From Elite Regulation to Self-Regulation: HMle in Scotland

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A Quick History

Traditionally powerful and independent in semi-colonial system;
Closer to government and more managerial throughout 70s and 80s as political controversy increased;
Lost Influence following exams debacle in 2000;
Became executive ‘agency’ and lost policy-making role.
Loss of Power

We no longer have a formal role in leading policy or leading development....when we became an agency we no longer have that title. Formally we give professional advice....there could be recommendations and so on but when I joined HMI in 1992 I wrote my first speech for [the then Minister] within a fortnight.

This no longer happens. We are now notably at second hand’ (HMIe 3)
Changing Politics: SNP in Government
2007-

Their ‘project’ emphasises local and autonomy to combat historically-embedded dependence on external authority:

"...so for decades you have had this top down approach in education which has been civil servants telling ministers, ministers then tell local government, local government then tell directors of education and directors of education tell head teachers and then head teachers tell teachers.

...There is this suffocation by direction ....so we are changing the education system, we hope, from one of dependence to one of independence and again that it quite a challenge... .......you can't be confident individuals if you think other people will do things for you....whether it is on a personal basis or a national..."(Senior Policy Maker5)"
Recovery through SSE

SNP project offers opportunities for HMie to:

- promote the policy ‘narrative’ of growing autonomy,
- propagate self-evaluation in a receptive European space,
- model and ‘teach’ self-evaluation within the national space.
Governing Knowledge

SSE encodes school knowledge, promotes self-managed and self-sufficient individuals (both teachers and pupils) in a decentralised, inclusive system.

Schools and their teachers and pupils become members of learning organisations, embedded within the larger learning organisation of the local authority and, indeed, of government itself.

SSE produces knowledge for the constant improvement not only of the individual school, but for the governing of the system as a whole
Winning Hearts and Minds

SSE is inclusive, binding teachers, parents and pupils together:

The evaluative activities involved are similar to those which we encourage pupils to engage in as part of their own learning process. Taking part in them creates a community of learners (HGIOS 2007: 7).

The Inspectorate is developing specific skills to win support:
‘We’re training our people quite actively in the social skills of inspection...we’ve got some occupational psychologists working with us to develop this framework-working on relationships with people-we must be able to win the support and constructive interest that will enable initiative’ (HMlle1)
Education Scotland: ‘Transforming Lives through Learning’

Education Scotland was created in July 2011 - HMIe ‘brought together’ with LTS to support:

‘highly effective collaborative partnership working, within and beyond the education sector, Scotland-wide and internationally’

and to extend:

‘the principle of earned autonomy and trust, enabling establishments to determine - with their natural partners - their own strengths / opportunities / development areas where they have demonstrated their ability to manage their development effectively’ (ES REMIT)
So-no longer be ‘at second hand’:
‘…there’s also a strong function, from my point of view, in informing policy development, managing policy development. For that reason, partly, we think it’s good to have strong links with the department, ministers’ (HMie1)

But is HMie recovering its position at the expense of its (perceived) independence from government?