

Summary of results from Sweden

This report describes Swedish results from the first year of data collection. A survey to principals in primary and secondary schools was used to gather data. In Sweden no official distinction is made between primary and secondary schools. However, the primary school level can be defined as comprising grades 1-6 (age 7 – 13) and the secondary school level as comprising grades 7 – 9 (age 13 – 16).

The conceptual model of the project specifies the major hypothesized components and mechanisms through which school inspection may influence teaching and learning in schools. One basic hypothesis is that standards and thresholds established by the school inspections are expected to promote the improvement of schools through the expectations they set and because they communicate what is meant by a ‘good school’. Expectations and stakeholder pressure are hypothesized to be determinants of improvement actions. It is also hypothesized that principals who accept feedback from the inspections will act on this information.

This report provides descriptives from the first round of data collection.

Descriptions of participating schools

As described in Table 1 altogether 1031 principals completed the survey, of which 567 were from primary schools and 464 from secondary schools. The majority of schools are located in metropolitan and suburban areas. About one third of the schools are located in rural areas and about one tenth of the schools are located in urban areas.

The number of students and fulltime teachers varies greatly. The average number of students in primary schools is 224 and in secondary schools it is 347. The average number of fulltime teachers is 18 in primary schools and in secondary schools it is 31.

As estimated by the principals 17 % of the primary schools and 18 % of the secondary schools have a majority of students from low income families, while 32 % of the primary schools and 26 % of the secondary schools have a majority of student from high income families. 9 % of the primary and secondary schools have a majority of students that do not speak Swedish as their first language.

More than one third of the schools had been inspected during the previous academic year. The principals generally have long experience in their profession and about half of them have worked as principals for more than seven years. They spend much time on administrative tasks, although the variation is large. Teaching or observing lessons does not occupy much of the principals’ time. They do discuss issues of teaching and learning with the teaching staff to some degree and are involved in managing students with problems of different kinds. On average, about 10 % of the principals’ time is devoted to quality assurance and self-evaluation of the school.

Table 1. Description of participating schools/principal survey (means, sd in brackets)

	P.S	S.S.
Number of schools:	567	464
Percentage of schools inspected in the previous year	32%	38%

	P.S	S.S.
Percentage of principals with 0-2 years' experience	17%	18%
Percentage of principals with 3-6 years' experience	26%	30%
Percentage of principals with >7 years' experience	57%	52%
Percentage of time spent on administrative tasks	37% (15)	36% (16)
Percentage of time spent on teaching	3% (10)	4% (9)
Percentage of time spent on discussing education with teachers	16% (8)	15% (8)
Percentage of time spent on observing lessons	7% (5)	6% (4)
Percentage of time spent on managing student behavior	19% (9)	23% (11)
Percentage of time spent on quality assurance/self-evaluation	10% (6)	9% (6)
Percentage of time spent on other tasks	8% (10)	7% (9)
Percentage of schools in area with <3000 inhabitants:	2%	2%
Percentage of schools in area with 3000-15.000 inhabitants:	23%	18%
Percentage of schools in area with 15.001-50.000 inhabitants:	36%	32%
Percentage of schools in area with 50.001-100.000 inhabitants:	18%	24%
Percentage of schools in area with 100.001-500.000 inhabitants:	14%	15%
Percentage of schools in area with >500.000 inhabitants:	7%	10%
Percentage of schools in urban area	10%	13%
Percentage of schools in suburban area	30%	31%
Percentage of suburban schools in metropolitan area	27%	31%
Percentage of schools in rural area	33%	25%
Average number of students in the schools	224 (137)	347 (178)
Average number of fulltime teachers in the schools	18 (13)	31 (19)
Percentage of schools with majority of students (>50%) from low income groups	17%	18%
Percentage of schools with majority of students (>50%) from high income groups	32%	26%
Percentage of schools where majority of students (>50%) do not speak national language as first language	9%	9%

P.S.: Primary schools

S.S.: Secondary schools

Descriptions of scales in conceptual framework

Table 2 presents means and standard deviations of the scales represented in the conceptual framework. Results are presented for primary and secondary schools separately.

Mean scale values of 3.0 indicate a neutral position, while scale values above 3.0 indicate a positive position. The results thus indicate that principals in both primary and secondary schools generally are satisfied with school inspections, and the principals tend to accept and use feedback from the Inspectorate. They also promote self-evaluation and quality assurance. Capacity-building in different aspects gets much attention from principals. This includes teachers' participation in decision-making, cooperation between teachers and transformational leadership. Teachers are encouraged to develop teaching methods in collaboration. On average, the principals rank their school effectiveness high. They estimate that there is sufficient learning time for students and that the teaching is clear and structured. Students' results are used to develop teaching. The learning climate is regarded as being safe and stimulating. There

seem to be few unintended consequences of inspection. The overall pattern thus shows that principals have a positive attitude to inspections. It must be emphasized, however, that the standard deviations, which generally are around 0.5, indicate that there also are quite large differences in the views of different principals.

Table 2. Description of variables in conceptual framework

	<i>Survey to principals</i>	
	<i>P.S.</i>	<i>S.S.</i>
	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>
General satisfaction with school inspections (5-point scale disagree-agree)	3.82 (0.65)	3.81 (0.62)
Intermediate processes: setting of expectations (5-point scale disagree-agree)	3.54 (0.57)	3.55 (0.56)
Intermediate processes: acceptance and use of feedback (5-point scale disagree-agree)	3.73 (0.60)	3.71 (0.59)
Intermediate processes: change in promoting self-evaluations (5-point scale disagree-agree)	3.50 (0.58)	3.53 (0.56)
Outcome: change in capacity building (5-point scale much less-much more)	3.78 (0.40)	3.75 (0.40)
Sub outcome: changes in participation in decision-making	3.82 (0.50)	3.76 (0.51)
Sub outcome: changes in cooperation between teachers	3.69 (0.45)	3.66 (0.45)
Sub outcome: changes in transformational leadership	3.85 (0.51)	3.84 (0.51)
Outcome: changes in school effectiveness (5-point scale much less-much more)	3.47 (0.34)	3.48 (0.33)
Sub outcome: changes in opportunity to learn and learning time	3.35 (0.32)	3.39 (0.34)
Sub outcome: changes in clear and structured teaching	3.59 (0.53)	3.60 (0.50)
Sub outcome: changes in safe and stimulating learning climate	3.52 (0.59)	3.53 (0.60)
Outcome: status in capacity building (5-point scale disagree-agree)	4.15 (0.43)	4.09 (0.44)
Outcome: status in school effectiveness (5-point scale disagree-agree)	3.89 (0.46)	3.82 (0.48)
Unintended consequences on the school level (5-point scale disagree-agree)	2.69 (0.46)	2.69 (0.51)

Correlations among scales

According to the conceptual framework there should be systematic patterns of correlations among the scales. Table 3 presents some examples of correlations among scales, namely correlations between ‘Satisfaction with school inspections’ on the one hand and ‘Setting

expectations' and 'Accepting feedback' on the other. As can be seen in the Table all the correlations are positive, but the correlation between Satisfaction and Accepting feedback is higher.

Table 3. Correlations between some of the variables in conceptual framework

	<i>Principal</i>	
	<i>P.S.</i>	<i>S.S.</i>
<i>Relations school inspections and intermediate mechanisms</i>		
Satisfaction with school inspections - Setting expectations	0.31**	0.30**
Satisfaction with school inspections - Accepting feedback	0.76**	0.77**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

However, the large number of possible correlations makes interpretation difficult. The path model for the relations among the scales in the conceptual model (see the Home page) is based upon the correlations and this model summarizes the relations among the scales. Work on estimating a path model for Sweden, as well as for the other countries, is under way and will be presented later.