

Better inspection for all

Maintained schools, academies, further education and skills providers, non-association independent schools and registered early years settings

This is a consultation document on Ofsted's proposals for a new framework for the inspection of maintained schools, academies, further education and skills providers, non-association independent schools and registered early years settings.

We are seeking the widest possible range of views from those who have an interest in these different types of providers to ensure that the new inspection framework takes proper account of the needs and circumstances of all interested parties.

The closing date for the consultation is 5 December 2014.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Foreword by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

As Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, I have been determined to reform inspection so that it has an even greater impact on improving education and care for all children and learners in England.

Replacing the grade of 'satisfactory' with 'requires improvement', as I did in 2012, sent a clear message that only 'good' is good enough. Since then, most providers have risen to the challenge of providing a better education for all.

More maintained schools, academies and further education and skills providers are now good or outstanding. It's absolutely vital that this progress is sustained and that our system does not falter.

The oversight that we have between our inspections is not as effective as it should be. At the moment, it can be five years or even more between inspections for a good school or college. This is too long. It is too long for parents, employers and learners. It is too long for us to spot signs of decline and it is too long for improving institutions to show that they are now delivering an outstanding standard of education.

The time has come, therefore, to introduce more frequent but shorter inspections for good schools and further education and skills providers. These inspections will differ from previous practice and will focus on ensuring that good standards have been maintained.

In particular, inspectors will be looking to see that headteachers and leadership teams have identified key areas of concern and have the capability to address them. For good schools and further education and skills providers who have the capacity to show this, the changes being proposed will mean that there is no longer any need for a full inspection.

Led by Her Majesty's Inspectors, the new inspections will encourage professional dialogue about the key issues, strengths and weaknesses that are most relevant to the individual school or further education and skills provider.

Alongside this, I want to introduce a new common inspection framework for maintained schools, academies, further education and skills providers, settings on the Early Years Register and non-associated independent schools.

A common inspection framework that focuses on those things that matter most will provide greater consistency across inspection and more comparability between different education providers. This builds on the improvements of recent years to align the different inspection frameworks. The need for this is more keenly felt in areas where similar provision is inspected under different frameworks.

This new common inspection framework must place a greater emphasis on safeguarding, the breadth of the curriculum in schools, the relevance of courses and training in further education and skills, and the quality of early learning. If it does

not, we cannot be satisfied that all children and learners are properly safeguarded and prepared for life in today's world.

These two initiatives will lead to greater ambition in our education system. It must, however, be accompanied by steps to improve the way we inspect.

From 1 September 2015, the inspection of schools and further education and skills providers will no longer be outsourced. Her Majesty's Inspectors will lead the great majority of inspections. We will benefit from the expertise of serving practitioners who will continue to work in their institutions while being contracted directly by Ofsted to provide inspection days each year.

I am confident that all this will lead to greater consistency, better training for inspectors and more serving practitioners becoming involved in inspection.

Ofsted will consider the future of the early years inspection contracts when these end in 2016.

The inspectorate has changed markedly in the 20 years since it was founded and it will continue to evolve to meet the demands of an evolving education system. This consultation marks the beginning of its next chapter.

Sir Michael Wilshaw

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

About Ofsted

1. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to promote improvement and achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages.

Purpose of the consultation

2. This consultation seeks your views on proposals for arrangements for the new and more proportionate inspection of maintained schools, academies, further education (FE) and skills providers, non-association independent schools and registered early years settings from September 2015.¹ Your views will help to refine and develop our framework for inspecting these services. We are also seeking your views on how to improve the methodology of inspection.
3. This document sets out our proposals for:
 - a common inspection framework for all early years settings on the Early Years Register, maintained schools and academies, non-association independent schools and FE and skills providers² – this framework will mean that the same judgements will apply in each of these remits
 - introducing short inspections for maintained schools, academies and FE and skills providers that were judged good at their previous inspection. These short inspections, conducted approximately every three years, will report on whether or not a provider has maintained its overall effectiveness but will not provide a full set of graded judgements
 - conducting a full inspection of non-association independent schools within a three-year period.
4. We are also seeking views on how we inspect and the way we gather evidence. We intend that this consultation helps to shape not only what but also how we inspect.
5. We will use the information gathered through this consultation and through a large number of consultative events with key stakeholders in each of Ofsted's eight regions to finalise the revised arrangements for inspection. These will

¹ This consultation includes inspection within early years settings, but does not include Ofsted's registration of early years settings.

² These inspections are carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents), the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents), section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as inserted by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005), The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010; www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made) and the Childcare Act 2006 (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/21/contents). All inspections carried out using the new common inspection framework will continue to meet relevant legislative requirements.

take account of your views. It is expected that the changes to inspection will be implemented from September 2015.

6. We will publish the main findings from the consultation on our website.

Where we are now

7. At present, there are unnecessary differences between the different Ofsted inspection frameworks. This means that similar provision for children and learners of the same age is inspected differently. For example, provision for 1.2 million children in school-based early years settings is inspected using the maintained schools, academies framework, but provision for a further 1.3 million children in other types of early years settings is inspected using a different framework. Similarly, even though students study many of the same courses, provision for 3.5 million 14–19-year-olds at general further education colleges, independent learning providers or sixth form colleges is inspected under different arrangements from the provision for 2.1 million students in school sixth forms.

What we are proposing to change

8. This consultation document proposes the following key changes to the way we inspect from September 2015.
 - Proposal 1: a common inspection framework for all early years settings on the Early Years Register, maintained schools, academies, non-association independent schools and FE and skills providers. This framework will mean that the same judgements will apply in each of these remits.
 - Proposal 2: introducing shorter inspections for maintained schools, academies and FE and skills providers that were judged good at their previous inspection. These short inspections, conducted approximately every three years, will report on whether or not a provider has maintained its overall effectiveness but will not provide a full set of graded judgements.
 - Proposal 3: conducting a full inspection of non-association independent schools within a three-year period.
9. These proposals are a careful evolution of the way we inspect now. For some time, we have been bringing together its frameworks and the way it inspects the different types of education provision. We want to continue to improve consistency in inspection practice and so that parents, learners and others are able to compare settings more easily when making choices.

Proposal 1: A common inspection framework

10. A new common inspection framework will provide greater coherence across the inspection of different providers that cater for similar age ranges. It will ensure

more comparability through inspection when children and learners move from one setting to another. It will support greater consistency across the inspection of different remits.

11. Inspections conducted under the proposed new common inspection framework will provide important information to parents, carers, learners and employers about the quality of education, training and care being provided. Moreover, all children and learners will benefit from a new and common inspection framework that considers more thoroughly how well each provider helps to prepare children and learners for life in Britain today.
12. Under the new framework, there will be greater emphasis on:
 - safeguarding
 - the suitability of the curriculum and the type and range of courses and opportunities offered by providers
 - preparation for life and work in Britain today, including in relation to personal development, behaviour and welfare.
13. Inspection handbooks specific to each remit will underpin the new common inspection framework and set out in detail how each of the judgements will be made. The handbooks will reflect the needs and expectations of different phases and the differences between different age groups. Inspectors will inspect the type of provision for which they have the appropriate expertise and training.
14. Separately to this consultation, we have broadened the criteria used to judge whether an unannounced inspection is required for particular schools or colleges. We are also undertaking a review of the circumstances in which no-notice inspection should take place. For these reasons, this consultation does not cover the question of moving to routine no-notice inspections. Nevertheless we will seek to harmonise the notice periods given, where possible, across the remits covered by the new common inspection framework.

Making judgements in full inspections³

Overall effectiveness

15. Inspectors will use all the available evidence to evaluate what it is like to be a child, learner or other user in the provision. In making the judgements about a provider's overall effectiveness, inspectors will consider whether the standard of education, training or care is good or exceeds good and is outstanding. If it is not good then inspectors will consider whether it requires improvement or is inadequate.

³ The term 'full inspections' refers to the standard inspections across the remits covered by this consultation, for example section 5 inspections for schools or full inspections for FE and skills.

16. Inspectors will also make graded judgements on the following areas, using the four-point scale:⁴
- Effectiveness of leadership and management
 - Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - Personal development, behaviour and welfare
 - Outcomes for children and learners.
17. We propose that inspectors will always make a written judgement in the leadership and management section about whether or not the arrangements for safeguarding children or learners are effective.
18. In future, we propose to ensure a high level of scrutiny of the curriculum or range of courses offered by schools and other providers. In the framework proposed by this consultation document, this forms part of the judgement on effectiveness of leadership and management. We are interested in your views as to whether or not there should be a separate graded judgement for the quality of the curriculum on offer or whether it should continue to be reported on as part of the judgement on leadership and management.

What inspectors will consider when making judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

19. Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management by evaluating, where this is applicable,⁵ the extent to which leaders, managers and governors:
- demonstrate an ambitious vision, have high expectations for what all learners can achieve and attain high standards of care, quality and performance
 - improve teaching and learning through rigorous performance management and appropriate professional development
 - evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes through robust self-assessment, taking account of users' views, and use the findings to develop capacity for sustainable improvement
 - provide a curriculum that has suitable breadth, depth and relevance so that it meets any relevant statutory requirements, as well as the needs and interests of children, learners, employers and the local community and nationally

⁴ Grade 1: outstanding; grade 2: good; grade 3: requires improvement; grade 4: inadequate.

⁵ Not all aspects listed in the bullet points will be relevant to all settings.

- successfully plan and manage the curriculum, learning programmes and careers advice so that all children and learners get a good start and are well prepared for the next stage in their education or training
- actively promote equality and diversity and fundamental British values, tackle bullying and discrimination and narrow any gaps in achievement between different groups of children and learners
- influence improvement in other local or national providers, and provision for children and families across their community and local economy, including by working directly with other providers and employers
- make sure that arrangements to protect children, young people and learners meet all statutory requirements and promote their welfare.

20. We will always report on whether or not arrangements for safeguarding children and learners are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

21. Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by evaluating, where this is applicable, the extent to which:
- teachers, practitioners and other staff have consistently high expectations of what each child or learner can achieve, including the most able and the most disadvantaged
 - a positive ethos, sense of achievement and commitment to learning are evident across the whole learning environment
 - teachers, practitioners and other staff have a secure understanding of the age group they are working with and have relevant subject knowledge that is detailed and communicated well to children and learners
 - assessment information is gathered from looking at what children and learners already know, understand and can do, and is informed by their parents and previous providers as appropriate
 - assessment information is used to plan appropriate teaching and learning strategies, including to identify children and learners who are falling behind in their learning or who need additional support to reach their full potential
 - except in the case of the very young, children and learners understand how to improve as a result of regular and accurate feedback from staff and, where relevant, parents, carers and employers understand how learners should improve and how they can contribute to this
 - reports to parents, carers and employers help them to understand how children and learners are doing in relation to the standards expected and what they need to do to improve, and there is engagement with parents and carers about how they can support their child's learning

- equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity are promoted through teaching and learning
- where relevant, English, mathematics and other skills necessary to function as an economically active member of today's British society are promoted through teaching and learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

22. Inspectors will make a judgement on the personal development, behaviour and welfare of children and learners by evaluating, where this is applicable, the extent to which the provision is successfully promoting or supporting children's and learners':

- prompt and regular attendance at sessions or work (for children and learners of school age and older)
- following of any guidelines for behaviour and conduct, including management of their own feelings and behaviour, and around bullying, and how they relate to others
- understanding of how to keep themselves safe from relevant risks such as exploitation and extremism, including when using the internet and social media
- personal, social, moral, cultural and spiritual development,⁶ including through access to cultural experiences and work experience so that they are well prepared to respect others and contribute to wider society and life in Britain today
- knowledge of how to keep themselves healthy, including through exercising and healthy eating
- self-confidence, self-assurance and knowledge of their potential to be a successful learner
- choices about the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training, where relevant, from independent careers advice and guidance
- where relevant, employability skills so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training.

23. While the inspection criteria for this judgement will be consistent across maintained schools, academies, FE and skills providers, non-association independent schools and registered early years settings, it may be reported on under an age-specific heading (for example 'behaviour and welfare' for schools and 'personal development and welfare' for FE and skills) in order to ensure that it is well understood by the sector in question.

⁶ This is a specific statutory requirement for school inspections when they are carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended).

Outcomes for children and learners

24. Where appropriate, reports will include a short factual summary of key published performance data with a brief commentary from the inspector. Inspectors will take account of current standards and progress and make a relevant judgement on academic and other learning outcomes for children and learners by evaluating the extent to which:
- all children and learners progress well from their different starting points and achieve or exceed the expected age-related standards, and/or attain relevant qualifications so that they can progress to the next stage of their education into courses that lead to higher-level qualifications and into jobs that meet local and national needs.

Additional considerations for inspectors

Helping to protect children and learners

25. Inspectors will always have regard for how well children and learners are helped and protected so that they are kept safe. Inspectors will evaluate the arrangements for safeguarding and report on whether they are effective or not in the leadership and management section and, where required, under personal development and welfare. Further details of this will be given in relevant remit-specific inspection guidance.

Disability and special educational needs

26. Inspectors will consider how well the provision meets the needs of disabled children and learners and those with special educational needs. No specific grade will be given but inspection arrangements will reflect changes to legislation and existing inspection guidance.

Subjects, aspects or themes

27. The new common inspection framework will allow inspectors to gather evidence about a subject, aspect or theme. Evidence gathered in this way will help to evaluate how well a particular subject is being taught across the different remits or in different parts of the country or to evaluate the quality of an aspect of education or care that is not otherwise routinely considered. Findings may be reported on but no specific grade will be given. Any evidence gathered will be taken into account when arriving at inspection judgements, as relevant, in the overall report.

Specific additional judgements according to type of provision

Early years (for schools with early years settings)

28. From 1 September 2014, maintained schools and academies and non-association independent schools that have Early Years Foundation Stage provision receive a separate grade for that provision. This contributes to the

judgement about the overall effectiveness of the school. It is expected that this arrangement will continue in the new framework.

29. Separately from this consultation, under changes proposed by the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Bill and subject to the will of Parliament, the age of children that exempts schools from registering as early years providers will be lowered from three to two. Therefore, schools' provision for two-year-olds that is on the Early Years Register will now be inspected as part of a school inspection using the new common inspection framework.

Sixth form (for schools with a sixth form)

30. From 1 September 2014, maintained schools and academies and non-association independent schools that have a sixth form receive a separate grade for that provision. This contributes to the judgement about the overall effectiveness of the school. It is expected that this arrangement will continue in the new framework.

Further education and skills provision

31. We propose that FE and skills providers will also have the following areas of provision graded where they exist: 16 to 19 study programmes, 19+ learning programmes, apprenticeships, traineeships, employability and community learning (and in colleges 14–16, full time and part time). These will contribute to the judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider. We will continue to use subject specialists to inspect the quality of teaching in order to inform the overall judgement on teaching, learning and assessment. However, inspectors will not grade or report on individual subjects.

Proposal 2: Short inspections

Maintained schools and academies

32. We propose that, from September 2015, schools that are already judged to be good will no longer be subject to a full inspection every three to five years.⁷ Instead, they will usually receive a short inspection once every three years unless their performance has dropped markedly. Alongside this, an annual summary dashboard of school performance data will be available on the Ofsted website.
33. The introduction of short inspections will make inspection more proportionate. Short inspections will free most schools from the burden of full inspection and allow us to focus its resources on the schools where performance is dipping.

⁷ This change is subject to the will of Parliament. Outstanding schools are exempt from routine inspection unless there are concerns about their performance. Good schools are currently subject to a full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) within a five-year period.

34. There will be no change for schools judged as requires improvement or inadequate. They will be subject to the same frequency and type of monitoring and inspection as they are now.

Further education and skills

35. From September 2015, FE and skills providers that are already judged as good will no longer always be subject to a full inspection once within a six-year period. Instead, they will usually receive a short inspection once every three years, unless their performance has dropped markedly. Alongside this, an annual summary dashboard of provider performance data will be available on the Ofsted website.
36. Providers judged as outstanding, requires improvement and inadequate will be subject to the same frequency and type of monitoring and full inspection as now.

Conduct of short inspections

37. The short inspections in **schools and academies**⁸ will be carried out usually by no more than two inspectors on site for one day and will focus on whether the quality of the provision is being sustained. Inspectors will consider:
- the performance of the school
 - its leadership and management, including of the teaching, the curriculum and the ethos of the school.
38. Where no concerns arise about the performance of the school or its leadership and management, then a brief formal report for parents will be provided in letter format that sets out the main inspection findings.
39. If a significant concern arises that the school is no longer good, then Her Majesty's Inspectors may recommend that a full inspection of the school takes place. If concerns are urgent, the short inspection may be deemed a section 5 inspection and will either be extended in time or more inspectors will be sent to the school to carry out further inspection activity in order to arrive at judgements.
40. Where the indications are that the school may have improved to the point that inspectors believe the school would have a high likelihood of being judged outstanding under a full inspection, Her Majesty's Inspectors may also recommend that a full inspection is scheduled in due course.

⁸ Subject to a change in regulations.

FE and skills

41. In FE and skills, these new shorter inspections will be carried out by one or more inspectors, for one or more days, depending on the size, location(s) and nature of the provision. They will also focus on whether the quality of the provision is being sustained. The inspections will require fewer inspection days than under the current arrangements.
42. Where no concerns arise about the performance of the provider, its leadership and management or curriculum, then a brief report for learners, parents and employers will be provided in letter format that sets out the main inspection findings.
43. If a significant concern arises that the provider is no longer good, Her Majesty's Inspectors may recommend that a full inspection of the provider takes place. If concerns are urgent, the short inspection may be extended in time or the size of the team may be increased.
44. Where the provider may have improved to the point that inspectors believe it would have a high likelihood of being judged outstanding under a full inspection, inspectors may recommend that a full inspection is scheduled in due course.
45. As a consequence of this new approach, there will be some schools and providers that receive several short inspections in succession. We are currently considering whether we should specify a maximum period or number of short inspections after which a school or provider should receive a full inspection. We will continue to consider this, but do not yet have any fixed proposals on which to consult.

Proposal 3: Inspection of non-association independent schools

46. Revised independent school standards are being introduced in 2014 that are more challenging and that all schools must meet. All inspections from September 2015 will be against the revised independent schools standards and the new common inspection framework. We propose that from September 2015 all non-association schools will receive an inspection under the proposed common inspection framework within three years.
47. Following supportive responses to a public consultation in early 2014, it is also intended that non-association independent schools judged as requires improvement or inadequate are inspected within two years, rather than three as at present.
48. Independent schools that are not part of an association are registered with and regulated by the Department for Education. As such, this consultation does not make any proposals relating to the standards. All inspections of non-association independent schools report on whether the independent school standards are

being met. This will continue, and inspection reports will always set out clearly whether these standards are being met.

Settings with residential and boarding provision

49. Some providers have residential or boarding facilities that are attached to, or part of, the provision. In these instances, providers are subject to a regular welfare inspection and a regulatory standards check carried out by specialist inspectors. In colleges, only residential provision for learners under 18 years is inspected. These arrangements will continue as they are now.

Additional proposals

Early years settings

50. Early years providers are registered with and regulated by Ofsted. All inspections of early years settings on the Early Years Register will be carried out under the new common inspection framework from September 2015.⁹
51. We do not propose to introduce, at this time, any form of shortened inspection for good or outstanding early years settings. However, we intend to return to this issue and the inspection of early years settings that are co-located with, and managed by, the school at a later date.
52. Inspections of early years providers will continue to report on the extent to which the relevant standards are being met. The arrangements for regulating early years can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare/resources-for-inspectors-and-other-organisations.

Inspection methodology

53. We are committed to improving the way that we inspect so that our inspection provides a reliable and robust view of the quality of provision.
54. Inspectors will always consider, for example, how well providers are meeting the needs of children and learners by evaluating the quality of teaching and training. However, there are different ways of doing this. We will test different approaches to gathering evidence in each of the remits during pilot inspections in late 2014 and early 2015 and will consider any evidence submitted as part of this consultation before setting out how we will inspect in more detail in an inspection handbook for each remit.

⁹ The proposed judgements in the new common inspection framework are aligned to HMCI's duty to report on specific matters under section 50 of the Childcare Act 2006. Settings registered on any part of the Childcare Register will not be covered by the new common inspection framework. Ofsted has no duty to inspect or report through quality judgements for these settings.

55. We are interested in your views on how we can improve our inspection methodology and are seeking contributions about this through the consultation exercise.

Seeking your views

56. We are seeking your views on our proposals for:
- a common inspection framework for all early years settings on the Early Years Register, maintained schools, academies, non-association independent schools and further education (FE) and skills providers – this framework will mean that the same judgements will apply in each of these remits (paragraphs 10-31)
 - introducing short inspections for maintained schools, academies and FE and skills providers that were judged good at their previous inspection. These short inspections, conducted approximately every three years, will report on whether or not a provider has maintained its overall effectiveness but will not provide a full set of graded judgements (paragraphs 32-45)
 - conducting a full inspection of non-association independent schools within a three-year period (paragraphs 46-49).
57. We are also keen to hear your views on whether or not we should introduce a separate graded judgement for the curriculum (paragraph 18) and how inspection methodology should be developed (paragraphs 53-55)

The consultation process

We look forward to reading your responses to this consultation paper. The consultation opens on 9 October 2014 and closes on 5 December 2014.

The information you provide us with will help to shape the final common inspection framework and the general arrangements for inspection, including short inspections for qualifying providers, before its publication ready for September 2015.

We will publish a summary of responses to the consultation in early 2015.

How you can submit your views

There are three ways of completing and submitting your response.

Online electronic questionnaire

Visit our website to complete and submit an electronic version of the response form:
<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/futureofinspection>

Downloading the document and emailing it to us

Visit our website to download a Word version of the response form that you can complete on your computer: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/better-inspection-for-all-consultation-proposals-for-new-framework-for-inspection-of-schools-further>. When you have completed the form, please email it to inspectionreform@ofsted.gov.uk with 'Better inspection for all' in the subject line.

Printing the document and posting it to us

Visit our website to print a Word or PDF version of the response form that can be filled in by hand: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/better-inspection-for-all-consultation-proposals-for-new-framework-for-inspection-of-schools-further>. When you have completed the form please post it to:

FOEI consultation
8th floor
Ofsted
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE