level of government. But the author has some reservations about this solution. It can be argued that the administrative chain (policy making, implementation and evaluation) would disintegrate if the inspectorate (the third component) breaks away from the other two. If the educational inspectorate can do so, there is no reason why other evaluation bodies in other governmental departments cannot do the same? It can also be argued that the implementation stage is equally important to the whole process of administration, so that those administrative branches are also eligible to break away. It can be further argued that only when it comes to enforcement, does administrative rank become a major consideration. In other words, when inspectors carry out tasks other than enforcement, such as routine visits, administrative rank is less important. Therefore, there is not sufficient justification for this way of promoting the inspectorate's status. It is understandable for the Chinese inspectors to want to adopt

this method for the time being. But in the author's opinion, it cannot and will not be a long term solution. In addition, by so doing, it makes it more difficult for the inspectorate to cooperate with its education authority, whether physically or organisationally.

In view of the present difficulty of the inspectorate in carrying out inspection of the next lower level local government, it can be suggested that, instead of separating the inspectorate and its education authority, it might be possible to give the inspectorate some special privileges. For example: inspectors could be appointed by the government instead of the education authority, but still work within it. Thus, the inspectors would be seen to have certain privileges to carry out their inspection missions. In addition, some special rights might be given to the inspectorate, for example: direct access of the inspectorate's head to the corresponding government, so that the inspectorate is able to express their views which would be difficult otherwise.

Although these measures can increase the inspectorate's authority to a certain extent in a short term, they are not solutions to the fundamental issue -- the inspectorate needs a long term and more formal backing to empower it to inspect next lower level government.

In England and Wales, HMI has the right to inspect any educational institution including local education authorities, though in practice, HMI spends much more time on school inspection than on inspection of LEAs. That is, HMI does not have the same difficulties as its Chinese counterpart. Its legitimacy to inspect is given by the law. The 1944 Education Act provides the statutory base for the work of the HM Inspectorate. It requires the Secretary of State (Minister) to cause

inspections to be made of every educational establishment. Therefore, in the English case, it is legislation, not the administrative status that entitles the inspectorate to carry out inspections.

In the author's view, this might be a hopeful solution to the Chinese problem. As argued earlier, along with the development of education reform, administrative means should no longer be treated as the sole instrument of educational administration. Other important means such as legislative and financial could be greatly strengthened to meet the challenges of a less centralised situation. In this case, the legitimacy of the inspectorate to carry out inspections should be recognised and written into the Education Act which is in the process of drafting and consultation at the moment. If it had the backing of an educational law, the inspectorate would be in a much better position, and, the need for promoting inspectorate's administrative status could be removed.

The Chinese inspectorate needs backing not only for inspecting the next lower level of government, but also for other necessary rights. There is no national document which formally spells out the basic rights and responsibilities of the inspectorate. At the regional level, only a few cities have done so (e.g., Beijing).

The circular "Some Observations on Realising Compulsory Education" transmitted in 1986 by the State Council on behalf of the State Education Commission required the restoration of the inspection system in the basic education sector to be responsible for inspection and guidance on implementing compulsory education. However, the circular specified neither the basic regulations of the inspectorate nor the time limit for its establishment, which implied that these matters

were up to the local governments to decide.

Thus, the fate of the inspectorate is decided by the local government by which it is supervised. First of all, a personnel quota must be approved, extra funding must be allocated, and proper administrative rank must be decided which is again related to the administrative quota.

But local governments at all levels (except township level) value the inspectorate and even the educational service itself differently. In practice, there are some places where very low importance is attached to the educational service. Education authorities are in a junior position among all governmental departments. Support for education is insufficient, and some funds for education are diverted to other uses. Hence, in these places, inspectorates are regarded as an extra burden on finance and staff quotas for local governments. Under these circumstances, how much support an inspectorate can get from an unwilling local government is doubtful. Thus, the work of these inspectorates cannot be carried out effectively, or even normally. Moreover, the authority of the inspectorate will definitely be limited when their recommendations are responded to indifferently by its government.

The inspectorates in Beijing and Ninbo city are among those which are paid great attention by their governments. They have relatively adequate staffing and supporting facilities, and most important, strong backing from the government all the time. By contrast, the inspectorate in Shandong province, for instance, is among those most recently established largely due to the indifference of its local government.

In short, a legislative framework is needed in educational inspection to give the inspectorate basic rights and authority so that it can carry out its duty effectively. This process is very much related to the legislation in overall education system, which is an important aspect of education reform in China today.

### **8.3 To Increase the Influence of the Inspectorate**

Restored to help government and education authorities implement the nine year compulsory education, the Chinese inspectorate should influence the work of education authorities as well as schools and lower level education authorities. But according to the field work findings, the inspectorate has only between "little influence" and "some influence" on its employing education authority. On its junior education authorities and schools, its influence is between "some" to "quite strong" (see Diagram 6.4, and Diagram 6.6). Many inspectors are very much concerned with their limited influence and authority.

In England, the reputation of HM Inspectorate has long been good. It exerts enormous influence on the schools and education authorities it visits and inspects to help them keep up with national developments. By applying their rich professional expertise, HM Inspectors offer suggestions to promote standards of education in schools. It also plays its role by means of indirect contact with schools and education authorities through methods like publications. Its influence on central government is recognised by the DES (see Chapter 4). It provides information to keep the DES well informed and offers influential advice on the formulation of national policy as well as on policy

implementation, though the degree of adoption largely depends on the willingness of the DES politicians. Two key reasons for its success are its professional expertise and its "conditional" independence of political and administrative influence.

For historical reasons, HM Inspectors are appointed by the Queen in Council, though the executive appointment is carried out by senior HMIs, and the Civil Service Commissioners. Compared with other civil servants, this special privilege helps the inspectorate, to a certain extent, to express its views more freely and more openly. Being independent, HMI manages to be able to say what it sees instead of what others want it to say. Additionally it enables HMI to comment more freely than other civil servants on the actual state of educational standards, which in one way or another reflects the correctness of the central government policies, the sufficiency of LEAs' educational provision, and the soundness of school teaching. This independence helps to ensure a certain degree of objectivity in the evaluation of educational performance. Thus, it enables HMI to retain its role as the safeguard of educational standards. However, this independence is not unlimited. On the contrary, it is conditional.

Firstly, the appointment of HM Inspectors, especially the Senior Chief Inspector, can be influenced by the choice of the politicians in power though this influence had been used with caution. Secondly, HMI has the statutory duty to work for the Secretary of State. Therefore, whatever HMI decides to do, it usually has to take into account the policy priorities laid down by the Secretary of State. Thirdly, although the Secretary of State has no right to revise whatever HMI has written, he (she) does have the right to refuse to publish them. And finally, the

advice offered by HMI is purely advisory, which means they can be ignored by politicians and civil servants. Nevertheless, the strong influence of HMI on the DES, on education authorities, and on school teachers is very much related to its independence.

In the Chinese case, the inspectorate lacks independence. Theoretically speaking, the inspectorate does not directly participate in decision-making and implementation though it can exert influence. The independent monitoring and feedback can help to ensure the objectivity of judgment on the consequences of policy implementation, which will usually result in either the adjustment of implementation, or the adjustment of policy itself. But as the previous chapters have shown, the majority of the inspectorates are under the supervision of their employing education authorities. Inspectors are exactly like other administrators: appointed by the education authority, financed by it, and receive instructions from its chief. They are virtually the representatives of the education authority.

What will happen if the inspectorate does not have due independence or does not perform the function of evaluating its authority's policy? Take the example of the central inspectorate which works under the direction of the State Education Commission. It is a dependent department of the SEdC and mainly carries out the mission of supervising the implementation of SEdC's policies in the whole country. If it only has the power to supervise, but has not adequate freedom to comment on SEdC's policy, should the SEdC's policy be incorrect, the consequences all over the country would be disastrous, as China is still more or less a centralised state. The same reason is applicable to local authorities. Although generally controlled by their higher level

authorities, local education authorities do assume greater responsibilities to operate educational affairs. Hence the feedback and the evaluation of the policy itself is essential for education authorities to do their job well.

Therefore, the inspectors, being in the position of providing feedback and evaluation, have the duty to evaluate the results of the other two steps in administration: implementation as well as policy making. (see Diagram 6.2). Hence the authority and legitimacy of the inspectorate must be sufficient to ensure the supervision of policy implementation and to offer sound advice to subordinates on one hand, and to truly reflect the real situation in the field and to comment on, or criticise if necessary, the policies made by its own authority on the other.

Some people might argue that, if the inspectorate is transferred from under its education authority to directly under the government, it would have some independence, because it is now separated from its education authority and enjoys the same rank. But according to interview findings and literature review, most of the inspectorates, though directly accountable to their governments, are still concurrently headed by the chief of the education authority. Therefore, this measure does little to increase the independence of the inspectorate. Apart from administrative rank, in all other aspects they are almost the same as the education-authority--led inspectorates, despite the theoretical assumption that the government-led inspectorates can have an independent voice in commenting on educational quality and educational provision as they are administratively equal to education authorities. The reason is that the education authorities are still the determinants of the work of the inspectorates.

In brief, the Chinese inspectorate not only needs sufficient authority to carry out inspection of any lower level government, education authority and school and to enforce legislation, but also needs due freedom to comment on the policies of its own education authority in order to effectively perform the function of evaluation. It is obviously impractical for the Chinese inspectorate to seek the same degree of independence as HMI, because HMI's independence is largely due to historical reasons as well as the unique feature of the English education system. But some measures can certainly be introduced to ensure that the inspectors can voice their views. For example, the head of the inspectorate can have direct access to the leaders in the government; inspectors have the right, and indeed the duty, to criticise any unsound policy or decision.

The second, and perhaps more direct reason which accounts for HMI's high authority is its high professional expertise. As all HMIs are selected from the most experienced teaching professionals or sometimes from seasoned professionals outside teaching circles (this usually happens in the higher education sector), their advice and assistance are trusted by teachers, administrators and even politicians to be authoritative professional opinions. Consequently, they are willing to accept HMIs' advice and put it into practice.

According to the survey conducted during the field work, the Chinese inspectors are selected from proficient administrators with previous teaching experience and from skilful head teachers who are good at both teaching and administration, so that professional competence should be considered sufficient. But the problem lies in the application of their professional experience and competence. At present, the main focus of

the inspectors is enforcement of legislation and inspection, in which case the professional competence cannot be fully utilised. In the author's view, the inspectors should seek other ways that can prove their expertise, e.g., advisory and persuasive methods, to gain trust and respect from teachers and administrators.

The final way in which the influence of the inspectorate (especially on schools and lower level education authorities) may be enhanced, and which is drawing from the experience of HMI, is the publication of inspection reports. Since the early 1980s, all the HMI's full inspection reports have been made available for public scrutiny. Though the original purpose was not for the advancement of HMI's authority, its influence did increase largely for the simple reason that the reputation of a school is heavily affected by the publicised HMI reports. In the current Chinese circumstances, it does not seem likely that the Chinese inspectorate would adopt this measure to achieve its aims. However, this method does have some potential hints. For example, the inspectorate could make the reports open within an appropriate scope, for example, to all the school heads, or make use of the mass media to publish some suitable information, or make the reports available to parents. All these measures are aimed not only at increasing the inspectorate's influence, but also at helping disseminate good practice and revealing the factual state of education in an area and to make education more accountable to the public.

Other important ways of increasing the inspectorate's influence are to establish a closer link with education authorities, and to balance its various functions and perform them effectively, so that the education authorities and the inspected institutions can actually benefit from its

discharging functions. These are discussed in section 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6.

## **8.4 To Establish Closer and Clearer Links With Education Authorities**

It becomes clear, after the analysis of research findings, that the inspectorate has not established a stable and systematic relationship with the rest of the education authority. One very likely reason is that the inspectorate at this stage is concentrating on completing its own organisation and thus has little time to consider further improvement. However, this is the issue that the inspectorate will inevitably encounter after the completion of the organisation, which is obviously of vital importance to the successful achievement of its goals.

First, the inspectorate does not have many channels through which the role of professional adviser to policy making can be fully played. The participation of the head of the inspectorate in the education authority's board meeting is certainly the most effective way of letting the inspectors' voice be heard. However, among so many branches, the voice of the inspectorate is not equal to other branches. And often, because of its junior position, the voice of the inspectorate is not paid special attention. Nevertheless, it is the most frequently used channel to express inspectors' view on policy directions. Indeed, most inspectorates do not have other channels. In a few inspectorates, the chief of the education authority concurrently holds the post as chief of the inspectorate though he does not do any executive work. The advantage of this, obviously, is the more frequent exchange of information and the heavier weight of inspectors' voice. However, it does create a problem for the inspectors

because all the inspection activities must be approved by the chief. Theoretically, if the policy making and the policy evaluation are carried out by the same person or the same group of people, the objectivity of the evaluation may be questioned.

Policy makers need advice, so do administrators in the education authorities. The recipients of professional advice should also include those administrators who are responsible for implementation. The results of implementation in practice should be constantly evaluated and implementers ought to be informed about the evaluation results so that they can adjust their way of working. At present, except for administrators' participation in large scale inspections, neither side has any other way of purposive cooperation. Therefore, as far as this aspect is concerned, there is much room for improvement. For example, how to establish some purposeful ways of communication so that both sides at least get to know what and how the other is doing. Apart from that, one would expect to see all inspectors, not only the head, having a part to play in advising their administrator colleagues.

In England, HM Inspectorate has existed for 150 years. Its influence has been recognised all over the country. Its credit is based on high quality inspections, objective assessment of education standards, supportive professional assistance and excellent monitoring and safeguarding of the system. By monitoring the system nationally and professionally, HMI continuously supplies information about the state of education to central government to help maintain standards of education in a decentralised system in which local government and individual schools both have a considerable degree of autonomy. Apart from the function of monitoring and reporting, HMI more importantly

performs the function of advice, by applying their unique professional expertise. Its assessment of the performance of the educational system, its professional anticipation of a proposed policy, its judgments on the effect of the DES policy in practice, are very helpful to the Secretary of State in his formulating national policies. The participation of many HMI in various levels of policy groups greatly enhances the chance for HMI to exert its influence. As to civil servants in the Department, many HMI, especially Staff Inspectors and Chief Inspectors, work closely with them, though there is no fixed meeting intervals.

If the Chinese inspectorate can establish a closer relationship with its education authority functionally and organisationally, strengthen its advisory function to its education authority, open up more channels of communication, and find more ways of collaboration, sooner or later, its position in the education authority will be recognised.

HMI has a close relationship with the DES. But this does not mean that HMI mixes itself up with the rest of the DES. It is a close yet clear relationship. It firmly retains its position as a professional wing of the Department and confines itself to its own duties. Although the line between policy making, implementation, and evaluation is not clear-cut in practice, as all the branches of the DES necessarily have to cooperate, the inspectorate tries to influence, instead of being directly involving in, the policy-making and implementation processes which it sees as necessary to ensure the best possible objectivity of evaluation.

In some Chinese education authorities, however, responsibilities and rights are mixed up between the inspection branch and other administrative branches. Before the establishment of inspectorate, the

function of feedback and monitoring, and implementation of policy were concurrently carried out by the sector administrative branches, (e.g., primary education branch), which had received strong criticism. After the setting up of the inspectorate, the redistribution of responsibilities and rights has not yet been completed. In some education authorities, responsibility among branches for decision-making, implementation and supervision is still unclear. The inspectorates sometimes draw up directives and regulations for the education authorities and sometimes help other branches by doing administrative work for them, whilst in some other places, inter-branch communication is so inadequate that one does not have much idea of what the other is doing. Sometimes when the inspector visits schools, he gives directions that are different from those of other branches in the education authority. Sometimes he cannot offer prompt advice because he does not know the plans of other branches. Another typical example is the administrators' participation in large scale inspections (full inspections and sometimes aspect inspections). Due to their incapacity to cover all aspects which need inspecting, and perhaps also due to their insufficient authority, the inspectors often invite members of other branches of the education authority and very often the heads of the authority to conduct the inspection together. Consequently, the limited number of inspectors actually play the role of coordinator instead of inspector. In other words, many judges of educational quality are still the administrators, rather than the inspectors. In this respect, one cannot help wondering whether the establishment of a separate inspection branch within an education authority has any real meaning, if the function of implementation and inspection are still, to a considerable extent, carried out by the same group of people -- the administrators. Although one can argue that the administrators' involvement in inspection strengthens the enforcement

and cushions the shortage of inspectors, but the objectivity of the evaluation of the quality of education can well be questioned.

Therefore, there is a need to define the rights and responsibilities of the inspectorate as distinct from other administrative branches in the education authority. In China, such specification of responsibilities is usually done by using SEdC statements or administrative circulars.

At present, there is no such formal statement for the inspectorate. There are only two reference sources: "Guiding Regulations of Educational Inspection" (draft) in 1983 and the "Summary of Conference on Educational Inspection" in 1987. Both of them are out of date to varying degrees. Without formal regulations, the Chinese inspectorates have difficulty in defining specifically their functions, responsibilities, and rights, which is perfectly understandable when one considers the fact that the Chinese are used to doing things according to directions from superiors. Since the responsibility for administering basic education has been delegated to local authorities, local governments at provincial, prefectural and county levels have the right to organise the inspection system in their own ways, of course taking into consideration the requirements of the higher level authorities. In addition, since China is such a large country with great variations in economic standards, cultural development and education quality, there cannot be a specific central statement on the inspection system which every inspectorate must follow. Regulations have to be made only on the basis of the actual environment within which the inspectorate is working. Although being aware of the changing power distribution among central and local authorities, and among different level education authorities, as well as the impossibility of the SEdC making detailed

regulation, local inspectorates are still expecting something detailed from central government. However, from the inspectorates' point of view, they are faced with an absence of experience, with a lack of explicit job descriptions (in some places), and worst of all, with overlapping responsibilities and rights with other administrative branches in the education authorities.

To solve this problem, both sides (the SEdC and various levels of local education authorities) should make some efforts. The SEdC could make very general statement to give local inspectorates a basic framework. Local education authorities could try to define the inspectorate's rights and responsibilities in the light of their own situation, instead of waiting for SEdC's circular.

As long as the inspectorates stick to their own duties and become an indispensable part of their education authorities, their influence will certainly increase.

## **8.5 To Strengthen the Cooperation Between the Inspectorate and the Teaching Research Office System**

Determined by the functions of the inspectorate, most Chinese inspectors are chosen from either existing administrators within the education authorities or school heads experienced in both management and teaching. Fairly speaking, despite the fact that inspectors are seldom selected directly from the present teaching force, both these two groups of personnel are good at teaching as well as at administration because the administrators in China (especially those in "educational-content-branches", for example, the primary education department as opposed to the finance and building department) were good teachers originally. Having a close look at Table 6.3d and 6.3e in chapter 6, one can discover that 74.6% inspectors have more than 15 years of teaching experience and 40.3% have more than 15 years of administration experience.

However, these inspectors' expertise or say specialities are not yet fully made use of as their tasks only require them to apply some of their knowledge and skills. Or, even if the expertise of individual inspectors is quite satisfactorily used, the district as a whole is still not balanced when it has, for example, two inspectors good at biology but only one at maths. Currently, the inspectorates either divide themselves (each inspectorate at all levels consists of 10-12 people on average) according to one of the following three criteria: district, phase, and task, though the chance of using the final one is quite rare; or simply do not divide at all. Virtually no inspectorate divides its force by subject specialities.

It is worth noticing that the higher the inspectorate's rank, the

higher the possibility of dividing by district. For instance, the national inspectorate in the SEdC divides the whole country into six regions in accordance with the national general administrative division and forms six groups corresponding to these six areas. While the higher level inspectorates are generally unable to divide labour by phase as it is economically and geographically infeasible, the lowest tier - county or city district inspectorates have a greater possibility of adopting this criteria as they are dealing directly with educational affairs in schools. However, as mentioned above, determined by the administrative nature of the inspection system, dividing by subject is unusual both in higher and lower inspectorates. This inevitably makes the inspectors less concerned with curriculum and teaching-learning matters during inspections and visits to schools and lower level education authorities.

Now the problem is, with only 6 inspectors every some 420 schools in a county, (in addition, inspectors are usually specialised in only one subject owing to the Chinese initial teacher training system), how is it possible to get a general picture of quality of teaching and learning in assigned schools? Only certain subjects which these few inspectors are good at can be covered and effectively inspected. Others are neglected or superficially visited, not to mention the fact that there are many inspectors whose teaching skill and knowledge has already become more or less out-of-date after so many years of doing administration. If so, one might naturally ask whether the function of monitoring and evaluating overall educational standards in schools can be satisfactorily achieved.

One will probably answer this question by saying that the responsibility for evaluating teaching and learning, and curriculum

matters belongs to the Teaching Research Office, which is a professional organisation under the leadership of the education authority. But the office site is usually inside the Teacher Training College or Teachers Centre instead of within the building of the education authority. Therefore, the inspectorate which is more concerned with management matters needs not to get involved in curriculum matters.

It is true that the two bodies have their own priorities, but they stand in similar positions in the administrative structure: feedback and evaluation. Although the inspectorate is more inclined to managerial side while the TRO oversees professional matters, they are closely interrelated and complementary. Management of a school or an area creates the environment in which professional matters can occur. In other words, the quality of pupil learning is the final criterion for judging management in schools and education authorities. Therefore, the evaluation of educational quality occupies an extremely important position in the overall evaluation of the educational performance.

The present separation of the inspectorate and the TRO disperses the evaluation of overall aspects of educational standards in schools, particularly when there is not much systematic and frequent collaboration between them, except for the TRO's involvement in full inspections. It becomes difficult to monitor and report the overall state of education promptly. Thus, the education authority receives different but interrelated information from two separate sources. In order for it to form a picture of the state of education, it would be preferable if the information came in as a whole. To the schools, teaching and learning is the core of education. Aspects other than that are regarded as the environment which influence the core. Therefore, these two parts are

closely interrelated and have the relationship of cause and effect. But the usual TRO practice is that it does not touch upon anything beyond the curriculum matters, teaching-learning and staff development. So that problems in these areas, which sometimes could be the result of managerial mistakes, would not be solved promptly when the TRO does not contact the inspectorate in time. In short, it is not only the separation of two organisations in terms of their work emphasis (inspectorate: organisational matters; TRO: professional matters) and in terms of their geographic office sites, but also their infrequent cooperation that results in the separation of monitoring schooling standards and providing advice, and thus causes inconvenience to both education authorities and schools.

Bearing in mind the different stresses in the functions of the inspectorate and that of the TRO in China, it is well worth looking at the way in which HMI divides its force. There is no such division of labour in England -- one body for inspecting administrative affairs and the other for professional matters. One single HM Inspectorate is responsible for monitoring and advising both professional matters, managerial affairs and resource provision. However, it does have what is in many respects a similar division -- general inspector and specialist inspector. Every ordinary HMI (i.e., those inspectors other than SCI, CI, SI, DI) assumes both the duties to look after and monitor overall aspects of educational quality in a range of schools and colleges, and to inspect and advise one or more specialised subjects in a larger number of establishments, as they were all successful teachers before joining HMI. If a general inspector discovers a problem that needs attention, he or she would ask the help from the relevant specialist inspectors who are closely cooperative. To make it clearer, instead of dividing personnel into

two groups, HMI divides the responsibilities of each inspector. By doing so, the professional specialities of every inspector can be effectively made of use, and helping each other become inevitably possible.

The difficulty of transferring the English experience to the Chinese context is the clear bureaucratic division between the inspectorate and the TRO. Unlike HMI which has total control of its personnel, they are under the leadership of the same education authority.

It is not recommended by the author that the Chinese inspectorate should be organised exactly the same as HMI - that is: to recruit hundreds of inspectors and make them both general and specialist inspectors. Neither is the author suggesting that inspecting curriculum and teaching learning must, as in the English case, occupy a dominant position in the work of the Chinese inspectorate. But considering the present inadequate cooperation between the TRO and the inspectorate and the importance of a close relationship, there is a need for some improvement.

There are several possible solutions. One is to merge the inspectorate and the TRO into one integrated organisation since both bodies are responsible for monitoring and advising on different but closely interrelated educational aspects. Alternatively, if the two forces are not combined organisationally, they might work in the same building as the transportation and the communication system are still not yet developed in China. However, it seems that at present, the only practical answer is to strengthen cooperation between the two units. In order to do that, not only the inspectors and TRO staff but the heads of the education authority stand in broader and higher perspective, should devote major

efforts, because being bound by the bureaucratic rules, what the inspectorate and the TRO themselves can do is limited. How to redistribute the responsibilities in order to avoid overlapping or omission and how to allocate the personnel taking the other side's personnel structure into account so that all the aspects of education could be looked after by a well balanced force? Both these questions need careful consideration and perhaps some pilot experiments.

In the author's opinion, the first thing should be the necessary consideration of inspectors' subject specialities when recruiting them. Similarly, the TRO members should also have a certain degree of familiarity with school management. Thus, both teams would have different expertise of their own but generally know something about everything. This would provide the basis on which the cooperation between the two bodies can be built. Secondly, the inspectors usually act as general inspectors carrying out the task of implementing national and regional policies, monitoring the overall state of education including curriculum and teaching learning. But if certain professional matters need particular attention, the TRO staff could offer prompt help. Similarly, the TRO members are mainly responsible for implementing the national curriculum and syllabus. But, if some problems in curriculum and teaching learning are brought about by the non-professional factors, the inspectors could be promptly informed and proper action could be taken. In addition, the inspectors and the TRO members should plan the work, especially the surveys and full inspections, jointly instead of separately. That is to say, the TRO staff should contribute to the planning and be active participants in the inspections and school visits, instead of passive guests invited who are not so well prepared (see Appendix C). Moreover, it could be suggested

that both units should have frequent exchanges of information between them as well as with the education authority so that feedback could be as all encompassing as possible. All these require a much closer relationship between the inspectorate and the Teaching Research Office.

In summary, bureaucratic separation plus inadequate cooperation between the inspectorate and the TRO hinders the overall monitoring and evaluation of educational standards in schools and in regions. It also causes some inconvenience to their education authorities. So suggestions have been made with the aim of bringing these two bodies to work more closely together, if not a total merger. But the author also feels that more could be done by the leaders of the education authority than by the two units themselves.

## **8.6 To Strengthen Other Functions Apart From Enforcing Policy Implementation**

Being in the position to provide supervision, feedback and monitoring, the functions of the Chinese inspectorate are multiple. According to the draft regulations produced by the State Education Commission in 1983, the inspectorates are supposed to "check, supervise, and guide the implementation of national educational legislation and policies", to "evaluate the standards of education in schools and the quality of educational administration in education authorities", to "report to the authorities on the comments and reactions of the schools, education authorities and educationists," and finally to "help education authorities and their local governments in the discharge of their educational responsibilities." The results of the field

work in China confirm that these are the main functions of the inspectorate in practice.

However, the field work findings also show that different functions carry different weights. For example, because of the contradiction between the urgency to realise universal education in the country and the innumerable problems in reality, the Chinese inspectorate treats "ensuring implementation of compulsory education legislations and other national policies" as the prior function above all. Therefore, to the school and education authorities, it is inspection rather than advice that is provided. The function of evaluating educational standards and administrative efficiency and supervising policy implementation carried much more weight than the function of "providing professional advice" (see Table 6.9). To its employing education authority, it leans towards the function of "providing information on the state of education". The function of "providing professional advice" was performed considerably less (see Table 6.4).

Now the question is: "Is this the right balance between different functions? What should be the appropriate balance"?

If one looks at the expectations of the teachers and administrators, which are shown in Table 6.17, one can see that both the expectations of the administrators and those of the school heads signal the need for the inspectorate to reconsider the balance of different functions. The research findings on the working methods of the inspectorate draw a similar conclusion that more methods should be introduced and the balance should be adjusted (refer to section 6.3.3). At present, full inspection and routine visit are the most commonly used methods

because the inspectorate wants to give every school an evaluation as the first task after its establishment. To the education authorities and various level governments, aspect inspection is the most popular method because obviously frequent full inspections cannot be afforded. But it is clear that the provision of the information on the state of education cannot merely rely on a limited number of full inspections. In addition, though the routine visit is flexible and relatively frequent, it is more suitable for monitoring the general state of education than for collecting special aspects of information to enable particular decisions to be made. What new methods should be employed, how to obtain a well balanced combination of working methods in order to fulfil the different functions which themselves need adjustments, are questions worth considering by the Chinese inspectors.

Looking at the ways in which HMI deals with the issue of balancing different functions and working methods, one can see that although carrying out inspection is the major task of HM Inspectorate, it does keep a more reasonable balance of different functions. Apart from conducting inspections and surveys, HM Inspectors spend a certain amount of time visiting schools advising on teaching and management, though this time has been reduced due to the increased contribution of the local advisory services as well as the DES' growing interest in the formulation of national policy. In addition, they conduct many INSET courses for school teachers using their professional expertise and rich nationwide experience. Furthermore, HMI publishes not only inspection reports but also a vast number of pamphlets which offer comments on educational standards, express professional views on certain matters, and give advice on curriculum and teaching. Moreover, HMIs often participate in various meetings of professional and amateur

organisations to contribute their expertise. In short, though inspection occupies a major position, other functions, especially advisory functions do have a reasonable place.

In current Chinese practice, most of the inspectorates the author visited (and indeed, most inspectorates in the country) are busy evaluating educational standards in all schools in their areas, "in order to test our newly established evaluation criteria as well as to give every school a basic idea of their schooling standards", claimed the inspectors. Senior level inspectorates are engaged in inspecting education authorities and governments on their implementation of national regulations. This inspection work occupies most of the time. The inspectors usually pay routine visit to schools only at the beginning, middle, and the end of the term.

Learning from HMI, and adapting in the light of the Chinese conditions, one can propose recommendations as follows:

Firstly, there is no need to evaluate all the schools in a short period, especially in the places where universal education has been achieved. In some prefectural and county areas, some evaluation criteria include very complicated mathematical formula. Evaluation is a very serious business, it is not a fashion. Testing the evaluation criteria is necessary at this stage, but sampling would be sufficient. Too much time devoted to this would be a waste.

On the other hand, once local governments and education authorities gain more autonomy in managing educational affairs, the need to strengthen an advisory force to assist decision-making naturally arises.

When those governments and education authorities have not yet adjusted themselves completely to the new style of administration, advice is especially needed. In addition to the government side which needs advice, schools also require help. As mentioned before, the "Head Teacher in Charge" system has been gradually put into practice and the power of the school is also increasing. Thus, decision-making at the school level is also eager for advice.

The work of the inspectorate and the way it works, and the fact that most inspectors possess rich experience in both teaching and administration, cause the author to believe that the Chinese inspectorate should have some part to play in assisting decision-making by those responsible for running the educational system. In other words, the advisory function should be strengthened without delay. The ways of doing it can be multiple: to increase the frequency of contact between inspectors and heads of education authorities and other administrators; to let every inspector (not only the head of the inspectorate) have a role to play in advising relevant administrators; to plan a reasonable combination of full inspections, surveys, and routine visits; to give lectures in school management and teaching, or organise school heads' seminars, in cooperation with the Teaching Research Office; to disseminate good practice by publishing summaries of experience and advisory pamphlets, and so on.

In summary, while admitting that ensuring policy implementation must remain a major function for a long period of time, other functions, especially those advisory functions, should be strengthened as quickly as possible to respond to practical needs.

## **8.7 To Establish a Dynamic and Effective National Network of Inspectorates**

The organisational structure of the inspection system in China, both central and local, has been introduced and analysed in considerable detail in Chapter Five. One feature worth mentioning again is that every local inspectorate is jointly supervised by its corresponding education authority (or in some cases by corresponding government) and by the inspectorate of its next higher level, though the recent emphasis lies on the former in accordance with the call for decentralisation. The supervision of the next higher inspectorate is quite weak at present, largely due to the incomplete organisation of the inspection system.

Generally speaking, if the system of educational administration is totally decentralised and the central education government does not have any leadership or supervision function towards the local education authorities (or any higher level authorities towards lower ones), the inspectorates at these two levels would be likely to be independent of each other and not to have the relationship of leading or being led. In a system that is more or less a partnership, like the one in England and Wales, the inspection system is composed of two separate inspectorates (central and local). A feature is that though organisationally these two bodies are independent of each other, they do have reasonably frequent and a wide range of cooperation through contacts between the district inspector (HMI) and the local advisers, through inspectors' association meetings and through some joint activities. But still, one is not dependent upon or supervised by the other. What they do is not controlled by the other though influence does sometimes exist. In a highly centralised system, however, like the one China used to be, the

inspectorates themselves form a hierarchy within which every inspectorate is accountable to the next higher level and implements the orders from the one above. In this case, the inspectorates are highly dependent and obedient to their superior inspectorates.

The current situation in China is somewhere between the last two models, i.e., not as highly centralised as it was, but definitely not as partner-like as the English one. In other words, decentralisation takes the form of power delegation more than of power devolution. The central and higher authorities still have considerable influence and control over the decision-making of the lower level authorities, particularly over matters of principle, general directions and problematic issues. Meanwhile, local governments have obtained greater freedom to make their own policies and by-legislation which do not contradict the state spirit.

Control has started to become less rigid and local freedom has been increasing. The inspectorates, as part of the administration mechanism, should adjust themselves to the present situation. This means that the relationship among different level inspectorates should be a reasonable combination of control and freedom. At present, the relationship is neither stable nor sound. There are a number of shortcomings that need to be improved.

First is the weak role of coordination and liaison played by higher level inspectorates (i.e., every inspectorate to its next lower level inspectorates). Since the inspection system started building up not long ago, virtually no inspectorate has any experience. In these circumstances, disseminating good practice and exchanging experience

is extremely helpful for all inspectorates. In addition to this, keeping a certain degree of balance of the development among lower level inspectorates is also the responsibility of higher level inspectorates. But currently higher level inspectorates have done very little about this for an understandable reason --- they are unable to fend for themselves. Nevertheless, this might be a direction of improvement later.

The second is the lack of proper division of responsibilities and cooperation among different level inspectorates. If all the inspectorates assume the same task of inspecting schools, it is clear that the higher the level, the more difficult for the inspectorate to oversee the whole area, because of the large size of the country and the limited number of inspectors. (provincial level: 8-10; prefectural level: 6-8; county: 5-6). In other words, with that limited number of inspectors, the information they collect in person through a limited number of inspections and visits to schools and lower level education authorities is not typical and general enough to reflect the overall state of education, thus to enable their authorities to make sound decisions. Therefore, there is a need for different level inspectorates to divide the responsibilities and take different priorities. One solution which is the case in the present practice, is to let the higher inspectorates (provincial, prefectural) inspect lower level governments and education authorities, and let the lowest level inspectorates (county) inspect schools.

While acknowledging the soundness of this solution, one can still argue that the higher inspectorates should allocate a certain amount of time and manpower to inspect schools regularly (perhaps not as frequently as the lowest level inspectorates) instead of being content with merely inspecting lower level education authorities. Inspecting

education authorities serves the purpose of ensuring proper implementation of policies and monitoring the state of administration. It also contributes, to a certain extent, to the monitoring of the state of education in grass roots schools. However, it should be borne in mind that the information of the state of education in grass roots schools through this channel is second hand and indirect, and may well be incomplete. To be able to provide sound and thorough advice to their education authorities, inspectors should have some first hand evidence both of the educational provision of lower education authorities and of the educational standards in schools.

The final issue concerning the poor relationship among inspectorates is the weak cooperation among inspectorates at the same level. The impression emerging from the interviews is that the inspectorates of the same rank seldom meet except at higher education authorities' infrequent meetings. Undoubtedly, every inspectorate works under different conditions, and therefore has different experiences and different ways of working. But the author believe that common elements do exist, especially in the neighbourhood inspectorates. This area has considerable potential for development.

Paying some attention to HMI, one can see that though HMI is an integrated inspectorate (as opposed to the Chinese inspectorate which consists of tiers of individual inspectorates), its experience in organising and managing seven divisions still has some enlightenment (the detailed account of the organisation of HM Inspectorate can be found in chapter three). Firstly, in the annual programme of HMI's work, nearly two thirds of the inspectors' time is devoted to the so-called "issue-led inspection" which really refers to those predetermined activities

including inspections, surveys, and INSET courses. In so doing, the central part of the inspectorate, (i.e. the decision-making body of 7 Chief Inspectors and 1 Senior Chief Inspector) can ensure the close monitoring of the general state of education as well as the satisfactory collection of special information to respond to the policy priorities set down by the Secretary of State. This ultimately serves as the basis for judging educational standards and offering professional advice to those with responsibilities for the educational system.

This feature of clear central determination of the programme cannot fully apply to the Chinese inspection system because, instead of being a single inspectorate, they are a network of numerous inspectorates. The existing difficulty is that the limited manpower cannot cope with the task of closely monitoring large areas and of collecting adequate information. It is especially true in senior level inspectorates, bearing in mind that the higher the level of the inspectorate, the more difficult to monitor the assigned area, especially when the number of inspectors is small. This might be partly solved by strengthening cooperation among inspectorates. That is to say, every higher inspectorate could entrust its lower inspectorates with a certain number of predetermined missions. These missions could be the combination of long-term, medium-term, and short-term tasks. The content of these missions could include such tasks as the collection of certain information required by the policy priorities, the participation in inspections and surveys, and the contribution of publications, depending on the actual needs in a particular period. These tasks should not, however, be as many as those in the HMI programme because the lower inspectorates have their own duties entrusted by their local governments. Apart from assigning some predetermined tasks to the inspectorates at lower level, the higher level

inspectorates can also request the submission of all the inspection reports, or could ask for themselves to be briefed regularly to strengthen communication.

With the help of the corresponding lower level inspectorates, each next higher inspectorate can, to a certain extent, cushion the shortage of manpower, because some information would be sent by lower level inspectorates instead of having to be collected in person by inspectors at higher levels. One could even think of the possibility of employing computers to facilitate this work. Given the present economic level, it is unlikely for the Chinese inspectors to have as many computers as their English counterparts. But there are some national computer products at affordable prices. Even a few of them in the whole country will greatly speed up communications among different level inspectorates which are scattered in a large country. Having obtained the information sent by lower level inspectors, plus its own observations, the senior level inspectorates would be more able to judge the standards of education and administration in its area, and to form a more solid basis for offering professional advice. In addition, inviting inspectors from lower inspectorates to take part in inspections and surveys can increase the position of the inspectors in the inspection team and weaken the influence of administrators who, theoretically speaking, should not be on the list of the inspection team.

One might wonder if the problem of manpower shortages would be even more serious when the inspectorate had to devote some of its manpower to the tasks from the higher level. The answer is "not necessarily". Bearing in mind that the inspectorate has some duties towards its higher rank inspectorate in the first place, therefore,

carrying out some tasks is perfectly justifiable. Secondly, by asking its lower inspectorates to offer help, **each** inspectorate (except the ones at lowest level) can actually reduce some work load, which will automatically save some room for the tasks from the higher inspectorate. Thirdly, by carrying out work for higher ranking colleagues, the inspectorate can keep abreast of recent developments and future tendencies in a broader perspective, which will be very helpful to its own work. Finally, as was said before, the task load given by the higher inspectorate should not be as much as to disrupt the work of the lower inspectorates. Having said that, the fundamental solution will have to be a much greater number of inspectors.

The role of the HM Staff Inspector and Division Inspector might have some applications with regard to liaison between the Chinese higher and lower level inspectorates. In the HMI system, Staff Inspectors are responsible for digesting the general decisions made by the CIs and conversely, sorting out and processing information obtained from the field. Division Inspectors are the people who oversee and coordinate all HMIs' activities within their divisions. Therefore, they are the key people forming a connecting link between decision-makers and actual implementors.

To continue the suggestions to the Chinese inspectorate, in order to increase the collaboration between different level inspectorates, one senior inspector could be selected among the ordinary inspectors to be the liaison among inspectorates. This "liaison inspector" would digest the tasks from the higher level inspectorate and make detailed plans which integrate an overall plan for his (her) own inspectorate, and report to the higher inspectorate regularly about the tasks being carried

out. This is a function somewhat similar to that of Staff Inspectors of HMI. It is believed by the author that the assignment of predetermined tasks and the appointment of liaison inspectors would help to establish a dynamic network in which the inspectorates could regularly communicate. Certain necessary information from different areas could be gathered quickly and truthfully, whilst local freedom is maintained.

The third consideration is related to cooperation among inspectorates of the same organisational rank. In the case of HMI, there are seven divisions which cover the whole of England and Wales. Because every member of HM Inspectorate is deployed by the headquarters in London, the usual exchange of manpower between different divisions usually takes the form of joint inspection and surveys. This practice is out of the consideration to ensure objectivity of judgment and with the intention of bringing inspectors up-to-date.

At present, Chinese inspectorates at the same administrative tier do not have much contact and collaboration except seeing each other at the meetings held by the higher inspectorate. In many places, higher level inspectorates themselves have not been completely set up, thus the chances of gathering them together are rather slim. Increasing communication among not only different rank inspectorates but different inspectorates of the same rank could be very beneficial. Three limitations are: in the first place, moving HM Inspectors around is mainly centrally controlled and coordinated (though personal help does exist), whilst in China, the higher level inspectorate seldom perform this function. In the second place, the exchange would only be feasible among neighbouring inspectorates as the long distance from one area to the other prevents those far-reaching inspectorates from joining.

Finally, each inspectorate is a separate body, unlike the division in HMI which is an integral part of a single inspectorate. Therefore, the frequency of exchange could not be as often as to affect the normal work of the inspectorates.

The final application of HMI's organisational experience is the division of labour within the inspectorate. As analysed in Chapter Four, the whole inspectorate is actually composed of three types of people: decision maker; planners; and implementors -- the structure by which two-way communications can be effectively carried out.

If we examine the inner structure of each Chinese inspectorate, these three components do exist: the head of the inspectorate is the main decision-maker, and the other two functions are covered by both the heads and the inspectors as every local inspectorate is small with 6-12 people. But if one looks at the national network of inspectorates as a whole, one can see that the division of responsibilities is not clear enough. Every inspectorate, no matter what level it is, performs similar though not duplicate functions. There is no clear division of priorities between different levels.

In the author's view, the basic work, and indeed most of the work ought to be similar in inspectorates at different levels, as they are all integrated inspectorates rather than different parts of one inspectorate. In addition, they all have a duty to help their own education authorities (or local governments) discharge educational responsibilities. But, because of the centralised nature of the system, and because of the difference in administrative positions, the inspectorates of different rank should have some different roles to play. To elaborate, the central and

provincial inspectorates should spend more manpower and resources in planning the building of the whole inspection system in general. They should also focus on the collection of vast amounts of information to inform their employing authorities in order to help make important decisions which will have a strong effect on the nation or on the province. One more role that the central and provincial inspectorates should start to strengthen is the role of coordinator, which was not been paid much attention to in the past when all the subordinate units carried out the same directives. But today every local inspectorate, under the leadership of its own education authority and local government, has its own way of working. As time goes on, different features and possible imbalances are likely to appear. Thus the coordination function of the higher level inspectorate is required in order to let all its subordinate inspectorates have a reasonable balanced development.

To summarise this section, drawing from HMI's experience of managing its force, the following suggestions could be put forward to improve the Chinese system:

(1) higher level inspectorate should add a small amount of predetermined work to the regular plans of its lower level inspectorates;

(2) every inspectorate should set up "liaison inspectors" to facilitate its cooperation and communication with inspectorates at higher levels as well as with those at the same level;

(3) collaboration among neighbouring inspectorates should be strengthened in order to exchange experience and to enhance objectivity of judgment;

(4) Certain differentiation of the roles of different level inspectorates is needed. Higher level inspectorates should concern themselves more with assisting important policy making.

In conclusion, there is a great deal of experience that can be learned from the HMI system by those responsible for developing the Chinese inspection system. Some are directly applicable, whilst others need various adaptations. All the discussions above are the author's own suggestions to the Chinese inspectors and administrators after making comparisons with HM Inspectorate. Obviously, some of the suggestions have immediate implications. But others will not be realised in the near future. Chapter Nine tries to speculate on possible directions for the future development of the Chinese inspection system.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **CONCLUSION**

This concluding section of the thesis summarises its major points and speculates on possible directions for the development of the Chinese inspection system on the basis of the suggestions made in the preceding chapter as well as the present practical conditions in China.

#### **9.1 Summary**

The adoption of the law of nine-year universal education in 1986 and the rising need to enforce this legislation, together with the delegation of power in educational administration as a part of the overall education reform, resulted in the reestablishment of the Chinese inspectorate in late 1986. The Chinese inspectors, being aware that they lacked experience in this field, initiated a series of exchanges with foreign inspectorates. Of all the inspectorates with which China had had contact, HM Inspectorate in England was the one with which there had been the most frequent and extensive cooperation and which was certainly seen by the Chinese as being a valuable reference. This inspired the author, who happened to be beginning a period of post-graduate study in England, to undertake this thesis on the functions and organisational structures of both HMI and the Chinese inspectorate as a basis for putting forward relevant suggestions to the newly restored Chinese inspectorate.

A great deal of effort has been made by the Chinese education authorities and inspectors to set up inspectorates at almost all administrative levels (except the township level) and to perform the functions required by the existing circumstances in educational service. Because the inspectorate has been created to help ensure the successful implementation of the law of nine-year universal education, the inspectors are equipped with certain administrative powers. They are expected to enforce the Law and other relevant national and regional policies. They are entitled to make recommendations to their authorities that they praise or criticise school heads and leaders in lower level education authorities. But their power is not unlimited. It is only derived from their right to enforce national and regional legislation and important policies. According to official claims and the author's similar research findings, the work of the Chinese inspectors is, at present, dominated by the supervision and enforcement of the Law and policies, and by the evaluation of educational provision in regions and educational standards in schools. This fact is obviously consistent with the reasons for the establishment of the inspectorate. Apart from the implementation of the Law, the delegation of power from centre to local areas and from education authorities to individual schools also contributes to the demand for inspectorate. An increasing number of education authorities have begun to realise the function of monitoring and feedback that the inspectorate can offer. Along with the deepening of decentralisation, the need for monitoring (as opposed to controlling) the work in lower level areas is rising. Therefore, the inspectors' biggest contribution to their employing education authorities, as revealed by the research findings, is to provide up-to-date information about the state of educational provision in areas and educational standards in schools. Enforcement of legislation and the provision of information to

educational authorities seem to be the most important tasks for the Chinese inspectors at this particular time.

The field work carried out by the author also exposed some issues in the inspection system that are existing or are likely to emerge in the not too distant future. Firstly, the inspectors concentrate on the supervision of policy implementation and give much lower priorities to other functions. Such functions include encouraging innovation in schools and in lower level education authorities, disseminating good practice, and offering professional advice to those who run schools and administer education service. To their employing education authorities, inspectors give a much higher priority to the function of providing information than to other functions. Such functions include the professional assessment of the performance of the system on the basis of the collected information and evidence, the identification of the issues and trends in the implementation of the nine-year compulsory education and in the education reform, and the offering of professional advice to the education authorities on policy making and implementation. Many of the functions mentioned above are becoming increasingly important, particularly in the present circumstances when every local government and education authority has gained considerable freedom to make more independent decisions.

The present working methods, which result from the existing dominant function of enforcing legislation and evaluating standards, include full inspections, aspect inspections and routine visits. Apart from that, few extra activities, either in person or indirectly, have been initiated by the inspectorate to supplement its communication with schools and lower level education authorities. In relation to its

employing education authority, the inspectorate's involvement in the policy-making process is, at the moment, exercised only through the participation of the inspectorate head in the authority's board meetings. Cooperation between ordinary inspectors and their administrator colleagues is mainly reflected in joint inspections. Although informal contact and cooperation do exist, the extent is by no means satisfactory. The Teaching Research Office (TRO), a national network of professional organisations whose task is to ensure compliance with the nationally unified curricula, is often invited to take part in the full inspections organised by the inspectorate. But cases of further collaboration between these two bodies are hard to find. In the author's opinion, although there are certain divisions of labour between the inspectorate and the TRO (the inspectorate is more concerned with administrative and organisational matters whilst the TRO is more concerned with professional matters), they both perform functions of monitoring and supervision. Because of their similar position of feedback and evaluation, and particularly because of the highly interdependent relationship between organisational matters and professional matters in any educational establishment, these two bodies should have considerable degree of integration, or at least cooperation. In brief, better working methods have yet to be invented and put into practice. The cooperation mechanism with the employing education authority including the TRO is not yet an effective network. Not only the head of the inspectorate but also all the inspectors ought to have a role to play in influencing the work of the education authorities.

Changing the perspective of analysis from individual inspectorates and their relationships with various bodies to the network of inspectorates nationwide, the author feels that although the immediate

task is to complete the organisation of the system and to establish relationships among various level inspectorates, the long term issue will be to set the right balance between control and autonomy among them. Clearly, this distribution is very much affected by the power distribution among different level education authorities. Because the latter is still at an early stage with certain confusions and ups and downs, one would expect that a stable relationship among inspectorates will not be achieved in the near future. Basically, under contemporary Chinese conditions, an effective and dynamic network of inspectorates requires the inspectorates at different levels as well as those at the same administrative level to have sufficient communication and a certain degree of cooperation. It expects the senior level inspectorates to play the role of coordinator and supervisor rather than the role of commander. It needs reasonable differences in functions and in responsibilities among different level inspectorates.

Looking at the functions, working methods and organisational structure of HM Inspectorate, one can observe considerable differences from those of the Chinese inspectorate. The primary duty of HMI is to report to the Secretary of State on the performance of the education system nationally in order to enable him (her) to formulate and implement national policy. Other associated functions include offering professional assistance and advice to those with responsibilities for or in the institutions in the system to help maintain and promote educational standards. In order to carry out these functions, HMI employs full inspections, short inspections, surveys and routine visits as its main methods of collecting evidence and carrying out evaluations. In addition, frequent publications and regular INSET courses are additional ways by which professional advice can be offered. Inside the

DES, the Senior Chief Inspector holds the rank of Deputy Secretary and has direct access to the Secretary of State, which obviously increases the influence of the inspectorate in the Department. In addition, inspectors' participation in various planning committees opens up more channels through which the voice of the experienced professionals can be heard. HMI also offers professional judgments and advice to the civil servants in the DES through their day-to-day contact.

The organisational structure of HMI provides an efficient environment in which its functions can be well performed. The three groups of people, namely, Senior Chief Inspector and Chief Inspectors, Staff Inspectors, and HMI assume the tasks of decision-making, planning and execution respectively. The division of labour among these three groups of people is very clear. Dividing ordinary HMIs into general inspectors and specialist inspectors ensures the efficient collection of both general and specialist information required by the headquarters in London. Meanwhile, by so doing, both the overall performance and individual subjects in schools and colleges can be looked after by relevant HMIs. The post of District Inspector establishes the linkage between HMI, as a national inspectorate, and the local education authorities and their advisory services.

Not all the merits of the HMI system are transferable to the Chinese system because, as repeatedly argued earlier, the system of inspection is very much influenced by its educational administration system. HMI's prime task is to report to the Secretary of State on the efficiency of the education system whilst the Chinese inspectorate is there to supervise and enforce the implementation of the Law. Therefore, while both inspectorates belong to efficiency inspectorates, the Chinese inspectorate

does have certain elements of enforcement. The difference in power that the two inspectorates possess, the difference in the aspects that the two inspectorates are mainly concerned with, the difference in objects that are being inspected, the difference in relationship between central and local inspectorates, the difference in the degree of independence that two inspectorates enjoy, more importantly, the difference in the basic ideology of administration -- centralisation and decentralisation, as well as the geographical size and the level of economic development, all have given rise to the difficulties in making comparisons and in transferring HMI experience to China. Nevertheless, both inspectorates perform the function of maintaining and promoting the efficiency of the education service, the function of providing up-to-date information to education authorities, the function of offering assistance and advice to various partners in educational system. Both inspectorates employ similar methods to fulfil their functions. Both inspectorates have something in common in terms of the organisational structures. All these similarities provide the basis on which comparisons can be made and provisional recommendations can be proposed.

Learning from HMI from a contextual perspective, the author has put forward following suggestions to the Chinese inspectors: (1). to diversify the means of educational administration in the course of decentralisation; (2). to provide legislative backing for the inspectorate; (3). to increase the influence of the inspectorate; (4). to establish closer and clear links with education authority; (5). to strengthen the cooperation between the inspectorate and the Teaching Research Office system; (6). to strengthen other functions apart from enforcing policy implementation; (7). to establish a dynamic and effective national network of inspectorates. The detailed analysis and arguments can be

found in the previous chapter.

## **9.2 Possible Directions for the Development of the Chinese Inspectorate**

### **9.2.1 To speed up the Completion of Organisation**

Needless to say, the first step in establishing a system is to set up organisations. This includes many organisational and managerial matters such as deciding the levels at which the inspectorate should be set up, appointing inspectors from various sources, and allocating the necessary resources to maintain its day-to-day activities.

When the field work was conducted in May 1989, the author learned that 24 out of 31 provinces and 138 out of 334 prefectures had completed the organisation of an inspectorate. County level education authorities were starting to do so. When he came to visit England in June 1990, the head of the Central Inspectorate told the author that all the provincial level inspectorates had been set up, so had the majority of the prefectural inspectorates, (although he failed to give an exact figure), and more and more county level education authorities were starting to do so. Bearing in mind that the Law requires the majority of the areas in the country to make nine-year education universal by the end of 1995, the desire is to speed up the establishment of inspectorates so that the system can be put into operation as soon as possible. In order to do that, several steps have to be taken. Firstly, more resources and particularly more inspectors are needed because inspection work inevitably requires an adequate number of inspectors and a considerable amount of funds and other

facilities. In a few education authorities, inspectors have priority for vehicles for their inspections and routine visits. But most inspectorates are struggling very hard to try to persuade the Staffing Department of the local government (which is responsible for deciding personnel quota) even to allow an adequate number of inspectors so that the inspector school ratio can be reduced to a reasonable figure. But the present governmental policy of cutting the personnel quota in public administration authorities makes the inspectors' campaign difficult. Provincial governments, under direct pressure from central government, are usually more likely to give in to inspectors' demands, whilst the junior level governments (e.g. county) are more difficult to convince as they do not face as much pressure as the provincial governments. In most education authorities, inspectors either have to work overtime or have to give up some of their work because of the shortage of staff. Since the support that an inspectorate can receive depends very much on the attitudes of individual local government, their determination to enforce the Law and their recognition of the role of the inspectorate in this process, further publicity is needed in order to make known the importance of the inspection system. In 1989, when the field work was conducted, many inspectors expressed concern about their governments' lack of interest in inspectorates. They felt that the government regarded the inspectorates as personnel and financial burdens. But it is believed by the author that along with the progress of the education reform, more and more responsibilities for ensuring the successful implementation of the Law of the nine-year universal education will fall on to local governments and their education authorities at various levels. This will inevitably create great demands on law enforcement. Meanwhile, more and more power to make detailed and contextual decisions will be delegated to lower levels. The need for

close monitoring and evaluation will also rise. Thus, the roles that the inspectorate can play will eventually be recognised by politicians, administrators and professionals at large. Moreover, this recognition will certainly be reinforced when the inspectorate shows its effects and functions in practice.

### **9.2.2 To Provide a Statutory Base for Carrying Out Inspections**

As analysed in the preceding chapters, the Chinese inspectorate has been challenged by many administrators when it carries out the inspections of the government at the next lower level. A suggestion was offered, with reference to HMI experience, that the legitimacy to inspect should be guaranteed by legislation rather than by administrative circulars.

Over recent years, the State Education Commission has been organising various bodies to draw up a series of educational legislation. Two basic pieces are the Teacher Act and the Education Act. It is desirable that the inspection system, as one part of the educational administration, be mentioned in the Act, especially if it is intended to be kept in existence for some length of time.

Therefore, with the help of the Law, the inspectorate should be able to inspect whatever the Law empowers it to, whether it is school, education authority, or government. More importantly, the law could stipulate statutory requirements about the fundamental functions of the inspectorate so that all the inspectorates in the country can have a basic uniformity in their work. It is also expected that the SEdC will assign

some primary tasks to the inspectors nationwide from time to time in accordance with government priorities. More concrete instructions will be given by government and education authorities at every level according to the practical needs in local areas. It is hoped that by so doing, a proper combination of central missions and local tasks can be achieved and a balance of central supervision and local autonomy can be maintained.

### **9.2.3 To Improve the Inspection System Itself**

After the improvement of the environment, it is the improvement of the inspectorate itself that has the decisive influence on the success or otherwise of this system. As far as this thesis is concerned, the author can foresee the following areas of progress:

#### **9.2.3.1 The Function of Enforcing the Law Will Remain Dominant**

The goal of making nine year basic education universal has almost been accomplished in a few large cities such as Shanghai and Beijing where most of the people take universal education for granted. In these cities, the inspectors can spend less resource and manpower on enforcement and more on evaluation and monitoring. The problem lies in small cities and, in particular, rural areas where underage employment and farm labour are the direct causes of increasing school dropout rates. 75% of the areas in the country are required by the Law to make education universal by 1995. But this aim seems difficult to achieve without frequent pushing and tightened enforcement. Thus, the

function of enforcing the Law will probably be high on the agenda at least for the next five or ten years. An effective way of enforcing the Law is inspections of various kind. A typical example was the nationwide inspection organised by the central inspectorate with the participation of various high ranking officials including the deputy head of the SEdC. It took place between 1989 and 1990 and lasted for nearly half a year. All provinces were inspected without exception. A few regions within each province, and a few schools within each region, were selected and inspected so that inspectors could get to know the reality at the grass-roots levels. The results, claimed by the central inspectorate and also believed by the author, was satisfactory because it collected a great deal of information about the state of Law implementation. In addition, it succeeded in urging some provinces that were behind to keep up with the others. But obviously this kind of nationwide inspection can neither be frequent nor be in depth. Most of the work has to be done by inspectors at lower levels, especially county level inspectors. Therefore, the author would anticipate no immediate change of major function in the near future. In other words, to inspect to enforce legislation and national and regional polices will remain to be the prime function.

### **9.2.3.2 Other Functions Will Gradually Emerge**

Although at present there is no urgent need for the Chinese inspectorate to develop rapidly functions other than the function of enforcing the Law, others will progressively emerge if the decentralisation process is meant to go on. It seems to the author that two functions will probably be of particular importance. They are monitoring and evaluation, and advice. As argued earlier in the thesis,

## *Chapter 9: Conclusion*

the responsibilities for universal education has been continuously delegated to various levels of governments. Thus, instead of comprehending, interpreting and then implementing the directives from the higher level authorities, as it was in the past, all local authorities find themselves facing more independent policy making, overall planning and implementation. In order to formulate sound policy, frequent and reliable feedback of the state of policy implementation and the results of the implementation will become increasingly important. This is something in which the inspectors can play an active part. Furthermore, the politicians and senior administrators also need professional assistance from experienced administrators and educationists. The relatively higher quality of the inspectors both in terms of teaching and administration experience, and in terms of academic qualification obliges inspectors to make contributions by monitoring the performance of education system, by identifying issues and trends in reality, and by offering professional judgments and advice, all on the basis of their expertise and collected information.

At present, in the big municipalities mentioned above, there is less need for the inspectors to be concerned with matters like dangerous school building, high dropout rate, and irregular teachers' pay, compared with those in remote rural areas. Apart from supervising other national policies, their attention is focused on setting up evaluation criteria and conducting constructive and quality inspections so that inspection can become an effective way to promote efficiency of the education system instead of a matter of going through the motions. Therefore, for these inspectorates, assessing the standards of education, not enforcing the Law, is their major task.

It must be remembered that after the accomplishment of universal education, or even in the process of it, there will be other national policies that need enforcing or at least need supervising which might or might not be relevant to nine-year compulsory education. The inspection of school political education in 1990 in response to the national policy, for instance, was an additional task for the inspectors. Therefore, the functions of supervision and if necessary enforcement of important national policies will still remain a major function of the Chinese inspectorate. Nevertheless, in less than a decade, this function will be less dominant than it is now and other functions such as monitoring and advice will be on the increase.

#### **9.2.3.3 More Working Methods Will Be Invented and Employed as a Result of the Rise of Other Functions**

When functions like the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the education system and the provision of professional assistance to both employing education authorities and to lower level education authorities and schools have come into play, the corresponding methods of performing these functions will certainly follow. Full inspections, short inspections, aspect inspections, surveys, and routine visits might be employed to serve different purposes. Apart from their supervisory and enforcement function, they might be used as part of the rolling programme to keep up with the general development of education, or used as efficient methods to collect overall information of the state of education, or used to gather information on particular aspects of the system, or used as ways of offering advice, or simply used as channels of communication with lower level education authorities

and schools.

Obviously, what methods will be employed and to what extent each of them will be employed are determined by practical needs. But it is very likely that all these methods will be used sooner or later depending on the emergence of other functions.

#### **9.2.3.4 The Inspectorate's Influence on the Education Authorities Will Increase**

As a result of the strengthened function, with respect to its employing education authority (providing advice and up-to-date information), and also as a result of a more established position, the inspectors will gain a much higher influence on the work of their education authorities. Because the inspectorate makes more contributions to the decision-making and planning of the authority, it is bound to have more cooperation with it. This means that not only the involvement of the head of the inspectorate in authority board meetings will continue and become more active, but also other members of the inspectorate will be expected to establish more frequent and more extensive relationship with relevant administrator colleagues so as to offer information and advice to help their planning and implementation.

Closer cooperation can be expected between the inspectorate and the TRO. When the functions of monitoring and evaluation of the state of education in regions and in schools become more important, one would expect that the TRO will not only be taking part in joint inspections at the invitation of the inspectorate, but also be involved in planning inspection

programme as an active participant. Indeed, there should be more TRO's participation not only in large scale inspections, but also in other works of the inspectorate such as surveys. Because each side is expert at only one particular aspect of evaluation, therefore, only through joint planning and action can the overall information be collected and the general standards of education be evaluated. This, the author believes, is and will remain to be the basis of their cooperation.

To conclude, during its first few years of existence, the Chinese inspectorate has made remarkable contributions to the enforcement of the Law of the nine-year compulsory education and to the evaluation of the performance of schools and education authorities. By continuing to do so, and by strengthening other functions that will probably rise in the future, it will certainly play a more and more active role in promoting educational standards and in raising the efficiency of the education service.

### **9.3 Conclusion**

This study aims to propose practical suggestions to the newly restored Chinese school inspectorate. These suggestions are the results of the comparative study. The last but certainly not least suggestion, is that China should not copy any foreign systems as none of them is totally relevant to the Chinese situation. These foreign experiences only serve as references for China.

This is the first substantial piece of research in English on the system of educational inspection in China. Due to the limit on time and

resources, the thesis focuses on HM Inspectorate in England as the object of comparison. The author believes that there are a number of areas that are worth being studied further. The LEA advisory services in England, for example, are the quality control forces operating at local level. They provide LEA officials with up-to-date information on the state of education and offer professional advice on their policy formulation. Some of their functions are highly relevant to those of the Chinese inspectorate. More importantly, to the Chinese, they show some examples of how to design and operate an inspection system which responds to local conditions and needs. The Chinese inspectorate, particularly the local inspectorates at various levels could benefit much from learning from LEA advisory services.

This thesis examines the HMI practice prior to 1988, for the reason that the effect of the 1988 Education Reform Act on HMI has not been stabilised. The post-1988 HMI practice, therefore, has not taken into account. With the gradual unfolding of the education reform, in particular, with the further implementation of national curriculum and more DES' participation in educational affairs, some of the HMI practice will inevitably change in response to the needs of central government. How the future practice of HMI in a more centralised system can be introduced and adapted to meet the needs of the Chinese inspectorate (which itself is in a process of development) is another interesting area worth to be explored.

To move the perspective from England to other foreign countries, there is even more choice of topics. Experiences of the inspectorates in other countries can also be introduced to China. In particular, the education inspection systems in France and Russia will probably be

*Chapter 9: Conclusion*

more helpful because all the three countries have a similar feature in educational system -- centralisation. Thus, in some respects, the practice in French inspectorate and Russian inspectorate might be even more relevant to the Chinese situation.

Another area for future research, is, of course, the research on the Chinese inspectorate itself. As repeatedly argued earlier, there is no foreign practice in the world that is totally relevant and transferable to the Chinese system. The principal way of improving and developing the Chinese inspection system is through its own practice and reflection. Therefore, there is a great deal of work need to be done.

The road is tortuous, yet the prospects are bright.

## **Appendix A: The Outline of the Field Work**

The field work was carried out both in England and in China, with the permission and assistance of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools, and the Chinese National Inspectorate. Though it was conducted mainly from October 1988 to June 1989, the English part was done intermittently whilst the investigation in China was rather intensive. Following is the summary of the field work. For the reason of confidentiality, the names of interviewees and the names of inspected schools will not be revealed.

### **I. The Field Work in England:**

#### **1. 5 observations**

- (1). 1 observation on HMI full inspection of one secondary school  
Date: January 1989  
Duration: One week
- (2). 1 observation on HMI full inspection of a primary school  
Date: March 1989  
Duration: One week
- (3). 3 observations on three day visits in southern England by LEA inspectors  
Date: November 1988  
April 1990  
Duration: Three days

#### **2. 10 Interviews**

- (1). 6 interviews with Her Majesty's Inspectors including Senior Chief Inspector, Chief Inspectors, Staff Inspectors and "ordinary" HMI.
- (2). 2 interviews with school head teachers including primary and secondary heads.
- (3). 2 interviews with local inspectors.

## II. The Field Work in China

### 1. 2 observations

- (1). 1 observation on an aspect inspection of an secondary school in Shanghai conducted by prefectural rank inspectors.

Date: May 1989

Duration: Two days

- (2). 1 observation on a day visit to a primary school in Shanghai by a provincial rank inspector (Shanghai Education Bureau inspector).

Date: May 1989

Duration: One day

### 2. 23 interviews

- (1). 12 interviews with inspectors at different ranks: national, provincial, prefectural and county. These 12 interviewees were chosen from 7 out of 30 provinces in the country. (Shanghai, Beijing, Guangdong, Fujian, Shandong, and Jiangsu).

- (2). 4 interviews with administrators at prefectural rank. These 4 interviewees belong to 3 education authorities.

- (3). 7 interviews with primary and secondary school head teachers. These interviewees mostly came from Shanghai which was the survey base.

3. 3 sets of questionnaires designed for 3 groups of people: school head teachers, administrators, and inspectors. Samples were selected from 11 out of 30 provinces, crossing 6 out of 8 large administrative regions. (Fujian, Shandong, Henan, Shishuan, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Guizhou, Heilongjiang, Beijing, Jiangsu, Shanghai).

110 questionnaires each group were distributed by post. The follow up letter was sent one month later. By the closing day, 205 samples responded. They are:

77 school heads	response rate = 70%
52 administrators	response rate = 47%
76 inspectors	response rate = 69%

## **Appendix B: Observation on HMI Full Inspections**

### **I. General Information**

Object of the inspection: one secondary school  
Type of inspection: full inspection  
Conductor: HM Inspectors of schools  
Location: one of HMI's divisions, England  
Date: January 1989  
Duration: one week  
Number of inspectors: 22 (but not all were present every day)

### **II. Schedule of the Week**

#### **Day One**

- (1) HMI arrived at the school
- (2) found relevant heads of department and staff and discussed schedules
- (3) started their assigned tasks. Most of HMI observed classes. Some of them talked with teachers, head teachers, toured around the school
- (4) HMI had a brief meeting after school, raised questions and gathered evidence

#### **Day Two**

- (1) some HMI began to talk with relevant heads about accommodation, staffing, financing, curriculum, assessment, staff development and so on. But some preferred to leave it to Wednesday
- (2) continued to observe classes
- (3) continued to talk with school heads

*Appendix B: Observation on HMI Full Inspections*

- (4) after school, examined pupils' work by sampling good, middle and poor levels for one and a half hour

**Day Three**

- (1) continued to observe classes and talk with staff
- (2) HMI filled in some slips concerning various aspects of education, quality and handed in to relevant HMI
- (3) after school, HMI had a three and a half hours' meeting. Every HMI reported his (her) findings, and the whole team reached some provisional conclusions about this school

**Day Four**

- (1) HMI reported back to the relevant departmental heads (or school heads) about his (her) findings
- (2) afternoon, every HMI reported back to the school head teacher and deputy heads the results of his (her) assignment
- (3) had a four hours Thursday evening panel meeting, and reached an agreeable view on the school

**Day Five**

- (1) continued to report back

N.B. An overall evaluation of the education quality in this school was given by the reporting HMI on the following week because the Friday reporting back ran out of time.

### **III. Observations**

#### **1. Different bases of the inspectors**

All members of the inspection team were HMI. But instead of coming from the local division, they were selected by their headquarter to gather here from different bases in the country.

Some even came from south of England.

#### **2. Very cooperative and perceptive team**

Although some HMI had never met before, the whole team was extremely cooperative and effective.

#### **3. Well defined purpose and clear division of labour**

Before the inspection, every HMI had been allocated certain tasks --- subjects, quality of work, general and cross curriculum issues. So that every HMI had a very clear target throughout the inspection

#### **4. Adequate preparation beforehand**

Most HMI had studied the submitted school documents in certain depth before the inspection started. So they had a preliminary idea of the inspected school

#### **5. Special position of the curriculum matters**

Curriculum matters were paid particular attention by the inspectors who believed that the standards of education were eventually mirrored in pupils' learning. Inspectors went straight to the classrooms as soon as they arrived at the school without going through any formality.

#### **6. Large coverage**

The inspection was all round and thorough. With 87 teachers in school, (several absent from time to time), all of them had met HMI, either in class, or in tutorial group. According to the figure by Thursday afternoon, 90% teachers had been observed teaching for an average of 2.7 times; and 65.5% teachers had had discussions with HMI for 1.65 times on average.

#### **7. Cost**

The expenses for inspectors to come by car, by train, or even by plane, and the expenses of staying in hotel should not be neglected.

#### **8. Observations of the school head teacher**

The head teacher said that this evaluation was done by professionals outside his school. It gave them a fairly objective view of their school, and it was also very helpful to the future

*Appendix B: Observation on HMI Full Inspections*

**improvement of their school.**

**Appendix C: Observation on an Aspect Inspection  
by the Chinese Inspectors**

**I. General Information**

Object of inspection: one secondary school  
Type of inspection: aspect inspection (moral education)  
Conductor: the Chinese prefectural rank  
inspectors and their colleagues  
Location: Shanghai, China  
Date: June, 1989  
Duration: two days  
Number of inspectors: 14 (5 of them were professional  
inspectors, 9 were "acting" inspectors)

**II. Schedule of the Two Day Inspection**

- Day one
- (1) observed raising national flag and pupils' morning exercises
  - (2) read school documents about moral education and discussed allocation of tasks among inspectors
  - (3) school heads and political cadres reported the work they had done
  - (4) met teachers and pupils
  - (5) all the inspection team members and school heads observed one well prepared moral education class
  - (6) after school, some inspectors held a meeting with moral education teachers, some inspected extracurricular activities
- Day Two
- (1) several inspectors observed classes, others held meetings with staff of political organisation: the Chinese Youth League, the Chinese Young Pioneer, and so on

- (2) held pupils' meeting during lunch
- (3) observed moral education classes
- (4) participated in school seminar on moral education

### **III. Observations**

#### **1. Mixed sources of inspection team members**

All members of the inspection team were from the same education authority. But not all of them were inspectors. In fact, only 5 out of 14 were professional inspectors. Other members came from the Communist Party committee of the education authority, the Teaching Research Office Moral Education group and so on. The reason for this mixture of sources has been given in the thesis.

#### **2. The role of the professional inspectors**

Five inspectors, making up nearly one third of the total inspection team, played the role of an organiser, coordinator, and of course, participant of the inspection. They contacted the school before the inspection took place, they discussed with non-inspector "inspectors" the allocation of tasks, they gathered all the findings, and finally they summed up the results and wrote the report.

#### **3. Allocation of tasks on the spot**

The allocation of tasks took place after the inspection began. Though every member of the inspection team eventually got his (her) task, they were not very well prepared in advance. In addition, school documents were read and examined during the inspection instead of before the inspection.

#### **4. Formality**

The inspection, like any other Chinese inspections, started with a meeting with school heads and relevant staff at which the head reported their work. In the whole process, meetings and school's reporting occupied a large proportion. It seemed to the author that, to some extent, the inspectors based their report more on what the head and the teachers said what they had done than on the reality of pupils' attitudes (as this was an inspection on moral education), though the latter was explored to some extent during the inspection.

5. Less importance of the class

The observation of classes, according to the inspection schedule, did not take place until the second day (which was also the last day) except the observation of that well prepared class on the first day. In addition, not all inspectors were observing classes on that day. Some were still meeting relevant staff. This was partly due to the nature of the Chinese moral education --- academic classes are only one part of the political education mechanism. In addition, not every moral education classe was observed by specialists of moral education (TRO members and inspectors). Some were perfunctorily observed by administrators and politicians.

6. Absence of inspectors' general meetings

The inspection team had numerous meetings with teachers and pupils of the school. But during the inspection, they themselves did not have a meeting to gather information. Obviously they could not make use of the evenings, like HMI did. Perhaps they would have a meeting in the education authority's building after the inspection. Or the inspectors would somehow gather those information from every member of the inspection team.

7. Observations of the school head teacher

He said that they had not been able to sit down to have a look at what they were doing. The inspection urged them to have a review. In this respect, the inspection was helpful. He said that the inspection also revealed some problems in his school and helped them identify issues. But he also expressed some reservations about the way the inspection was conducted. He said: "Dragging in so many people, and making such a perfunctory evaluation is a waste of my time as well as theirs. If we had much fewer people and a deeper study of the state of moral education in the school, the results of the inspection would be more valuable." In addition, he thought that the inspection had only uncovered problems which he himself and his colleagues had already noticed. He complained that the inspectors failed to give him some advice and help on how to solve these problems. "So, after this inspection, I still don't know how to solve these problems", he concluded.

## **Question List**

### **Interview Former Chief Inspector**

1. Would you please tell me your position and responsibility in the Inspectorate? How long had you been an HMI? What did you do before you became an HMI?
2. What are the channels of communication within the Inspectorate? In other words, who and how decides what you will do? And how does the information gathered in the field flow to London headquarters?
3. What, do you think, according to your experience, are the expectations of politicians, civil servants, and teachers of your role? Do each part's expectations affect your work? In what way?
4. Would you please describe the Inspectorate's relationship with the DES and the teaching body? What would you do about different expectations?
5. What are the channels of communication between HMI and the rest of the DES?
6. What do the Chief Inspectors do? What is their role in performing the overall functions of the Inspectorate?

**Appendix D: Interview with Former Chief Inspector of HMI**

**Date: Dec. 12th. 1988**

**Q -- interviewer    A -- interviewee**

(after greeting and chatting)

**Q:** Ok, let's begin with the questions. First, what did you do as a Chief Inspector? What did you do before became an HMI?

**A:** I spent x years as a x, and x years as a higher school teacher.

**Q:** The second question is about the channel of communication inside the inspectorate. I know it's a kind of two ways, of communication, top down, down to top. But who and how decide the programme, the inspection programme? How does the information gathered through visiting schools and surveys etc flow to London headquarter?

**A:** Well, my job was to advise the ministers, Chief Inspectors are ministers' chief advisers. That was my full time job, providing advice to ministers, to the elected politicians. The advice which we gave them is based on the information which we got from HMI in the field. Therefore, the whole of the inspection programme was in the hands of the Chief Inspectors, that's to say, the five Chief Inspectors, who were the five phase inspectors, one for primary, one for secondary, one for further education, one for teacher training, one for higher education. Those five Chief Inspectors determine the priorities for the inspection programme.

**Q:** You have seven Chief Inspectors?

**A:** Yes, but these five are the phase Chief Inspectors. That is the ones who are responsible for a part of the education system. There is one Chief Inspector who's responsible for curriculum matters, and LEA inspections, and there is one Chief Inspector who is responsible for personnel matters and information flow and all the rest of it. They don't have a phase responsibility, so they don't have any claim on the inspection programme. It was the five of us that decided the inspection programme, the phase Chief Inspectors. In fact, it was only very recently that there were 7. There were 5 Chief Inspectors up until about 1983, and then six until about 1985, and then 7. The 7 includes the one for information flow, personnel matters and so on. The main reason was that we needed somebody with very tip-top

computer expertise because the whole of the inspectorate went fully computerised in 1984.

**Q:** According to what, you make the inspection programme? For example, for next term or next year?

**A:** I am sure you have been told by other people. You need to talk to somebody who is up-to-date now. We used to change it every year. In the days when I was there, it was 60% nationally determined priorities, 20% locally determined, 20% subject inspection.

**Q:** Nobody told me that.

**A:** Really? That's probably different. It used to change every year. What we used to do, then, was that we played with the percentage. We played with it every year. When I left, it was 30% determined by political activities, that is, you know, the introduction of national curriculum, something like that. 30% determined by our rolling programme of national inspection. There was a basic minimum number, how many secondary schools were inspected every year, how many primary schools were inspected every year, how many polytechnics were inspected every year. But it was nationally determined because it was actually computerised sample. We used to tell the DES statisticians that we needed, say, if there were 45 secondary schools being inspected, then the statisticians would pick for us, geographically, size, stratified sample, that sort of thing. The computer would deliver the people to go on the inspections. That's the most complicated task. If you have a very packed inspection programme and we were all trawling the same manpower for teacher training and for a lot of the higher education inspection. It was much better off in engineering. There was not a lot of engineering schools, so the Staff Inspector could divide his programme more or less with a well defined relation: engineering, architecture and so on. Whilst to inspect history, whether it's in teacher training or in higher education, or in secondary school, or even in primary school, we were trawling the same little team, 15 historians, that spread across the whole of the programme. So the computer copied out the people for us. And then each individual HMI received a computer printout of what their programme was for the term. For instance, now, in December, they would get their programme for the spring term, although as far as the CIs are

concerned, they finished planning the spring term in August. 20% of the programme was regionally determined by Divisional Inspectors, another 20% was taken up by the HMI, days, they used to call "IP1" days. They used to send in the form called "IP1": Inspection Programme 1, which was what they said they had already committed on personal activities. They were asked to speak at conference, or they were sent abroad. That took up the other 20%.

Our politicians are the only politicians outside the Dutch, the French, and ourselves, who have that first hand information about how education really is, on which to base the policy decisions. And it gives the HMI enormous strength throughout the minister's discussions. The Secretary of State was looking for a direction for policy, of course, he's got his ministry adviser there, he's got his legal advisers there, and so on. But he's got one or two people there who can say: Secretary of State, we have visited 40,000 classrooms and we have seen this and that, that is how it is. And that's, I mean, nobody can argue with that.

**Q:** Professional.

**A:** That's right. And it's first hand evidence, it's not professional opinion. HMI are not professors of education. They are people who have first hand evidence. We would send off for retraining, any HMI who start trying to behave like a professor of education, and give his own views not based on first hand evidence. That's an absolute crucial point, I hope you write it down when you catch your tape recording.

**Q:** Another question is: what do you think, according to your experience, the expectations of politicians, civil servants and teachers?

**A:** I'm talking about the past. Each politician uses HMI differently.

**Q:** Do civil servants also request HMI to provide some information?

**A:** Yes, but they have no right to demand an inspection. Nobody has, nobody except HMI, has the right to ask HMI to do something. The Secretary of State can cause the inspection to be made.

**Q:** But you, in practice, do you cooperate?

**A:** Of course, on a day-to-day basis, we worked together.

**Q:** Would you please describe your relationship with the DES and the teaching body. What do you view your relationship? And what will you do when you receive different expectations?

**A:** We don't "work with" the teaching body. The key difference between local authority inspectors and national inspectors is that they have no official role in relation to teachers' careers at all. The point about HMI is that they don't promote teachers, they don't hire them, they don't fire them, they have nothing to do with teachers' careers at all. HMI is there to report on the system, not on the individual teachers. Whilst the local authority advisers, of course, they sit on the appointment panel for teachers, they recommend promotions for teachers. So they are very much concerned with the careers of teachers. HMI work for the government. They are government's inspectors. They work for national government and our teachers are not employed by the national government. So, what the expectations of teaching profession are towards HMI, I hope, will be that HMI will give good advice, unbiased advice to the government. That's all HMI tries to do. HMI is not a pressure group.

**Q:** What is the channel of communication between HMI and the rest of the Department. You have mentioned, you had contact with the civil servants on the daily, not official --

**A:** That's as the Chief Inspector, not as HMI. Ordinary HMI are in the field, haven't so much contact with the DES. So their channel of communication is through the CI team. They are normally through the Staff Inspectors. Each of the phase Chief Inspectors, those "phase" Chief Inspectors, has a team of 4 or 5 Staff Inspectors who work in the DES alongside the Chief Inspectors. They are responsible for the day-to-day contact with HMI. They direct the work of HMI, they provide the schedule on which the inspections are conducted. For example, the HMI will go out on a national inspection. It is the Staff Inspectors who prepare that schedule. And the reports, that HMI write, come into the Staff Inspectors and they edit them. So, the channel of communication really is: HMI in the field, to the Staff Inspectors, and then the Staff Inspectors to the Chief Inspectors, and the Chief Inspectors to the DES.

**Q:** In the past, when you were the Chief Inspector, did you meet the Secretary of State often?

**A:** Possibly, at times, at least once a day. That's what the Chief Inspectors are there to do.

**Q:** Did you meet a lot with the Senior Chief Inspector?

**A:** Yes, the Senior Chief Inspector is the orchestrator of the team, the chairman of the team of the Chief Inspectors. Although very often, outside, it's particularly now, the press tends to personalise people in government, so it's the Senior Chief Inspector's name gets used. Internally, it's not very hierarchical at all. The Senior Chief Inspector is very much the chairman of the CIs committee making CI policy. We used to meet once a week for two hour short working session altogether with the Senior Chief Inspector in the chair, and then once a month for whole day meeting which was a policy meeting, concerned with policy matters. But the Senior Chief Inspector, for example, never took any part in the inspection programme. The CIs had to plan that amongst themselves.

**Q:** The last question, I think you have answered this question: what is the role of the Chief Inspector?

**A:** Chief Inspectors are the advisers to the ministers. That's what they exist to do. That's what they are paid their salaries to do, to provide advice. The minister can demand the advice at any point. It's their job to provide constant advice. Obviously, the amount of advice is according to what the ministers' preoccupations are. I would imagine while the national curriculum was being discussed and debated, XX spent hours every day with the ministers, because he was the person responsible for curriculum. It would be a unusual day when, say, four out of the five phase Chief Inspectors haven't seen any of the ministers. Contact of the other two with the ministers would be less because they were more concerned internally with the administration of the inspectorate. In the same way, the Deputy Secretaries in the DES, they only exist to be the ministers' advisers. That's how our government works. It's very different from yours and must be very hard for you to understand.

## **Question List**

### **Interview Senior Chief Inspector**

1. Would you please describe the channels of communication within the Inspectorate?
2. Is your inspection programme often changed by the request of the Secretary of State or other influences?
3. What are the ways of communication with the DES? How do you and Chief Inspectors provide advice to politicians and civil servants?
4. What, do you think, are the expectations of the politicians, civil servants, and the teaching body? What would you do about different expectations?

**Appendix E: Interview With Senior Chief Inspector of HMI**

**Date: November 30th. 1988**

**Q -- interviewer    A-- interviewee**

**Q:** I know the time is very limited. So, the first question is about the communication channel within the inspectorate. I've read some books. You have the committee meetings, and computer input of the visits reports, something like that. And the individual Staff Inspector, they can require the ordinary HMIs to do some work for them. That's all I know about the communication channels. Is there any other ways of communication?

**A:** We have to plan the work nationally, because there is a great deal of government policy, and our main task is to be in a position to inform and advise that policy. So we have a national inspection programme. That is what our main work is about. So that although the HMI are all over the country, apart from those who are based in this building, we have to have our routes by which we communicate. Now, first of all, the Chief Inspectors, there are 7 of those, they are all here, and they have teams of Staff Inspectors who deal with people in our divisions. So the secondary Staff Inspector will have a group of secondary inspectors in each of the 7 divisions. They will discuss issues and plan issues. So it is a two-way track.

But we also have a awful lot of mail. We have a series of what are called "Memorandum to Inspectors". "M to I" is memorandum to inspectors. They are the things that are not going to change, that is not asking somebody to do something, it's actually to explain, for example, changes in the law of education, so the law now says, such and such, so this goes out to HMI to say: therefore, certain people will have certain responsibilities. So, that's the memorandum. They, as I said, tend to be the things that are going to stay in place for quite a long time. They go out to all HMIs, or to that group of inspectors for which they have a special interest.

We also have Working Instructions, WI. They are quite often linked to the M to I. In the M to I we write and say: the Education Reform Act says such and such about religious education; the Working

Instructions say: we are doing such and such, and will you all please gather information and let Staff Inspector so and so have it by -- . So, that is the formal work, some of those jobs occur only once, so that the Working Instruction goes out of date automatically as soon as the job finishes. Others are about activities that go on for long time, such as school closures. The local authority wishes to close a school, it has to get the permission eventually of the Secretary of State, here. So we have an important job to do in commenting on the request to the Secretary of State, telling the ministers here, what we think of the local authority's proposals. That goes on all the time. It's part of the education law, section 12. So, those Working Instructions stay in existence. So, that's an important part of communication.

And then, as I said, there are various national committees, for example, a national committee on higher education. We have our own central committee, that is my committee of the 7 Chief Inspectors and myself. That is the most senior management of the inspectorate, in terms of managing our work and the personnel. But it's also a main policy determining body of the inspectorate. We decide what the priorities are for our inspection. And then, there are national secondary committee, national primary committee, national higher education, further education committee --. Then there is a national, central committee for Staff Inspectors. And there is a central body of Divisional Inspectors (those are 7 Divisional Inspectors who run each of our divisions). All of them are interrelated. They are related through people; that is members of one committee are also members of another. So they could interrelate with each other. So, there is communication across from one body to the other. In addition, every subject of the curriculum has a national committee: English committee, Maths committee, and so on. It's all programmed. They are not allowed to meet all the time. They have the time set out to arrange their meetings.

**Q:** How often do they meet?

**A:** Well, I suppose each subject committee probably meets three times a year, once each term.

**Q:** How about you, I mean, the central committee ?

**A:** I meet with the Chief Inspectors. We have a Chief Inspectors' full meeting once a month. But I meet also with most of them once a

week. Because I am constantly in meetings, and so they are. We have a meeting less than an hour and no more, once a week, usually on Thursday morning, for immediate matters, matters that have to be handled quickly. It is simply passing information between us what's going on. Whilst the Chief Inspectors' meeting will take bigger items.

**Q:** say, the programme, the broad programme is determined by you and the Chief Inspectors, and --

**A:** Yes, we determine, as a group, what the broad priorities for inspection are in relation to what we know about government policy on one hand, and what we know from the inspectors, and the things that are happening out there. So, it's two ways. From that, we decide what should be the priorities. Then, each Chief Inspector discusses with his (her) Staff Inspectors to decide what particular things they should do. So, if we decide, for example, that standards of work is a priority, then the primary Chief Inspector will decide how he is going to report on standards of work over the next term. What sort of things should we do in primary schools. Now, that might be quite different from what they choose to do and what is the key issue in standards of work in secondary schools. We might have up-to-date information on standards of work in GCSE, but we are really not sure at all the standards of work in certain kinds of schools, say, secondary schools in the middle of our big cities, so those might be what they will consider. So, they decide that. Then, the Staff Inspectors prepare particular inspections.

**Q:** detailed programme?

**A:** That's right. Say, we will inspect 6 schools, it will take so much time, it will cost so much money. And that comes back then, comes to the Chief Inspectors. The Chief Inspectors decide from all those: well, I can only do ten, those are the ten I am going to do. Then they come together as Chief Inspectors to try to make all that into the inspection programme. I have to see that programme looks sensible as a programme overall. I tend not to get involved in the details. That's up to them. They have to get the information needed, that's their responsibilities. I ought to see that we are, in fact, properly addressing ourselves to the priorities.

**Q:** How often, I mean, for example, one programme, is it for one term or for one year?

**A:** Yes, In the main, it's for one term, although quite a large parts of it lasts much longer than that. Some of our big inspection programmes take three years to do. If we are inspecting 10% of all secondary schools in the country, and we can't do that in a term. So that, for example, recently we have to inspect every teacher training course, and that took us three years to do. So, you know that that is going to go on for a long time. But each term we have to send out to HMI, to every HMI, not only the full programme, but what they are going to be doing, their individual programme. So, HMI has to know which inspection, because although that HMI might be working in the North, that might be where he lives, he could well be involved in inspection in London, on a national programme.

**Q:** Does your programme often get interrupted, or say, changed by the request of the Secretary of State, or other influence?

**A:** No. not really. In that sense, the Secretary of State doesn't have anything to do with the programme. That's part of our independence of the government. The actual detail of the programme is for the inspectorate to decide. What does happen from time to time, is that there is some public concerns being expressed in the press, or radio, television, either about a particular college or school, or other institution, claiming things are very bad inside this school, people have been politically trying to influence children, or the behaviour that is going on is odd; or a whole education authority is in a mess. Now, what the Secretary of State will say to person in my position as a Senior Chief Inspector, (the Senior Chief Inspector is a senior professional adviser), what he is entitled to say is: what is going on? Because he is responsible for the education in England, and he's getting a lot of pressure from people saying that appalling things are happening in X. Now, if I can answer this question because we've got fairly up-to-date information, I answer his question. I go to him and say: what we do know about this is ---. This is what's going on. If we haven't got information about what's going on, the only way I can find out is to inspect. So we do have to have flexibility in our programme to be able to fit in the things that we couldn't have planned for. Some of those might come from the Secretary of State, but others might come from our own information. So there has got to be some flexibility. Everybody isn't programmed all the time, so that if we had urgent things, wherever it comes from, we ought to be able

to try to respond.

**Q:** Another question is about something particularly to the senior persons in the inspectorate. What is the communication channel within the DES, I mean, you and other civil servants and politicians?

**A:** Well, First of all, the Senior Chief Inspector has direct access to the Secretary of State. But also, the Senior Chief Inspector is one of the Deputy Secretaries in the department. The senior structure of the department is the Permanent Secretary, and then there are now 3 Deputy Secretaries and the Senior Chief Inspector.

**Q:** So, you are in the position of the Deputy Secretary.

**A:** So that the Senior Chief Inspector is involved in all the policy planning and discussion of the department. I am involved in that partly acting as a Deputy Secretary, but partly because by being involved in all that discussion and planning, and all that discussion with ministers, is one of the main ways I am able to make judgments what is the priority for inspection. There is no use for me starting an inspection today and the Secretary of State wants to know the answer today, because, you can see it, the inspection takes three years. I've got to be able to say: look, it's quite clear that the government is becoming more and more interested in X, I say to the Chief Inspectors, therefore, we must start to carry out inspections to be well informed about X. Similarly, for me to say to the Secretary of State: well, we can't tell you all the detail you want to know, but we will be able to do so in 12 months time. So it's an interchange. So I am involved at that level in all of the top meetings of the department. It also, the particular link is very close with the Deputy Secretary responsible for school and all that. That is very close because it is at that level that he can see that he is going to want information, advice, and help from HMI. So, there is a constant connection between all the Deputy Secretaries on this floor in the department. So we are very close together in that way. So that at my level, there are very close links. At the Chief Inspector level, they link with the heads of the policy branches. That's where they work most closely. So that the secondary Chief Inspector will have frequent meetings, formal or informal, with the heads of the school policy branches. Once particular areas of work start, then the Staff Inspectors will be involved. So, now the department is very much involved in the new Education Act, and we are working together nationally, forms of

assessment. Then certain Staff Inspectors who are knowledgeable on assessment and examining are closely involved in working with that. So, a lot of pieces of work are underway right now. There is a link built-in. So, there are very close links at that lines. And it's our job, all of those who linked in that line, to try to communicate the rest of the inspectorate what these concerns and interests are.

**Q:** You said, Chief Inspectors link with the heads of policy branches, they two groups of people link very closely. Do you have any rough idea, how often they meet?

**A:** It's very often, actually. I mean there isn't a formal timing, as I have for my on Chief Inspectors. But the frequency of meetings between, say, the head of school branch three and one or two Chief Inspectors is a great deal. Because school branch three is working out now all these national curriculum materials, then the Chief Inspector who has the particular responsibility of National Curriculum Council meets frequently with that person. As to the schools, the primary Chief Inspector and the secondary Chief Inspector, it wouldn't be possible to say that they meet once a week, or once a month, because it could be more than that.

**Q:** depend on the need.

**A:** But what they don't have, there isn't a regular pattern, because it is related to the specific interest. But anyway, it is very frequent.

**Q:**The last question, just briefly. Maybe this question is very straightforward, I hope you don't mind. How do you view the balance between advice and monitoring? and say, if you receive conflicting expectations from the central authority and the teaching body, what will you do? I mean, just a very personal view.

**A.** We haven't any advice to give unless we have inspected it. Because we are not here as a group of clever men and women, or something like that. We are here because we are knowledgeable and experienced. Therefore, when we look at schools and colleges, or higher education, we know what we are looking at and we come to certain judgments about it. It's on the basis of these judgments, on the basis of what we've seen, that we give our advice. So the balance is essential. If we are expected to advise, or we simply should advise on something, we must have done inspecting, and it must be fairly recent inspecting, otherwise we've got nothing to say, we are just expressing opinions like anybody else. It may well be that that inspection and its findings

leads us to certain things. If we are simply being ourselves and speak politically, we will speaking differently, because what one finds when you go to inspect is not always what you like to find, and your favourite theories and hopes might not be born out by the conclusions you must come to. So that our job is to report as we find, not as we would like to find. So that if government wants us to say things in certain ways, or teachers want us to say things, that isn't on. What we've got to say is what we think it is justifiable to say. So we will not have any particular interest --

**Q:** in both sides.

**A:** That's right. And that isn't always set out to contradict their views, or to support their views. If we are now saying something that the government doesn't like, or the teachers don't like, that's something that happens, it isn't something we planned to do. In other words, we don't start from an apriori position, say, the teachers think like that, therefore -- , or the government wants it like that, therefore, -- . We actually go to look at what's happening. Whether it's a government initiative, or whether is the teachers' in schools, we come to the best judgments we can. They are not the last word, we haven't seen everything. We say: there it is, this is what we saw, this is what we thought of it, and this is what we think is needed to improve that, whatever we think isn't good enough. Now people come and say, (we've seen a lot of it), that it isn't like that, and if they can show that to be true well and good. But all too often, people haven't looked at what they are talking about in any great detail. They have a view which they are expressing. It might be a political view on education, or a view that favours the teachers because it comes from the teachers' association, or a view that favours the employers because it comes from the education authorities. So we are much more in a position of the sort of the troublesome priest, and that at times is difficult. Most of the time, it's not difficult. Most of the times, politicians and teachers take our advice and use it as sensibly. They like some of it and don't like some of it. That's fine. Sometimes it is very difficult, the views we are expressing the government today wouldn't like to hear. Now the position is very clear, if the government does not allow us to publish, we can't publish. We are civil servants, and we have no right to publish. So it is actually quite difficult, given that everybody knows the work that we are doing. It's

difficult for the government in Parliament to say, to stand up and say, we are not going to publish what the inspectors' have said, because of the questions that will arise. So there are times when they do publish material at a particular level. They would prefer not to have it published because it is awkward. And there are lots of time, when some of the teacher unions would rather we say something different, for example, that teachers are marvellous, and everybody is working hard, and it's all wonderful; or that whatever the answers wrong, it's not the teachers'. But you know, it isn't like that. Quite a lot of teachers are doing a decent job, but there is room for improvement.

**Appendix F: Questionnaire for School Head Teachers**  
**Evaluation of Inspectorate's Work and Your Expectations**

Dear Colleague,

The last two years saw the rapid development of educational inspection throughout the country. With the aim of improving inspection work and speeding up education reform, this questionnaire is designed to discover your evaluation of inspectorate's work and your expectations of improvement. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: **part one** asks you to describe the **factual practice of the inspectorate** based on your school's experience, **part two** invites you to express **your views and expectations of the inspectorate**.

This is a nationwide survey. **Your answers will be strictly confidential**. We shall be very grateful if you could return the questionnaire to Department of Education, East China Normal University before 25th, May, using the prepaid envelop.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and wish you all the best with your work.

Research Group on Education Inspection  
Department of Education  
East China Normal University  
Coordinator: Weiqian Yang  
5th. May. 1989

**Part One: The Inspectorate and Your School**

- N.B. (1): If an inspectorate has not yet been set up in your area, please skip over to part two;  
(2): If you encounter an unapplicable question, please skip to the next one;  
(3): please tick to answer questions unless otherwise stated.

1. You are a \_\_\_\_\_ head teacher (or deputy head).  
(1) *primary school* (2) *secondary school*
2. There are \_\_\_\_\_ inspector(s) assigned to look after your school.  
(1) *no* (2) *one* (3) *two* (4) *three* (5) *more than three*
3. If there is no assigned inspector, please skip to question 4;  
If there is one inspector assigned to your school, the criterion for dividing the inspectorate is \_\_\_\_\_.  
(1) *sector* (2) *subject* (3) *district* (4) *current task* (5) *other*  
If there are more than two assigned inspectors, the criteria for dividing the inspectorate are \_\_\_\_\_.  
(1) *district and sector* (2) *sector and subject* (3) *district and subject* (4) *district and current task* (5) *other (please specify)*\_\_\_\_\_
4. The inspector(s) come(s) to your school \_\_\_\_\_ on the average.  
(1) *weekly* (2) *monthly* (3) *termly* (4) *annually* (5) *> one year*
5. The recent visit lasted \_\_\_\_\_.  
(1) *1/2 - 1 hr* (2) *1-2 hrs* (3) *2-3 hrs* (4) *half a day* (5) *a day*
6. When (s)he came to visit your school last time, his (her) main concerns were \_\_\_\_\_. (please choose **three** answers and indicate degrees of the concerns by **numbering 1, 2, 3**. i.e., 1: the first concern; 2: the second concern; 3: the third concern)  
\_\_\_ (1) *proceeding of the implementation of a particular policy* .  
\_\_\_ (2) *school management (e.g. planning)*  
\_\_\_ (3) *staffing and in-service teacher training*  
\_\_\_ (4) *school resources such as equipment, building, textbooks*  
\_\_\_ (5) *curriculum and teaching-learning of the school*  
\_\_\_ (6) *examination and records*  
\_\_\_ (7) *collect schools' comments on the LEA's policies*  
\_\_\_ (8) *relationship with other schools*

\_\_\_ (9) school attendance, dropout, discipline

\_\_\_ (10) political education

\_\_\_ (11) others (please specify) \_\_\_

7. When (s)he came to visit your school last time, (s)he spent time in \_\_\_\_\_. ( please choose **three** answers and indicate durations by **numbering 1,2,3**, i.e.: 1: the longest ; 2: the second longest; 3: the third longest).

\_\_\_ (1) talking with head teachers only

\_\_\_ (2) talking with school heads and department heads only

\_\_\_ (3) talking with teachers

\_\_\_ (4) observing classes

\_\_\_ (5) going around the school and visiting various facilities  
e.g., labs, library.

\_\_\_ (6) talking with pupils

\_\_\_ (7) others ( please specify) \_\_\_

8. Your inspector(s) know(s) your school \_\_\_\_\_ .

(1) not at all (2) a little (3) fairly well (4) quite well (5) very well

9. Your school is formally inspected \_\_\_\_\_ .

(1) termly (2) annually (3) biennially (4) > two years

10. The team of the recent inspection was composed of \_\_\_\_\_ people.

(1) <5 (2) 5-10 (3) 11-15 (4) 16-20 (5) > 20

They were \_\_\_\_\_ .

(1) full time inspectors only (2) PT and FT inspectors only

(3) inspectors and administrators only

(4) inspectors, administrators, and retired school heads

(5) inspectors, administrators, retired school heads, and  
teachers from other schools

(6) others (please specify) \_\_\_

11. The recent inspection lasted \_\_\_\_\_ days .

(1) 1/2 - 1 (2) 2-3 (3) 4-6 (4) 7-8 (5) 9-10

12. The results of the inspection (evaluation) \_\_\_\_\_ .

(1) reflected your school's reality

(2) were partial and subjective judgments

(3) were only some perfunctory remarks

(4) pointed out clearly the direction of improvements

13. On the whole, inspectors' visits and inspections are \_\_\_\_\_ to your

school's work.

- (1) of no help (2) of little help (3) of some help  
(4) quite helpful (5) very helpful

14. Inspectors' advice and requirements are \_\_\_\_\_ influential in your school's decision making.

- (1) not (2) hardly (3) fairly (4) quite (5) very

15. Your school \_\_\_\_\_ call for the help of the inspectors.

- (1) never (2) occasionally (3) sometimes (4) often  
(5) almost always

16. Your requests and expectations of the functions and activities of the inspectorate are paid \_\_\_\_\_ attention by the inspectors.

- (1) no (2) a little (3) some (4) quite a lot (5) much

17. Besides school visit and inspection, you meet inspectors when (tick more than one answer if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_ .

- (1) at the meeting chaired by inspectors  
(2) visit other schools together with inspectors  
(3) attend LEA's meeting and meet inspectors there  
(4) others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ .

18. The contributions of the inspectorate to your school are mainly \_\_\_\_\_ . ( please choose **three** answers and indicate degrees of contributions by **numbering 1,2,3**. i.e. 1: the biggest contribution; 2: the second biggest contribution; 3: the third biggest contribution).

- \_\_\_ (1) to convey LEA policies and to keep schools informed  
\_\_\_ (2) to collect and feedback schools' comment on LEA policies  
\_\_\_ (3) to evaluate school performance and point our direction of improvements  
\_\_\_ (4) to spread good practice  
\_\_\_ (5) to offer professional advice to school's work  
\_\_\_ (6) to act as trouble shooter on behalf of the LEA  
\_\_\_ (7) to act as a liaison between LEAs and schools  
\_\_\_ (8) to supervise and enforce policy implementation  
\_\_\_ (9) others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Part Two Your Evaluation and Expectations  
of the Work of the Inspectorate**

1. What role should the inspectors play \_\_\_\_\_ ?
  - (1) *representatives of LEAs*
  - (2) *representatives of schools*
  - (3) *intermediaries but inclined to LEAs*
  - (4) *intermediaries but inclined to the schools*
2. Whether the inspectors should be given administrative power?
  - (1) *yes, they should*
  - (2) *No. they shouldn't*
  - (3) *they should have some power on some matters such as \_\_\_\_\_*
3. What role do you expect the inspectors to play? (please choose **five** answers and indicate the degrees of expectations by **numbering 1,2,3,4,5**. i.e., 1: your strongest expectation 2: the second expectation, 3: the third expectation; 4: the fourth expectation 5: the fifth expectation).
  - \_\_\_ (1) *information collector ( i.e. report what is going on in schools)*
  - \_\_\_ (2) *conveyor of LEA's policies*
  - \_\_\_ (3) *supervisor of policy implementation*
  - \_\_\_ (4) *encourager and stimulus of school innovation*
  - \_\_\_ (5) *mediator between LEA and schools*
  - \_\_\_ (6) *facilitator of school resources*
  - \_\_\_ (7) *professional adviser to LEA policy making*
  - \_\_\_ (8) *information collector for higher level inspectorate*
  - \_\_\_ (9) *executive of the higher level inspectorate*
  - \_\_\_ (10) *disseminator of good practice*
  - \_\_\_ (11) *commentator or evaluator of LEA's policies*
  - \_\_\_ (12) *participant of teachers' appointment and promotions*
  - \_\_\_ (13) *adviser of individual teachers' personal and professional difficulties*
  - \_\_\_ (14) *evaluator of schools' educational standards*
  - \_\_\_ (15) *professional adviser to school management*
  - \_\_\_ (16) *professional adviser to school teaching-learning and curriculum matters*
  - \_\_\_ (17) *LEA's trouble shooter*
4. Would you please describe the work of the inspectors assigned to your school, or the inspectors in your area if you don't have an

**assigned inspector.**

**5. Do schools and teachers have influence on inspectorate's planning?**

**Appendix G: Questionnaire for Administrators in**

**Educational Authorities**

**Evaluation of Inspectorate's Work and Your Expectations**

Dear Colleague,

The last two years saw the rapid development of educational inspection throughout the country. With the aim of improving inspection work and speeding up education reform, this questionnaire is designed to discover your evaluation of inspectorate's work and your expectations towards improvement. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: **part one** asks you to describe the **factual practice of the inspectorate** based on the experience of your administrative branch (or your education authority), **part two** invites you to express **your views and expectations of the inspectorate**.

This is a nationwide survey. **Your answers will be strictly confidential**. We shall be very grateful if you could send the questionnaire back to the Department of Education, East China Normal University before 25th, May, using the prepaid envelop.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and wish you all the best with your work.

Research Group on Educational Inspection  
Department of Education  
East China Normal University  
Coordinator: Weiqian Yang  
5th. May. 1989

**Part One: The Inspectorate and Your Branch  
(or Your Education Authority)**

- N.B. (1): If an inspectorate has not yet been set up in your area, please skip over to part two;
- (2): If you encounter a unapplicable question, please skip to the next one;
- (3): please tick to answer questions unless otherwise stated.
- (4): if you are a head of the education authority, please answer the questions from authority's point of view. If you are a head or ordinary member of an administrative branch, please answer the questions from your branch's point of view.

1. You are a \_\_\_\_\_ administrator.  
(1) provincial rank (2) prefectural rank (3) county rank
2. You are a \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(1) head (deputy head) of a branch  
(2) ordinary staff of a branch  
(3) head (deputy head) of the education authority
3. The name of your branch is \_\_\_\_\_ .
4. Your branch usually has formal work contact with \_\_\_\_\_ members of the inspectorate.  
(1) no (2) 1/4 - 1/2 (3) 1/2 (4) 1/2 - 1 (5) all
5. Your branch and the inspectorate meet together \_\_\_\_\_ on the average for the purpose of work.  
(1) daily (2) weekly (3) half-monthly (4) monthly (5) termly
6. Normally, your branch contacts \_\_\_\_\_ .  
(1) heads of the inspectorate only (2) relevant inspectors only  
(3) normally heads, sometimes relevant inspectors if necessary  
(4) normally relevant inspectors, sometimes heads if necessary .
7. The contributions of the inspectorate to your branch are mainly \_\_\_\_\_ . ( please choose **three** answers and indicate degree of contribution by **numbering 1,2,3**. i.e. 1: the biggest contribution; 2: the second biggest contribution; 3: the third biggest contribution).  
\_\_\_\_ (1) to provide information of the state of education in schools and in lower level education authorities

Appendix G: Questionnaire for Administrators in Education Authorities

- \_\_\_ (2) to provide professional advice to decision making of the education authority
- \_\_\_ (3) to supervise and enforce the implementation of national and your authority's policies and decisions
- \_\_\_ (4) to feedback schools' (lower level education authorities') comments on policies of your authority and your branch
- \_\_\_ (5) to evaluate the policies made by your branch and your authority
- \_\_\_ (6) to offer administrative assistance and clerical support
- \_\_\_ (7) to liaise between your authority and schools (lower level education authorities)
- \_\_\_ (8) to act as a trouble-shooter on behalf of your education authority
- \_\_\_ (9) others (please specify) \_\_\_
8. Your branch \_\_\_\_\_ ask for the help of the inspectorate.  
(1) never (2) occasionally (3) sometimes (4) often  
(5) almost always
9. The most common means by which your branch contacts the inspectorate are \_\_\_\_\_. (please choose **three** answers and indicate frequencies by **numbering 1,2,3**. i.e. 1: the most frequent means; 2: the second most frequent means; 3: the third most frequent means)
- \_\_\_ (1) meetings between our staff and the inspectors
- \_\_\_ (2) attending other meetings with inspectors together
- \_\_\_ (3) memorandum and circular
- \_\_\_ (4) visiting and inspecting schools and lower level education authorities together with inspectors
- \_\_\_ (5) others
10. Setting up inspectorate has resulted in \_\_\_\_\_ conflict in responsibilities and rights between your branch and the inspectorate.  
(1) no (2) little (3) certain (4) quite big (5) very big
11. The work of the inspectorate is \_\_\_\_\_ helpful to your branch's work.  
(1) not (2) hardly (3) fairly (4) considerably (5) very
12. On the whole, the inspectorate has \_\_\_\_\_ influence on your

branch's decision making.

(1) *no* (2) *little* (3) *certain* (4) *quite strong* (5) *strong*

13. Your branch's expectations of the inspectorate have \_\_\_\_\_ influence on its planning and work.

(1) *no* (2) *little* (3) *certain* (4) *quite strong* (5) *strong*

14. The inspectors in your authority \_\_\_\_\_ policy making of the authority

(1) *participate in* (2) *do not participate in*

(3) *participate in some matters, such as \_\_\_\_\_*

**Part Two: Your Evaluation and Expectations  
of the Work of the Inspectorate**

1. What role should the inspectors play \_\_\_\_\_ ?

(1) *representatives of education authority*

(2) *representatives of schools*

(3) *intermediaries but inclined to education authority*

(4) *intermediaries but inclined to schools*

2. Whether the inspectors should be given administrative power?

(1) *yes, they should* (2) *No. they shouldn't*

(3) *they should have some power on some matters such as \_\_\_\_\_*

3. What role do you expect the inspectors to play? (please choose **five** answers and indicate the degrees of expectations by **numbering 1,2,3,4,5**. i.e., 1: your strongest expectation 2: the second expectation, 3: the third expectation; 4: the fourth expectation; 5: the fifth expectation).

\_\_\_ (1) *encourager and stimulus of school innovation*

\_\_\_ (2) *information collector ( i.e. report what is going on in schools)*

\_\_\_ (3) *conveyor of LEA's policies*

\_\_\_ (4) *supervisor of policy implementation*

\_\_\_ (5) *facilitator of school resources*

\_\_\_ (6) *professional adviser to policy making of the education authority*

\_\_\_ (7) *information collector for higher level inspectorate*

**Appendix G: Questionnaire for Administrators in Education Authorities**

- (8) executive of the higher level inspectorate*
- (9) disseminator of good practice*
- (10) mediator between employing education authority and schools ( and lower level education authorities)*
- (11) commentator or evaluator of policies of employing education authority*
- (12) participant of teachers' appointment and promotions*
- (13) evaluator of schools' educational standards*
- (14) adviser of individual teachers' personal and professional difficulties*
- (15) professional adviser to school management*
- (16) professional adviser to school teaching-learning and curriculum matters*
- (17) trouble shooter on behalf of the education authority*

4. Would you please describe the functions of the inspectorate in your education authority?

5. Do administrative branches have influence on inspectorate's functions and planning?

**Appendix H: Questionnaire for Inspectors**  
**Evaluation of Inspectorate's Work and Your Expectations**

Dear Colleague,

The last two years saw the rapid development of educational inspection throughout the country. With the aim of improving inspection work and speeding up education reform, this questionnaire is designed to discover your evaluation of inspectorate's work and your expectations towards improvement. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: **part one** asks you to describe the **factual practice of the inspectorate**, **part two** invites you to express **your views and expectations of the inspectorate**.

This is a nationwide survey. **Your answers will be strictly confidential**. We shall be very grateful if you could send the questionnaire back to the Department of Education, East China Normal University before 25th, May, using the prepaid envelop.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and wish you all the best with your work.

Research Group on Educational Inspection  
Department of Education  
East China Normal University  
Coordinator: Weiqian Yang  
5th. May. 1989

**Part One Some Factual Information about Your Work**

N.B. Please tick to answer unless otherwise stated.

1. Background information

a. Sex: (1) male (2) female

b. Age: (1) < 30 (2) 31-40 (3) 41-50 (4) 51-60 (5) > 60

c. You are a \_\_\_\_\_ rank inspector.

(1) county (2) prefectural (3) provincial

d. You are a \_\_\_\_\_ inspector.

(1) full time (2) part time

e. Your highest academic degree is \_\_\_\_\_ .

(1) postgraduate (2) undergraduate (3) college

(4) secondary education (5) primary education

f. You were \_\_\_\_\_ before became an inspector.

(1) school head (2) school teacher (3) retired school head

(4) retired administrator (5) administrator

(6) others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

g. You have altogether \_\_\_\_\_ years teaching experience.

(1) 0 (2) 1-5 (3) 6-10 (4) 11-15 (5) >15

h. You have altogether \_\_\_\_\_ years of administrative experience.

(1) 0 (2) 1-5 (3) 6-10 (4) 11-15 (5) >15

2. If you are a county rank inspector, you spend \_\_\_\_\_ days in schools every week.

(1) < 1 (2) 1-2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5-6

If you are a prefectural or provincial rank inspector, you spend \_\_\_\_\_ days in schools and lower level education authorities every week.

(1) < 1 (2) 1-2 (3) 3 (4) 4 (5) 5-6

3. You visit \_\_\_\_\_ schools (or lower level education authorities) on average every week.

(1) <1 (2) 2-3 (3) 4-5 (4) 6-7 (5) 8-9

4. The recent visit lasted \_\_\_\_\_ .

(1) 1/2 - 1 hr (2) 1-2 hrs (3) 2-3 hrs (4) half a day (5) a day

5. Schools (or lower level education authorities) \_\_\_\_\_ call for inspectors' help.

(1) never (2) occasionally (3) sometimes (4) often

(5) *almost always*

6. When you were visiting or inspecting schools last time, you were concerned with \_\_\_\_\_. (please choose **three** answers and indicate degrees of concerns by **numbering 1, 2, 3**. i.e., 1: the first concern; 2: the second concern; 3: the third concern)

- \_\_\_ (1) *proceeding of the implementation of a particular policy*
- \_\_\_ (2) *school management (e.g. planning)*
- \_\_\_ (3) *staffing and in-service teacher training*
- \_\_\_ (4) *school resources such as equipment, building, textbooks*
- \_\_\_ (5) *curriculum and teaching-learning of the school*
- \_\_\_ (6) *examination and records*
- \_\_\_ (7) *collect schools' comments on the policies of the education authority*
- \_\_\_ (8) *relationship with other schools*
- \_\_\_ (9) *school attendance, dropout, discipline*
- \_\_\_ (10) *political education*
- \_\_\_ (11) *others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_*

7. When you were visiting schools last time, you spent time in \_\_\_\_\_. (please choose **three** answers and indicate durations by **numbering 1,2,3**, i.e.: 1: the longest ; 2: the second longest; 3: the third longest).

- \_\_\_ (1) *talking with head teachers only*
- \_\_\_ (2) *talking with school heads and department heads only*
- \_\_\_ (3) *talking with teachers*
- \_\_\_ (4) *observing classes*
- \_\_\_ (5) *going around the school and visiting various facilities e.g., labs, library.*
- \_\_\_ (6) *talking with pupils*
- \_\_\_ (7) *others ( please specify) \_\_\_\_\_*

8. If you are a county level inspector, your inspectorate **inspect** \_\_\_\_\_ of schools in the area and **visit** \_\_\_\_\_ of them every term.

(1) < 3% (2) 4-5 % (3) 6-10 % (4) 11-15% (5) 16-20 %

If you are a prefectural or provincial level inspector, your inspectorate **inspect** \_\_\_\_\_ of the lower level education authorities and **visit** \_\_\_\_\_ of them on the average every term.

Appendix H: Questionnaire for Inspectors

(1) < 3% (2) 4-5 % (3) 6-10 % (4) 11-15% (5) 16-20 %

9. Your inspectorate's requirements and advice are \_\_\_\_\_ influential on schools' ( lower level education authorotoes) decision making.

(1) not (2) hardly (3) fairly (4) quite (5) very

10. The contributions of your inspectorate to schools (or lower level education authorities) are mainly \_\_\_\_\_. ( please choose **three** answers and indicate degrees of contributions by **numbering 1,2,3**. i.e. 1: the biggest contribution; 2: the second biggest contribution; 3: the third biggest contribution).

\_\_\_ (1) to convey LEA policies and to keep them informed

\_\_\_ (2) to collect and feedback schools' and lower level education authorities' comment on LEA policies

\_\_\_ (3) to evaluate the performance of schools and lower level education authorities and point our direction of improvements

\_\_\_ (4) to spread good practice

\_\_\_ (5) to offer professional advice to schools and lower level education authorities

\_\_\_ (6) to act as trouble shooter on behalf of the education authority

\_\_\_ (7) to act as a liaison between employing education authority and schools (and lower level education authorities)

\_\_\_ (8) to supervise and enforce policy implementation

\_\_\_ (9) others (please specify) \_\_\_

11. Please write down the name of **three** branches with which your inspectorate has the most contact.

- 
12. Your inspectorate \_\_\_\_\_ participate in policy making of the education authority.

(1) does (2) does not (3) partly on some matters, e.g., \_\_\_

13. How often is your inspectorate asked for help by other branches?

(1) almost daily (2) weekly (3) half-monthly (4) monthly

(5) termly

14. Your inspectorate's feedback and advice is \_\_\_\_\_ influential in

other branches' policy making.

(1) *not* (2) *hardly* (3) *fairly* (4) *quite* (5) *very*

15. Setting up inspectorate has resulted in \_\_\_\_\_ conflict in responsibilities and rights between your inspectorate and other branches.

(1) *no* (2) *little* (3) *certain* (4) *quite big* (5) *very big*

16. The most common means by which your inspectorate contacts other branches are: \_\_\_\_\_ (please choose **three** answers and indicate frequency by **numbering 1,2,3**. i.e.: 1: the most frequent means; 2: the second most frequent means; 3: the third most frequent means).

\_\_\_ (1) *meeting of inspectors and staff of other branches*

\_\_\_ (2) *attending other meetings with staff of other branches*

\_\_\_ (3) *memorandum and circular*

\_\_\_ (4) *visiting and inspecting schools (lower level education authorities) together*

\_\_\_ (5) *others (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_*

17. The contributions of your inspectorate to your education authority are mainly \_\_\_\_\_: ( please choose **three** answers and indicate degrees of contributions by **numbering 1,2,3**. i.e. 1: the biggest contribution; 2: the second biggest contribution; 3: the third biggest contribution).

\_\_\_ (1) *to provide information of the state of education in schools and in lower level education authorities*

\_\_\_ (2) *to provide professional advice to the decision making of employing education authority*

\_\_\_ (3) *to supervise and enforce the implementation of national and authority's policies and decisions*

\_\_\_ (4) *to feedback schools' (lower level education authorities') comments on policies of your education authority*

\_\_\_ (5) *to evaluate policies of your education authority*

\_\_\_ (6) *to offer administrative assistance and clerical support*

\_\_\_ (7) *to liaise between your authority and schools (lower level education authorities)*

\_\_\_ (8) *to act as trouble-shooter on behalf of your education authority*

\_\_\_ (9) others (please specify) \_\_\_

18. Your inspectorate takes \_\_\_\_\_ as your first consideration when making inspection plans, takes \_\_\_\_\_ as second consideration, and takes \_\_\_\_\_ as third consideration.

(1) *the expectations of higher level inspectorate*

(2) *the expectations of your education authority*

(3) *the expectations of schools and lower level education authorities*

19. Apart from inspections and visits, the rest of your time is spent on \_\_\_\_\_. (please choose **three** answers and indicate the length of the time by **numbering 1,2,3.**)

\_\_\_ (1) *stay in office and do some administrative work*

\_\_\_ (2) *attend inspector meetings*

\_\_\_ (3) *attend meetings of other branches or the whole authority*

\_\_\_ (4) *attend meetings held by higher level inspectorate*

\_\_\_ (5) *attend inspector training*

\_\_\_ (6) *others (please specify) \_\_\_*

### **Part Two Your Evaluation and Expectations of the work of the Inspectorate**

1. What role should the inspectors play \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- (1) *representatives of education authority*  
(2) *representatives of schools*  
(3) *intermediaries but inclined to education authority*  
(4) *intermediaries but inclined to schools*
2. Whether the inspectors should be given administrative power? \_\_\_\_\_
- (1) *yes, they should* (2) *No. they shouldn't*  
(3) *they should have some power on some matters such as \_\_\_*
3. What role do you expect the inspectors to play? (please choose **five** answers and indicate the degrees of expectations by **numbering 1,2,3,4,5.** i.e.,1: your strongest expectation 2: the second expectation, 3: the third expectation; 4: the fourth expectation; 5: the fifth expectation).

Appendix H: Questionnaire for Inspectors

- \_\_\_ (1) *information collector ( i.e. report what is going on in schools and lower level education authorities)*
- \_\_\_ (2) *conveyor of authority's policies*
- \_\_\_ (3) *supervisor of policy implementation*
- \_\_\_ (4) *encourager and stimulus of school innovation*
- \_\_\_ (5) *mediator between employing education authority and schools and lower level education authorities*
- \_\_\_ (6) *facilitator of school (lower level authorities) resources*
- \_\_\_ (7) *professional adviser to policy making of the employing education authority*
- \_\_\_ (8) *information collector for higher level inspectorate*
- \_\_\_ (9) *executive of the higher level inspectorate*
- \_\_\_ (10) *disseminator of good practice*
- \_\_\_ (11) *commentator or evaluator of policies of employing education authority*
- \_\_\_ (12) *participant of teachers' appointment and promotions*
- \_\_\_ (13) *evaluator of educational standards of schools and educational provision of lower level education authorities*
- \_\_\_ (14) *adviser of individual teachers' personal and professional difficulties*
- \_\_\_ (15) *professional adviser to school management*
- \_\_\_ (16) *professional adviser to school teaching-learning and curriculum matters*
- \_\_\_ (17) *professional adviser on macro-administration of employing education authority*
- \_\_\_ (18) *trouble shooter on behalf of the employing education authority*

4. The following table lists some possible tasks of inspectors. Please tick in the appropriate grid to show the time you spend.

Appendix H: Questionnaire for Inspectors

tasks	do not spend time	spend little time	spend some time	spend quite a lot time	spend much time
1. teachers (lower LEA staff) appointment and promotion					
2. advise on individual teachers' personal, professional matters					
3. evaluate teaching - learning in schools					
4. evaluate overall standards of schools and lower LEAs					
5. help schools and lower LEAs solve resource problems					
6. help schools solve teaching - learning problems					
7. organise INSET					
8. travelling on the road					
9. hold meetings of school heads and heads of lower LEAs					
10. attend meetings of higher level inspectorate					
11. attend meetings of other branches					
12. discuss matters with inspector colleagues					
13. stay in office, do some administrative work					
14. others _____					

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