

## **Comparative Study of the Educational Inspectorate Systems in the United Kingdom, France and China**

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**Abstract:** Educational inspection is a fundamental mode which implements scientific administration to education in the modern world. In addition, educational inspectorate system has become an essential part in modern educational administration. Given the importance of the inspectorate system in education, this paper tries to compare the four different aspects of the national inspectorate systems in the U.K., France and China. It consists of three parts: (a). the historical development of the educational inspectorate systems in the UK, France and China; (b). The status quo of the educational inspectorate systems in the UK, France and China, including the roles and responsibilities of the inspectors, the inspectional functions and scopes, the strategies and methods used by the educational inspectors in these three countries; (c). The implications of this study for policymaking and practice.

**Keywords:** educational inspectorate system, educational quality, comparative study.

With a history of 200 years old, educational inspectorate system originated from Europe and America (Guo, 2000). Educational inspection is an important instrument to implement educational laws, regulations, guidelines, and policies; to achieve educational goals; to transform governmental function and to strengthen macro-administration (Zhou, 2003). Currently, during the transformational period of time, it is imperative to establish a scientific and effective inspection system with Chinese characteristics. In order to develop and perfect our educational inspectorate system, we need to learn the successful experiences from other countries.

### **The Historical Development of Educational inspection in the U.K., France and China**

#### **The U.K.**

The U.K. is one of the earliest countries that established educational inspectorate system in the world. According to the English *Education Act*, the government had founded the group of Royal school inspectorate since 1839 and then began to supervise schools (Li, 2001). In 1871, *Compulsory Education Law for Primary Education* was enacted and then English government set up School Inspectorate Office in Academy of Educational Science. In the office, a chief inspector was appointed as the director by the Chairman of the Privy Council in order to meet the needs of compulsory education and the evaluation of the educational quality. *Compulsory Education Law for Secondary Education* which was passed in 1902 reinforced institutions of school inspector and expanded authority continually (Xu, 2003). Afterwards, *the 1944 Education Act* was passed which clearly described the working contents, procedures and requirement of Royal inspectors. Meanwhile, it laid a sound foundation for

current educational inspectorate system (Xu, 2003). In 1988, *Educational Reform Act* initiated a series of educational reforms and resulted in the National Uniform Curriculum. The focus is to strengthen the central control of schools and to monitor the execution of educational policy and the quality of school education (CIGEI, 1998).

In 1992, *Bill of Parents* and *Bill of Citizen* led to a significant change on modern educational inspectorate system in England (Li, 2003). The two laws stipulated: Each parent has the right to know about the condition of running a school and educational quality. Government must reinforce openness and transparency of education and encourage competitions among schools. According to the two Acts, Office for Standard in Education (OFSTED) was separated from Ministry of Education and it had become a non-ministerial governmental department in order that the central government could strengthen quality supervision of education in the whole country (Ding, 2003; Sun, 2004).

### **France**

As early as in the nineteenth century, the French educational inspectorate system was established. In May, 1802, French government promulgated *General Law of National Education* and reformed educational system. It stipulated to establish educational inspectorate system definitely and to set up general inspection. Promulgating and implementing the general law marked the formally establishment of the inspectorate system in France. Approximately in 1840, the government set up three-level educational inspectorate system initially, including chief inspector, inspectors at district and provincial levels, and inspectors at the school level (Li, 2003).

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the development of educational inspectorate system tended to become diversified, specific with some new features. First, political status of educational inspection was improved evidently. Since 1852, chief inspectors have been nominated by the Educational Minister and then have been appointed and removed by the Chief Executive. At the same time, treatment was improved. Secondly, inspectorate organization was set up independently in Ministry of Education. Thirdly, the group of chief inspectors was enlarged apparently, establishing chief inspectors respectively in higher education, secondary education, elementary education and kindergarten education. Fourthly, specialization of inspectorate was developed and hierarchy of inspectorate was formed. Specialization inclined to two leading tendencies: First, dividing the work by specialty and discipline; Secondly, by the nature of work; Besides implementing extensive supervision in the past and separating discipline inspection from other working inspection, some new inspectorate groups emerged, such as Chief Inspectors in charge of Finance, Economics, Library and Literature. During the two World Wars, groups of inspectorate were extended and division of the work tended to become specialized but overall evaluation to educational organizations has been weakened somewhat (IGNMEI, 2003).

In the 1970s and the 1980s, French government reformed and rectified the educational inspectorate system. For example, chief inspector of public education in France was renamed as Chief Inspector of National Education in 1980 and the government organized the working

group according to specialty. Since 1984, the function of the Chief Inspector of State Administration has strengthened research and macro-investigation. The government has tried to invite applications from society. In 1986, regional educational inspectors began to play a major role in teachers' evaluation and management. However, the function of Chief Inspector was transformed to research, macro-evaluation and macro-investigation (Huo, 1990). From the French Inspectorate system, we may say if education were a machine, beyond all doubt, educational inspection would be an indispensable gear wheel.

### China

Educational inspectorate system in China began in 1906 (Qing Dynasty). At that time, Qing Government set up 'Inspection Officer' in 'Education Department' after visiting outside (Hu & Li, 2003). In November 1949, the People's Government of China established the Ministry of Education and set up Inspection Department whose main task was to monitor and to evaluate the implementation of educational policies and decisions in every administrative district or provinces or schools (Shi, 2005).

In October 1986, ratified by State Council of People's Republic of China, Inspection Department was renamed as Inspection Department of State Education Committee, which marked that educational inspectorate system in China was reinstated and rebuilt (Yang & Guo, 2005). In order to give impetus to legality of education inspection, State Education Committee enacted *Temporary Provisions of Educational Inspection* in April 1991, which indicated that educational inspection in China entered into a new stage of development (Sun, 2005). In March 1995, *Educational Act* was passed at the third Session of the 8<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress. It stipulated that 'the State carried out educational inspectorate system and educational evaluation system in school and other educational organization.' Thus, it endowed educational inspection with unshakeable legal status (Shi, 2005). Early in 2000, authorized by leaders in State Council, the original group was renamed as National Inspection group, which clearly obligated the integration of 'administrative inspection' and 'school inspection' and put forward the mission of educational inspection in order to ensure educational quality and to realize the educational goals. In carrying out educational policies, laws and regulations, educational inspectorate exerted supervision and reinforcement (Sun, 2005).

Table 1: *The Comparison of Historical Development of Educational Inspection in the U.K., France, China*

<b>Educational Inspectorate System</b>	<b>Time of Establishment</b>	<b>Educational Inspectorate Organization</b>
The U.K.	in 1839	Office for Standard in Education

France	in 1802	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. General Inspection Bureau, Office of National Education Administration</li> <li>General Inspection Office of National Education</li> <li>Library Inspection-General Office Youthful and Physical Inspection-General Office</li> <li>2. University Inspectorate Office</li> <li>3. Educational Inspectorate Office in Provinces</li> </ol>
China	in 1902	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inspectorate Group of National Education</li> <li>2. Educational Inspectorate Group in Province</li> <li>3. Educational Office in City</li> <li>4. Educational Office in County</li> </ol>

The time of establishment of Educational Inspectorate Systems in the U.K. and in France is much earlier than that in China. In the U.K., the OFSTED is independent of Department of Education and Employment. In France, educational inspectorate organizations include central level, school district level and provincial level. In China, educational inspectorate organizations include the central level, provincial level, city level and county level.

**Comparison of Existing Educational Inspectorate Systems in three Countries**

**Duties of Educational Inspectorate**

**The U.K.**

OFSTED is the educational inspectorate organization in the U.K. Its independence is the most notable feature. The headquarters of OFSTED is in London which is led by the Royal Chief inspector and two directors including 12 branches throughout the country. Now the number of working personnel is up to 600 including 300 Royal inspectors. There are also 300 people working in the headquarters including 100 Royal inspectors. The Ministry of Finance allocates 150 million pounds each year to OFSTED, approximately 0.1% of the national educational expenditure, in which 32 million pounds are used for operation (Li, 2001).

OFSTED is responsible for Educational Minister and Parliament directly. It is independent from the administration of the Department of Education and Employment. Royal chief inspectors can constitute some concerned policies of inspection. *Education Act* in England has stipulated: the aim of OFSTED is to improve its work and the quality of education through periodic supervision, public report and suggestion. Its primary duties include: (1) Laying down evaluative criterion and establishing an efficient system of evaluation. (2) Supervising and evaluating in some aspects according to Education Minister’s request. (3) Formulating regulations about how to write inspection report for inspectorate. (4) Supervising inspectorate’s work. (6) Strengthening effective operation of OFSTED.

**France**

Educational inspectorate organization in France was divided into three levels: Central levels, provincial levels and school district. The central level of educational inspectorate organization is established in Inspection-general Bureau of the Ministry of National

Education with responsibility for macro-supervision and macro-evaluation of national educational system, to inspect, evaluate the administration and finance in colleges and university, the work of teachers in secondary schools and primary schools. There are 243 school inspectors in active service and the average age is 56 years old. According to different roles and duties, there are 156 national chief inspectors, 55 national chief inspectors of administration and 32 deputy chief inspectors of administration (IGNMEI, 2003). According to different duties, there are four branches: (1) Chief Inspector Office of National Education. It is responsible for macro-supervising and macro-evaluating national education system including categories of education, curricula, teaching programs, pedagogy, teaching procedures and enforcement patterns. In addition, they are in charge of giving training and lectures for regional inspectors, school principals and teachers. (2) Administrative Chief Inspector Office of National Education. It is in charge of inspecting education and administration in higher education and in provinces. To supervise the departments, organizations and personnel on administration, economy and financial affairs which are dominated by Educational Minister. (3) Chief Inspector Office for Libraries. It is responsible for inspecting the operation of libraries. (4) Chief Inspector Office for Youth and Physical Education. It is in charge of inspecting physical education and teachers.

There are 96 administrative provinces in France which is divided into 28 school districts (Tao, 2004). The first-level inspectorate organization of school districts is University Inspectorate Office in University Chief Inspector Office, including: instruction inspectors, inspectors in school district and staff of consultant. Regional inspectors are special staff. Basically, there is one inspector in a discipline in each school district but there is also minority with responsibility for several disciplines and school districts. Led by the Director of School District, school inspectors don't work at supervision actually but administration. Otherwise, ten or more consultant and staff (full-time and part-time) assist the Director of School District.

Provincial inspectorate organization has been set up in School Inspectorate Office in every province. Provincial Inspectors of National Education are responsible for supervising primary schools, junior vocational education and pre-school education and they engage in inspecting teaching, administrating and evaluating teachers and school staff.

## **China**

In recent years, while educational inspectorate system is being reinstated in China, all levels of inspectorate organizations have been gradually set up (Zhang, 1992). Currently, the country has formed four-level educational inspectorate agencies: at the level of central, province, city and county. The total number of national inspectorate is 35217, including 8631 inspectorate of secondary vocational and technical education, 21178 part-time inspectors and a group of expert inspectorate. Inspectorate group consists of full-time and part-time experts (Li, 2004).

At the central level, the government has set up the National Inspectorate Bureau with responsibility for advising, supervising, evaluating the implementation of policy for

education at lower levels. It constitutes the regulations for educational inspection, for inspecting and evaluating special topics in provinces, such as, making nine-year compulsory education universal, outlaying investment and so on.

At the provincial level, the Educational Inspectorate Office was set up. The group is responsible for advising, supervising, and inspecting the work of district/city governments, in administrative departments and in schools in order to ensure that the relevant guidelines, policies, laws and regulations and goals can be reached. Meanwhile, the group is in charge of constituting provincial inspection programs, determining the focuses of education, coordinating the work of educational inspection, training county-inspectorate and the research working of inspectors.

At the district, city or county level, inspectorate offices are established within the Educational Department. The corresponding inspectorate offices are responsible for working programs of educational inspection and organizing inspection; for advising, supervising and inspecting administration and teaching in the administrative departments of education and school (Tao, 2004).

Table 2: *Comparison of the number of inspectorate and duties of educational inspectorate organizations in the U.K., France and China.*

<b>Country</b>	<b>The Number of Inspectorate</b>	<b>Duties of Educational Inspectorate Organizations</b>
The U.K.	600 (including 300 Royal Inspectors)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Making evaluative criterion and establishing an effective evaluative system.</li> <li>2. Supervising &amp; evaluating some aspects according to Education Minister's request.</li> <li>3. Formulating regulations about how to write inspection reports</li> <li>4. Supervising inspectorate's work.</li> <li>5. Strengthening effectively running OFSTED.</li> </ol>
France	243( including 156 National Chief Inspectors (NCI) 55 NCI of Administration 32 Deputy Chief Inspectors of Administration)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Macro-supervision &amp; Macro-evaluation to state edu system according to different disciplines</li> <li>2. Education administrative inspection in higher education, provinces &amp; supervising department, organizations &amp; personnel on administration, financial affairs dominated by MoE.</li> </ol>
China	35217( including 8631 full-time School Inspectors  21178 part-time School Inspectors)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advising, supervising, evaluating, enforcement the implementation of policies at low levels Constituting regulations for inspections, laws and regulations;</li> </ol>

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2. Advising, supervising and inspecting school work in all cities, in educational administrative departments in order to ensure that national education policies, laws and regulations and goals can be reached.
  3. Making programs, organizing inspections; advising, supervising, inspecting administration and teaching in schools and educational administrative departments.
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The number of inspectorate in China is much larger than that in the U.K. and France. There are strict selective procedures and explicit condition of position in the U.K. and in France. The duties of educational inspectorate system are clear. But in China, besides the number of inspectorate is large, they are divided into part-time and full-time inspectors. In addition, the agencies aren't standard and uniform and from central agencies to local agencies, the duties of inspectorate organizations are ambiguous and their focus is not instructional inspection but rather the administrative inspection.

## **Functions and Scopes of Educational Inspection**

### **The U.K.**

In order to follow the international competition, the English government adopted a series of decisive measures: improving the quality of elementary education and increasing the ratio of input and output in education. On the one hand, the government strengthened centralization of state power and enhanced a competitive driving force from exterior pressure. On the other hand, the government promoted schools to frame developmental plans and guided improvement of school forming an inside driving force. On the foundation of two hands, the government promotes the improvement of the quality of elementary education.

According to 'the Report on the Investigation of Educational Inspectorate System in the U.K (Chen, 2004), the central government controls educational outlay. According to the number of students on campus, central government allocates 90% of educational funds directly to school through local Education Bureaus, but only 10% of educational funds are used by local Education Bureau. However, as to how to utilize educational expenditure, the OFSTED can supervise the local Bureaus of Education at any time.

Secondly, the government set up National Curriculum making a uniform criterion on educational contents and requirements in primary schools and high schools and a unified examination system supervised by the central government (Sun, 2004, 2005). The Royal Inspectors supervises a school every four years and the length of time are determined by the size of school. The appraisalment involved the state of quality offered by school, students' performance, educational costs and benefits and individual morality. The whole process is open and transparent. Before supervising a school, each inspector must be trained 10 to 15 days on the unified criterion of evaluation and the sequence of operation. After completing the course, they can be inspectorate. There must be a lay public figure in every inspectorate

group (equivalent to guest inspector) in order to maintain impartiality. Inspectorate must attend a lecture at school and must hear the views from teachers, students and parents. At the end of a school inspection, the inspectorate must feed back verbally to school directorate and principals. After the written report is passed through, the inspectorate group should announce the result to school and should also publish it on National Information Internet from which everybody can inquire about. Within 40 days of receiving inspection report, the school must bring forward improving measures and must work out programs then must inform all of parents. OFSTED is responsible to Educational Minister and Congress, so the Ministry of Education will overcome drawbacks which appraise by themselves. This makes evaluation and the result more objective and more reasonable. Annual Inspection Report which is submitted to Educational Minister provides science basis for setting down educational policies. Meanwhile, the report will be announced to the public so it is more authoritative. As the English government attaches importance to educational costs and benefits, a school which is recognized as disqualification must be improved in 2 years, or it will be taken over and closed by central government.

While the government adds to the outside pressure, it also builds up the inside driving force of school in order to bring every positive factors into play. Therefore, overall goals are raised by the Central Government while sub-goals are put forward by local Educational Bureaus. Educational inspectorate organizations help schools set down developmental programs in accordance with the central and local requirements. Before inspecting, educational organizations assist schools in self-evaluation to identify existing problems and then contrast to the Inspection Index System provided by OFSTED and to the achievement datum announced by press media. After inspecting, inspectorate helps school frame operative plans which will strengthen and develop their own advantages and will take effective measures to change and overcome their own weaknesses and then makes school perfect constantly. Educational Inspectorate Organizations cooperate with schools closely paying attention to not only inspection but the gradual process as well. *The tendency of function of educational inspection in the U.K. is suggestion and consultation, discovery and popularization, evaluating standard and participation and programming.*

The evaluating scopes of OFSTED include: (1) National education for all primary and secondary schools and nursery schools; (2) Normal schools, the working of teachers' training and secondary private schools or under administrated by Qualification Outline Committee; (3) Educational working of local administrative departments.

### **France**

At the initial stage, the functions of inspection were more in the way of control and leading. Now their functions have been continually changing that are more in the directions of inspection, direction, liaison and consultant (Tao, 2004). At present, all levels of inspectorate organizations focus on: monitoring principals and teaching, participating prevocational and vocational training (Li, 2003). Different levels of inspectorate organizations focus on different working objectives. If the key function of inspectorate system is reduced to three aspects: supervision and inspection, guidance and assistance, and consultant, chief inspectors



will focus on supervision and inspection then to guidance and help, but inspectors of university district will emphasize on guidance, help and consultant rather than on supervision and inspection.

Reports from inspectors attract people's attention because they can not only help Education Minister to know about some concerned situations but also provide reference for making decisions and educational policies. Since 1991, the government has decided that annual investigation reports from chief inspectors must be submitted to the President of France. These reports must be compiled and then published so that people can know about the status quo and problems of education, hold out and participate in educational reform (Zhou, 2003). The remarkable feature of educational inspection in France is to focus on strengthening guidance, accepting consultation and extending service on the basis of perfecting supervision, inspection and evaluation and the scopes of inspection focusing on teaching specially school inspection. Now, educational inspection is facing a new turning point that the reform of educational system in France will require inspectors inevitably from inspecting teaching quality of one subject to macro-supervising and macro-controlling the holistic running of educational system. Inspectors must play the role as collaborators and technical advisers of local educational administrator. Educational inspection in France involves preschool education, primary and secondary education, higher education and public library supervision, school organization, school life, administration and finance.

## **China**

In China, the functions of educational inspectorate organizations are manifold, including: supervision, evaluation, guidance and feedback but their positions are different. Hereinto, the focus of the supervision is more likely to 'administrative inspection' rather than 'school inspection'.

1. Supervision is the core task which can embody essential attribute of the educational inspectorate organization most. Educational inspectorate organizations exercise their function, on the basis of national guidelines, policies, laws, regulations and instructions.
2. At present, the level of education and administration isn't in the advanced position so the guidance from inspectorate organizations and from their members is more important. The inspectors are knowledgeable experts who can give concrete assistance and guidance in educational administration, curriculum arrangement, teaching methods and teaching materials chosen, etc.
3. Evaluation is a process of value judgment which is in the light of definite educational goals with means of modern educational statistics and measurement. In 1993, State Education Committee determined to investigate the 'Two Basics' (making nine-year compulsory education universal basically and wiping out illiteracy in youth basically). This was a notable achievement of educational inspection in China.
4. Feedback plays an irreplaceable and unique part in educational inspection. Inspectorate comply with definite procedures, principles, ways and means, collect and select first-hand information, transmit real and effective circumstances and exert the function of feedback so that leaders have a thorough grasp of the situation and have a clear direction (Kou, 2000).

Nowadays, the scopes of educational inspection in China are primary and secondary school

education, preschool education and other correlative working. Educational inspectorate organization can supervise other working beyond the above-mentioned functions when they are entrusted by their local government and same-grade educational administrative departments (State Education Commission, 1991).

**Table 3: The Comparison of Functions and Scopes of Educational Inspection in the U.K., France and China**

Country	Functions of Educational Inspection	Scopes of Educational Inspection
The U.K.	1. Suggestion and consultation 2. Discovery and popularization 3. Evaluating standard	1. high school, elementary schools and nursery schools 2. Normal schools, the teachers' training and secondary private schools or under administrated by Qualification Committee
France	1. Inspection 2. Direction 3. Liaison 4. Consultant	1. Preschool education 2. Primary and secondary school education 3. Higher Education 4. Public library
China	1. Supervision 2. Primary & secondary school education 3. Evaluation 4. Feedback	1. Primary and secondary schools 2. Preschool education

## Ways and Methods of Educational Inspection

### The U.K.

The ways of educational inspection involve in collocation of inspectorate and methods of inspection.

**Collocation of Inspectorate** When educational inspection is mentioned, the collocation of inspectorate is the first thing. English government adopts division of labor on educational inspection. Under the prerequisite of division of labor on the central level, they are divided further. On the central level, inspectorate is divided into:

**a.** General inspectorate and specialized inspectorate. Central inspectorate is divided into general inspectorate and specialized inspectorate. The former works on general inspection and education administrative inspection while the latter works on professional inspection to teaching activity. There are four kinds of Royal inspectors in the U.K. Ordinary inspectors belong to general inspectorate and special inspectors belong to specialized inspectorate.

**b.** Inspectorate with classification and Inspectorate with subjects. Under the arrangement of the Chief inspector, Royal inspectors are responsible for supervising inspectorate on the regular payroll. But there are some differences in Ireland, Wales and several large inspection districts. Such as, in some areas, Royal inspectors are divided into the inspectorate of elementary education, secondary education, teachers' education and special education on the principle of classification and level, while in other areas, Royal inspectors are divided into the

inspectorate of foreign language, mathematics, history, and physical on the principle of subjects.

**Methods of Inspection** The methods of inspection in the U.K. can be divided into: observation and analysis, examination and text, discussion and investigation. First, observation and analysis is that inspectorate goes into classroom knowing about teaching and analyzes students' homework and concerned document of the school. Through observing students in the classrooms, school inspectors can know about whether teaching materials and methods adapt to them; whether the expectations are appropriate. Examination and text is that inspectorate examines students verbally and in written form and then analyzes the results. Now, Royal inspectors take the method of observation and analysis and the method of examination and text increasingly. Discussion and investigation is that inspectorate has an informal discussion with teachers, parents, students, leaders of school and delegates of social organization; knows about circumstance; attends every assembly and activity ; hears speeches and reports from participants. In recent years, Royal school inspectors prefer national investigation and then publish the results (Yang, 1995).

## France

The ways of educational inspection in France is similar to that of the U.K.

### *Collocation of Inspectorate*

a. Central inspectorate is divided into general inspectorate and specialized inspectorate. The former works on general inspection and educational administrative inspection with responsibility for supervising administration, funds and financial affairs while the latter works on professional inspection to teaching activity.

b. In France, central inspectorate can be divided into some groups: the group of elementary education and vocational education, the group of handicraft and domestic economy, the group of mathematics, the group of natural science, the group of philosophy, the group of literature, the group of history and geography and the group of modern French. The collocation of inspectorate gives priority to classification (Yang, 1995).

**Methods of Inspection** Some concerned decrees and documents of the French government and the Ministry of Education only provide the setup of organization, application and their primary duties but nothing about special procedures and methods. For some reasons, there are so many differences in all levels of inspectorate organizations and at the same level of organizations in different fields. They focus on their respective fields, procedures and methods so it is more random. The inspectorate adopts the method of observation and analysis, the method of examination and text and the method of discussion and investigation.

## China

**Collocation of Inspectorate** a. full-time inspectors and part-time inspectors; the number of full-time inspector lies in the range of all levels of educational administration, the number of school , distribution of schools and authorized personnel. Part-time inspectors are from

cadres from administration department at all levels, staff from teaching and research section, old schoolmasters with abundant experience, old directors from Education Bureaus. b. administrator inspectors and specialist inspectors; the team of inspectors in China takes administrator inspectors as principals but in other countries with modern inspectorate system, governments usually place administrator inspectors and specialist inspectors at the same position (Chen, 2004).

**Methods of Inspection** Educational Inspection in China can be classified into regular inspection, comprehensive inspection and special inspection. The methods are carried out by organizations of educational inspection with accordance to the decisions made by governments, administration departments and superior inspection organizations. Regular inspection is that inspectorate visits and supervises schools at any moment. This kind of inspection will last 1-2 days, the inspectorate needn't inform schools every time and also needn't plan out thorough programs and write reports. Comprehensive inspection is that inspectorate supervises all works in order to know about overall situation and to evaluate and analyze them thoroughly. Special inspection is that inspectorate supervises schools in a certain domain in order to find and solve problems.

The methods of educational inspection in China include questionnaires, reports, records, consulting documents, taking part in conferences and educational activities, holding symposium, individual visit, and investigation on the spot (Zhang, 1992).

### **Summary**

Through comparison of historical development, duties, functions, scopes, ways and methods of educational inspection, we can conclude that educational inspection in the U.K. and in France have a longer history and governments in these two countries offer lots of autonomy and paid much more attention to their inspectorate systems. They established special agencies, made clear duties, adopted flexible methods, and integrated inspectorate systems. We can draw deep inspiration from their experiences.

#### **(1) Strengthening legislation and perfecting laws and regulations**

Strengthening educational inspection has become a common trend that developed countries administer their education more scientifically. We should strengthen the legislation and promulgate *Laws of Educational Inspection* and some relevant regulations as soon as possible. When the laws of educational Inspection are constituted, both the current needs and the future developmental should be taken into consideration. They should be operative and applicable.

#### **(2) Making clear duties for each level and upholding combination between administrative inspection and school instructional inspection**

From educational inspectorate agencies in the U.K. and in France, we may see that they have special inspectorate organizations and their duties are clear. But in China, the agencies aren't standard and uniform so it is difficult to carry out educational inspection. In addition, from central agencies to local agencies, the duties of educational inspectorate organizations are ambiguous. One of the weak points is that too much attention has been paid to

administrative inspection rather than school instructional inspection. From the functions of the inspectorate in the UK and France, we may find that they pay much more attention to 'school inspection' and instructional inspection. The most striking feature is the authorities of the Inspectorate. They have been offered the power to announce the failing schools and force them to improve within a limited time (Sun, 2004). They have got the power to give advice to MoE to close such schools. In France, inspectorate emphasizes particularly on supervision and inspection, guidance, assistance and consultant. Therefore, more attention should be paid to school quality and instructional inspection in China.

### (3) Adopting flexible methods and improving school effectiveness

In the U.K and France, various methods of educational inspection have been used to improve school effectiveness. For instance, the methods include independent inspection and collective inspection, regular inspection and incidental inspection, comprehensive inspection and selective inspection, general inspection and special inspection. Compared with them, the methods used by the educational inspection in China should be more specific, scientific, detailed, problem-focused and professionally.

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