

SUPERVISION AND INSPECTION FOR EFFECTIVE PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Primary Education is very crucial to the attainment of National development. This opinion necessitated this paper, as regards to the concept of supervision and inspection, challenges of school inspection and supervision and proffered strategies for improving supervision and inspection for effective primary education delivery in Nigeria. In conclusion, it was made clear that supervision/inspection should be taken into consideration for effective teaching and learning. Recommendations were made for ensuring effective supervision and inspection at the primary education level in Nigeria.

Keywords: Supervision, inspection, primary education

INTRODUCTION

Primary education is that kind of education which is given to children from age 5+ to about 11. That is, school age children from primary 1-6. However, with the Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy, the classes have been restructured to include JSS 1-3. Now the new nomenclature is Basic 1-9. Primary education thus entails 9 unbroken years of schooling for children aged between 6-14 years. The content of the curriculum of this level of education has also been enlarged to cater for a wide body of knowledge in the light of the ever changing global trends in science, technology and the arts. It is also meant to lay a solid foundation for the senior secondary where they are prepared for useful living in the society.

Section 4 of the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2012) states the goals of primary education to include the following:

1. Inculcating permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively;
2. Laying a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;
3. Giving citizenship education as a basis for effective participation and contribution to the life of the society;
4. Moulding the character and developing sound attitude and morals in the child.
5. Developing in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment;
6. Giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity.
7. Providing the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trade and craft of the locality.

In pursuance of the goals above, the curriculum for primary education shall include language of the environment, English, French, Arabic, Mathematics, Science, Physical and health Education, Religious Knowledge, Agriculture, Home Economics, Social Studies and Citizenship Education, Cultural and Creative Arts, Computer and so on.

A careful consideration of the above goals and curriculum content brings to the fore front the need for a well-balanced and result oriented teaching and learning process and interaction among teachers and students and external education officials. It therefore means that there is need for both internal and external supervision/inspection in primary education to achieve the stated objectives. In discharging, these tasks, it should not be left in the hands of unqualified, out dated or untrained educational personnel. The Nigerian Government recognized the need to monitor not only the activities but also the financial provisions to the system. Educationalists at the Ministries of Education, both federal and state and local levels of government have set up quality control division in their respective ministries to ensure that quality education is maintained. It has been determined that quality and standard in the system could be maintained through regular inspection and continuous supervision of instructions and education services as laid down in the national policy on education (Fadipe, 1998).

Supervision and Inspection have been identified as crucial for the daily operation and function of the school system since they assess and record the performance of teachers, their ability and consistency in carrying out intellectually challenging teaching and the keeping of high quality records (Mortimore, 1998). They also involve the assessment of effectiveness of communication among teachers and between the students and their teachers. This article therefore attempts to highlight the need for effective supervision and inspection in primary education in Nigeria to ensure the attainment of National development.

THE CONCEPT OF SUPERVISION

Supervision is a way of advising, guarding, refreshing, encouraging, stimulating, improving and over seeing their cooperation in order for the supervisor to be successful in their tasks or supervision. Ogunu (1998:128) defines supervision as

the art of overseeing the activities of teachers and other educational workers in a school system to ensure that they conform with generally accepted principles and practice of education and the stipulated policies and guidelines of education authority which controls the system of education and providing professional guidance to them (school personnel) to improve the conditions which affect the learning and growth of student and teachers.

Igwe (2001) stated that to supervise means to direct, oversee, guide or to make sure that expected standards are met. Thus, supervision in the school means that the laid down rules, regulations, principles are followed to maintain the minimum standard lay for the schools are carried out effectively and efficiently.

Effective supervision is based on identifying certain areas that if well supervised, would help improve quality of primary education in Nigeria. Afolabi and Loto (2008) took into cognizance the following areas:

The Nature of Lesson Plan

The lesson plan shows the level of preparedness and the effort the teacher made in gathering information for the lesson. If the lesson plan is poorly prepared it indicates how the teacher is committed through his teaching the school head must examine the following items in the lesson plan:

- a. The clarity and appropriateness of the learner behavioural objectives,
- b. The relevance and adequacy of the lesson note,
- c. Selection of the appropriate teaching aids

- d. Appropriate evaluation techniques to determine the extent of achieving the objectives or goals effectively.

Lesson Presentation

Teaching is said to be effective, if the objectives are achieved. The principal, during internal supervision should pay attention to the following areas:

- a. Introduction of the lesson and the ability of the teacher to carry the pupils along, during the lesson.
- b. The teachers voice, how audible he/she is clarity expression and appropriate use of language and effective use of instructional material.
- c. Teachers knowledge about the subject matter
- d. Good use of classroom management techniques to enable the participation of students.

Reference Materials

The use of appropriate reference material such as textbooks, scheme of work and syllabus cannot be overlooked. The principal must look into the following.

- a. The duration of the topic
- b. Logical use of the reference material used
- c. Sequence of presentation
- d. Make use of current materials

The Relationship between Teacher and Student

Cordial relationship between teachers and students can enhance effective learning and achievement of educational goals/objectives. Principal must seek for positive concern and acceptable disposition between teachers and students, to enable them relate well in every aspect.

Classroom Management

Good classroom management facilitates teaching and learning process. The principal or other appointed school personnel must be conversant with the following:

- a. Ability to discipline and control students
- b. Reward or reinforce good performance or conduct
- c. Identify cases and causes of students misbehaviour
- d. Create a conducive classroom atmosphere
- e. Classroom arrangement
- f. The physical condition of the classroom

Personality of the Teacher

Personality of the teacher includes the trait he or she possess; emotional status, intelligence, physique, leadership skills, communication skill etc

On the other hand Adepoju (1998) said that the term supervision is derived from the word "super video" meaning to oversee, which is an interaction between persons for the improvement of activity, he defined supervision as the process of bringing out improvement in instruction by working with teachers who have interaction with the pupils. It can also be described as a process of stimulating growth and a means of assisting teachers to achieve a perfect teaching skill. Supervision involves the use of expert knowledge and experiences to

improve, to oversee, evaluate and coordinate the process of improving teaching and learning activities in schools.

Supervision of education however, could be regarded as a concept with emphasis on the improvement of instruction the supervisor may be regarded as an adviser whose experience is such that it is believed he could offer positive assistance to an average teacher.

Basic Principles for Effective Supervision

1. There should be a healthy atmosphere free from pressure and stress.
2. Staff must be given orientation about the quality of work expected from them. New staff must be given orientation concerning the job.
3. There should be room for constructive criticism, that is poor work should be criticized, advice should be given to the affected party.
4. Staff should be given opportunity to prove their capability, they should be allowed to use their initiative when performing certain task or taking decision in some crucial areas.
5. Staff should be motivated and encouraged to work, to increase their productivity that will enhance organizational goals.

Features of school supervision includes

1. It pays attention on the improvement of teaching and learning.
2. It is mostly based on human relation principles rather than the traditional masters versus servant attitude
3. It usually associated with a lot of discussion and exchange of ideas to find out which method works better.
4. It last few days rather than few hours
5. They usually come as a colleague rather than fault-finder and reporter
6. It is regular, scheduled and well planned
7. It helps in boosting the morale of teacher and pupils in doing what they do well and in correcting what they do not do well. (Ojelabi, 1981)

With these basic facts you can really differentiate between what supervision and inspection is all about.

Purposes of Supervision

There are various reasons for carrying out supervision in schools one of the crucial reasons is to ensure that the individual teacher within the school system has been performing the duties for which he was scheduled.

For supervisor to achieve the stated purpose, it is important for him to have a good idea of what he wants in supervision. Other reasons for supervision of schools are as follows as noted by Ogunsaju (1983):

1. To improve effectiveness of teachers so that they can contribute maximally to the attainment of the schools goals. This will assist the supervision in making recommendations for the improvement of incompetent teachers.
2. It helps to enhance the quality of instruction in schools and it also helps to maintain minimum standards in schools
3. Asses the overall climate of the school and identify some of its most urgent needs
4. Identify sources of needs of the school

5. Supervision helps in deciding the nature and content of curriculum, the learning materials that will enhance educational growth of both students and teachers
6. Supervision helps to “checkmate” the activities of staff, the newly recruited both the old to see their performance in teaching and learning.
7. It helps in appropriate expenditure of funds in schools
8. Supervision determine whether a teacher should be transferred, retained, promoted retired or dismissed based on the performance of the teacher.
9. Supervision helps to discover special abilities or qualities possessed teachers in the school. This can be used as a guide for staff development

THE CONCEPT OF INSPECTION

School inspection in Nigeria is as old as the school system of western type education school. Inspection is of the activities that have always been compulsory by law in Nigeria. As a matter of fact, as far back as 1887, there was a colonial education ordinance that legalized regular school inspection. This tradition has continued till date. The national policy on education (FRN, 2012) still specifically requires schools in the country to be inspected.

School inspection refers to the specific occasion when the entire school is examined and evaluated as a place of learning. It also means the constant and continuous process of guidance based on frequent visits which focus attention on one or more aspects of the schools and its organization. Ojelabi (1981) affirm that inspection could be described as the critical examination and evaluation of a school as a place of learning. Through the inspection of school necessary advice is given for the improvement of the school examples of school inspection are as follows:

1. Full inspection
2. Routine inspection
3. First school leaving certificate visit
4. Sample inspection visit
5. Special investigation visits and
6. Follow up visits

According to Fafunwa and Adaralegbe (1971) during the inspection visit, the inspectors are expected to report on the following: staffing, academic and administrative records, school plant, teaching programme, school community relationship, management and organization.

Inspection on the other hand is seen as an instrument with which the political and administrative authorities maintain the necessary contact with the schools, teachers, pupils and the community and so ensure that the system is working satisfactorily (Okoro, 1994). In this sense inspection is to be viewed as fulfilling a controlling coordinating and communicating role as guardian of educational standards. It is evident from both concepts that effective teaching can be developed within schools and that such development is essentially derived from the control of the nexus of connections amongst staff, pupils, parents and other stakeholders within the school community with a view to developing a positive teaching and learning environment.

Guidelines for Inspecting Officers

There are certain guidelines that must be followed for inspection to be properly carried out, inspector shall

1. Aim at providing academic guidance to the teachers and help the institution in the promotion of a higher standard of education
2. It should not aim at fault finding of the teachers and their work but for providing concrete suggestions for the improvement of teaching, class work, home work and its corrections
3. Help the institution in organization of co-curricular programmes in a manner conducive to all development of the students and help in the co-curricular development of the school.
4. Aim at imposing check on offenders from amongst the staff in respect of attendance, punctuality, discipline, overall behavior and performance at large.

The supervising and inspecting official shall:

1. Formulate a definite plan for supervising the subject and classes of teachers
2. Focus his attention on the teaching situation and not on the teachers as a person
3. Emphasize the professional growth of the teacher by developing his/her power of self-direction
4. Give teachers requisite freedom to try out new experiments, methods and innovation in the process of teaching.
5. Help the teacher to understand the role of the school and the objectives to be achieved through teaching-learning process in the school.

Features of School Inspection Includes

1. Emphasis on conformity to rules and regulations at all times
2. Usually fault-finding
3. Focuses of teacher appearance
4. It is usually concerned with paper work and reporting than with actual school change
5. It lack leadership abilities
6. It puts fear/pressure on teachers and pupils most times
7. It uses out-dated methods

Challenges of School Supervision and Inspection

Insufficient Staff/Shortage of Inspectors or Supervisors

Supervisors and inspectors from the Ministry of Education are usually insufficient or not adequate to carry out the duties required, according to Ogunu (2005) the consequences of this shortage of supervisory personal is that most often, a lot of unprofessional practices are carried out in our schools to the detriment of the children.

Poor Funding

Lack of funds creates a problem in the school. Head teachers will not be able to organize orientation or in-service training for the staff or travel out to other schools to learn new development in the curriculum and instruction that could benefit their schools.

There is need for government to provide adequate finds, for the development of the personnel and supervision of instruction in our schools for this goal to be achieved.

Lack of Time

According to Ogunu (2005) secondary school Principals are weighed down by routine administrative burden that they hardly find time to visit the classroom and observe who the

teachers are teaching. The head teachers are busy with correspondence from the Ministry of Education while creates a problem because the primary duty has been neglected, by diverting her/his time to less relevant activities, teachers thereby take advantage of the head's neglect of supervision to achieve their selfish interest or desire.

Lack of Basic Facilities

There can be no effective supervision of instruction without instructional material. Experience has shown that most schools lack even the basic materials and equipment for teaching such as text books, chalkboard, decent classroom for students, apart from this, there are other problems like lack of facilities, bad roads, lack materials and resources for the supervisor to use. External supervisors' inspectors do not have transport facilities and writing materials to carry out their inspection duties.

Lack of Basic Knowledge or Formal Training

Most school head teachers are not given the necessary training or orientation about the new position they are overseeing to equip them with the new skills of supervisor of instruction functions. They dabble into instructional supervision without understanding how to do it.

Staff Inadequacy

The numbers of professional trained supervisors in our schools are inadequate to meet the needs for effective supervision. The students population has increased drastically, with regards to the number of teachers pupils ratio, this becomes difficult for the head teacher, all he/she does at that point is to position the teachers in the classes to ensure that effective teaching takes place; leaving the area of supervision vacant.

Other challenges encountered by inspectors and supervisors are; unprofessional attitude to work, lack of interest, poor perception of the general public on teaching profession, poor status given by teachers, constant change in educational policies, political instability and lack of evaluation system, as noted by (Onasanya, 2011).

Seminars and Workshop

There is need to organize and run seminars and workshop for teachers and head teachers, especially when new curriculum is introduced in the system it will help to improve the quality of the teacher and teaching skills.

Training and Retraining of Supervisors

The training of new supervisors and retraining of the old ones should be put into consideration, to enhance teaching. Special centers should be made available/established by the government for this purpose. This is important because of the idea of introducing the new trend in teaching and learning and negates the old or obsolete method.

Motivation and Reinforcement of Teachers

If supervisors are motivated and reinforced with available working materials such as statutory, transportation, conducive working environment and enhanced salaries and allowances this will motivate the supervisors to perform better.

Improved Selection Criteria For Supervisors/Inspectors

Supervision is a task that requires meticulous, firm and objective assessment. Therefore those given the responsibility should be very careful in carrying out their duties. A special aptitude test should be administered testing various aspect of candidates' personality to determine their suitability. This exercise according to Obanya (2005) stimulates confidence which is a necessary ingredient for skill acquisition and performance.

Educational Qualification of Supervisors / Inspectors

Supervisors/inspectors with higher educational qualification are likely to perform better due to the experience they have acquired from schools their counterpart with lower qualification, according to Okoro (2004) education personnel with higher qualifications display more confidence in their workplace they are also more accessible to current information than their counterparts with lower qualification who are usually not exposed to the modern changes.

Supervision Should Be Used As a Means of Reinforcement

If teachers finds out that supervision and inspection are more of formalities than quality control they will not be encouraged to beef their performance, for internal and external supervision to yield concrete controls they have to use it as a criteria for transfer of teachers that are not performing well to another school or promote teachers that have performed well etc teachers would strive hard to perform better as they would like to be promoted or even be recognized as the best teacher.

Disciplinary Action against Professional Ethics

To improve the skills of school supervisor appropriate actions/sanctions should be taken against any erring or deviant supervisor who tends to undermine the expected standard. If supervisors perform well they should be encouraged and rewarded but if found wanting in his jurisdiction should be sanctioned it acts as a deterrent for others.

Restructuring the Inspectorate Division

There is need to restructure the inspectorate division so as to accommodate further decentralization. This will entail the distribution of schools into geographical zone which will make it possible for frequent visits to schools.

Proper supervision and sound machinery being in place, through this restricting one supervisor/inspector will be given 5 to 15 schools to supervise.

According to Onasanya (2011) an administrative unit of the inspectorate that is responsible for evaluation and research should be created. This will enhance effective inspection because the details of the day to day administration of the administrative officers as well as attendance meetings as well as important professional issues relating to educational policies will be taken into consideration.

CONCLUSION

This paper examines the concept of supervision and inspection, which is to be supervised, basic principles for effective supervision, guidelines for inspecting officers, differences between inspection and supervision, purposes of supervisor, challenges faced by supervision/inspection and finally strategies to improve effective supervision and inspection in primary education.

Educational activities in schools need inspection and supervision to achieve its educational goals. Teachers need inspection and supervision to upgrade them in terms of teaching and learning skills, it will encourage teachers to work harder and not to abscond from schools to go about their different business.

The inspectorate division should be up and doing about the new trend in teaching and learning in Nigeria school and make it available in primary schools also government should motivate teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. High performing teachers should be encouraged by giving them extra incentives to motivate them Head teachers should be serious with internal supervision
2. School heads should more serious with internal supervision
3. The inspectors in the inspectorate division should be highly motivated. They would be given materials to work, including vehicle
4. Workshops and seminars should be organized for teachers by Ministry of Education at the State level and Federal level.
5. There is need for regular pursuit of higher qualification for teachers, supervisors and inspectors. Through the in-service programme by the government to improve on the quality of the teachers, supervisors and inspectors.
6. Government should tar roads leading to schools particularly in the rural areas so that inspectors can get to them.

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