

Reaching for a Better Standard

REVIEWED

The Times Educational Supplement

...Suppose you could take [a] step back and see the whole inspection process through other eyes? That is what Thomas A. Wilson's *Reaching for a Better Standard* [Teachers College Press] allows. This American book sets out to examine the English school inspection system with a view to finding out whether there are lessons to be learned for American schools.

Well written and lively, it makes absorbing reading – one of the few education books you could read for pleasure. The heart consists of a detailed account, with long quotations, from a five-day inspection. Everything is there – observations, teachers' reactions, reporting back. How can this be, given rules about confidentiality? The author has, with great skill and diligence, constructed an entirely fictional inspection, using as raw material the experience of 10 months spent watching local inspectors and HMI. The final account was reviewed by several inspectors. It is beautifully done, and entirely convincing.

(London, November 15, 1996. Section 2, p.7.)

How is this for a “shortening?”

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