

School Inspection Update

September 2015 | Issue: 4

Message to inspectors from the National Director, Education

Welcome to the start of another academic year and to the fourth edition of 'School inspection update'. I hope you have all enjoyed the summer break.

We are about to embark on the new inspection arrangements for September 2015 and we have published the final versions of the 'Common inspection framework'¹, the associated section 5² and section 8³ handbooks, and safeguarding guidance⁴.

These documents are substantially the same as those that we published in draft form on 15 June 2015. We have, however, had some helpful suggestions and questions seeking clarification on specific points and we have used these to make some improvements to the readability and clarity of the documents. There are three things that I want to draw to your attention.

- **Short inspections of special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs)**
– There has been a considerable amount of discussion about arrangements for short inspections of special schools and PRUs, in particular the extra notice of inspection we intended to give them. Over the summer, the feedback we have received from these schools has continued to emphasise that they wish to be treated like other schools. I have been listening and I think they have a right to this parity. So you will see in the section 8 handbook that special schools and PRUs will be notified of inspection around midday on the day before a short inspection. These and all other arrangements will be exactly the same as for other short inspections of

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015.

² www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015.

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-short-monitoring-and-unannounced-behaviour-school-inspections.

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015.



schools. Similarly, these schools will receive the same notice period for section 5 inspections.

- **Governance** – We received a number of comments saying that we had over-summarised the section in the 'School inspection handbook' about governance in the leadership and management judgement. Governors have a pivotal role in schools and providers. I agree that we need to be crystal clear about what inspectors will look at and this section has now been expanded to reflect this.
- **Recognition of exceptional leaders** – From September, when inspecting schools, lead inspectors will be looking to identify school leaders who have played a key role in turning around other institutions. Paragraph 37 (final bullet point) of the section 5 inspection handbook sets out what lead inspectors should seek to find out in the initial call to the headteacher. To be recognised as an exceptional leader, a number of criteria will have to be met, including that:
 - the supported school is recognised as having particular challenges, for example a higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils
 - normally, the supported school will have improved by two grades since the last inspection, from inadequate to good or from requires improvement to outstanding
 - the improvement can be linked demonstrably with the support and challenge provided by the exceptional leader.

Where the lead inspector considers that the supporting headteacher has made a substantial contribution to the improvement in the school, they should capture the details on an evidence form, ticking the special focus box and using a **new subject code of 'EE'**. The lead inspector should provide relevant evidence to support a nomination, including verification through discussion with the leadership team and governors in the school being inspected. Where appropriate, the lead inspector might also talk to the leader who has provided support and, where possible, to other stakeholders, e.g. the local authority or diocese. The name of the supporting leader should **not** be included in the evidence form, in line with normal data protection guidance. The name can be included in the context section of the inspection report. Following the inspection a copy of the evidence form should be sent to the Schools Policy Team mailbox.

Where the Chief Inspector considers that the contribution made by that leader deserves particular recognition, he will send a letter to that headteacher to acknowledge their exceptional leadership. A copy of this letter will go to the Secretary of State and the Chief Inspector will use his Annual Report to feature those leaders who have been recognised in this way.

I wanted to inform you of a development that has taken place over the summer relating to the inspection of academy converters. During and following the launch

events, we received a number of enquiries asking if an academy converter that had not received an inspection following its conversion, could qualify for a short inspection on the basis of its predecessor school having been judged good at its last inspection. I am pleased to inform you that, following discussions with the Department for Education (DfE), regulations are being introduced to enable Ofsted to conduct short inspections for these academy converters, in line with the arrangements for other schools judged good at their last inspection.

This update also contains important information about the timing of re-inspections for schools judged to require improvement. Feedback from our launch events in the summer term indicated that some delegates were concerned that there was limited coverage of what happens to schools that require improvement. This was because there will be no significant change here. However, there will be some flexibility on the timing of the next section 5 inspection, details of which you will find in this update.

Finally, we have used this update to bring together details of other relevant guidance that featured in updates issued in the last academic year, but that remain current and are relevant to inspections going forward. This is your one-stop shop.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean Harford".

Sean Harford HMI
National Director, Education

Timing of re-inspections for schools judged requires improvement

When a school has been judged as requires improvement, including for its leadership and management, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) will normally conduct monitoring visits to see how well the school is addressing the concerns raised during the inspection. From September, the initial monitoring inspection can take place at any time during the two-year period following the publication of the section 5 inspection report. Following the initial monitoring inspection, the lead monitoring HMI will recommend whether or not further monitoring and/or other activity should occur to encourage the school's improvement.

Where the HMI considers that a school is ready for re-inspection because it has made good progress, she or he may recommend that the next section 5 inspection be brought forward. Conversely, when the HMI feels that the school would benefit from further time to improve to good, she or he may recommend that the school is re-inspected later in the two-year monitoring period.

In some exceptional circumstances (for example when a new headteacher is taken on to lead the school since it was judged as requires improvement), the HMI may recommend to the Regional Director that the school is given further time to improve. At the discretion of the Regional Director, this can be beyond the end of the term in which the 24th month after the publication of the report of the previous inspection falls. This should not place the re-inspection any more than 30 months after the publication of the inspection report that judged the school as requires improvement.

Please note that these changes will apply retrospectively to schools that were judged requires improvement at their last inspection. For schools in this position, the HMI who is assigned to monitor the school may want to inform the school of the changes.

Statements of action for inadequate schools

Where a school is judged as having serious weaknesses or requires special measures, the local authority in the case of a maintained school, and proprietor or sponsor in the case of an academy, are required by law to produce a Statement of Action.

This requirement is set out in sections 15 and 17 of the Education Act 2005:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/section/17

and in Schedule 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/schedule/7.

The requirement for the submission of these statements to Ofsted is within ten working days of the school receiving the section 5 report.

Implications for inspectors

Previously, the assessment of the fitness for purpose of the statement was made at the first monitoring inspection. However, as the first monitoring inspection for these schools will now take place later, normally within three to six months of the publication of the section 5 report, arrangements need to be made to review and comment on the suitability of the statement **prior to** the first monitoring inspection.

Each region will need to put in place a procedure for ensuring that statements are actioned in a timely manner. The review of statements will need to be undertaken by HMI and regions may want to consider whether this is best done by the HMI who will be assigned to monitor the school.

Please note that there is no change to the notice period for monitoring inspections. For the initial monitoring inspection, the school will be notified up to two days in advance and for any subsequent monitoring inspections, schools will normally be notified at noon on the day before the inspection.

Medicines in schools

Pupils at school with medical conditions should be properly supported so that they have full access to education, including school trips and physical education. The DfE's guidance document '[Supporting pupils at schools with medical conditions](#)' provides statutory guidance and non-statutory advice on the policies schools are required to have in place to support pupils with medical needs, both within school and during activities taking place off-site. This document is for governing bodies in the case of maintained schools, proprietors in the case of academies and management committees in the case of pupil referral units (PRUs).

Implications for inspectors

Inspectors do not routinely check the quality or content of a policy. However, if it emerged that the needs of pupils with medical conditions were not being met by the school, inspectors might then consider the application of the policy and whether there was evidence of any deficiency and explain this in the inspection report.

Reporting on the use of PE and sport premium funding in primary school inspections

The 'School inspection update' issued in March 2015 included a reminder to inspectors of the importance of reporting on the use of the PE and sport premium funding.

Inspectors are required to evaluate how effectively leaders use the primary PE and sport premium funding and measure its impact on outcomes for pupils, and how effectively governors hold them to account for this.

This must be recorded and coded (using the special focus box) on an evidence form and summarised in the report.

Update on accountability measures

The new measures (Progress 8 and Attainment 8) will be implemented for all schools in 2016. Schools have been able to opt in a year early for 2015 data. The **DfE has recently published a list of the 327 schools that have opted in**, which can be viewed at www.gov.uk/government/publications/progress-8-school-performance-measure-early-opt-in-schools.

What is Attainment 8/Progress 8? – a reminder

- **Attainment 8 will measure the mean average grade of a pupil across 8 subjects** (with mathematics and English double weighted, giving a possible 10 scoring slots). If a pupil hasn't taken the maximum number of qualifications that count they will receive a point score of zero where a slot is empty.

- **Progress 8 aims to capture the progress a pupil makes from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4.** It is a type of value added measure, so pupils' results are compared to other pupils with the same prior attainment at Key Stage 2. Performance is measured across eight qualifications.
- Progress 8 will be calculated by taking the pupil's mean average grade (their Attainment 8 score) and comparing it to the average grade of pupils nationally who had a similar prior attainment. All pupils' Progress 8 scores are then averaged to reach the Progress 8 score for the school. It will give an indication of whether, as a group, pupils in the school made above or below average progress compared to similar pupils in other schools.
- For all pupils nationally, the average Progress 8 score will be zero.

What next?

- For the 2015 data, both RAISEonline and the inspection dashboard will include Progress 8 and Attainment 8 charts and tables for those schools that have opted in. For schools that have not opted in, these measures will not be available to inspectors and should not be requested. The measures will be rolled out to all schools for 2016 data.
- The 8 September 2015 distance learning for all HMI and Ofsted Inspectors will include brief material on judging 'outcomes', within which an update about the Progress 8 opt-in and the 2015 data to be used for those schools will be provided. Fuller distance learning on outcomes, to be undertaken soon afterwards, will contain more detail, including an interpretation of the **new measures, charts and tables**.
- Expected progress (EP) will not be included in RAISEonline and the school performance tables from 2016. The system of levels that underpins EP is being removed so this measure is being phased out.
- The 2014 shadow Progress 8 and Attainment 8 data have been requested from the DfE. These data will be used to analyse the impact of the new measures; they will not be used for inspection.

School governance – expectations document

The Association of School and College Leaders, National Association of Head Teachers, National Governors Association and Local Government Association have together reissued their 'expectations' document, which was originally issued in 2008 and updated in 2012. This joint paper, setting out '[What governing bodies can expect from school leaders and what school leaders can expect from governing bodies](#)', aims to improve the effectiveness of school governance. The paper is broken down into four main areas: the respective roles of governance and management, developing and supporting the governing board, effective ways of working, and understanding the school and engaging with stakeholders.

Statutory guidance on school teachers' pay and conditions

The latest [statutory guidance](#) on school teachers' pay and conditions was published in August 2015. It includes the Teachers' Standards at Annex 1.

Key Stage 2 provisional data (August 2015)

These data were published on 27 August. Key headlines:

- In 2015, 80% of pupils in all schools achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics. This is an increase of two percentage points from 2014.
- There has been little change in the proportion of pupils in state-funded schools making expected progress in reading [91%], in writing [94%] and in mathematics [90%].
- Girls continue to outperform boys although the gender gaps amongst higher attainers have narrowed slightly.
- Read more at: www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-at-key-stage-2-2015-provisional.

Publications that are still current and relevant

SMSC guidance for maintained and independent schools

DfE guidance on promoting British values in schools:

www.gov.uk/government/news/guidance-on-promoting-british-values-in-schools-published

www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-fundamental-british-values-through-smsc

www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-smsc-development-of-pupils-in-independent-schools.

Protecting children from radicalisation; the prevent duty

DfE advice for schools and childcare providers on preventing children and young people from being drawn into terrorism:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty.

The use of social media for online radicalisation (July 2015)

The DfE has issued guidance (5 pages) for schools on how terrorist groups such as ISIL use social media to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-use-of-social-media-for-online-radicalisation.

<p>Pupil premium reviews A guide developed by the Teaching Schools Council working with Sir John Dunford, National Pupil Premium Champion: www.tscouncil.org.uk/guide-effective-pupil-premium-reviews.</p>
<p>Early years pupil premium (EYPP) DfE guidance for local authorities: www.gov.uk/early-years-pupil-premium-guide-for-local-authorities</p>
<p>Change to the persistent absence threshold from school year 2015/16 April 2015 school census guidance: www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2014-to-2015-guide-for-schools-and-las.</p>
<p>School exclusion DfE statutory guidance on the exclusion of pupils: www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion.</p>
<p>DfE statutory guidance publications for schools Statutory guidance setting out what schools and local authorities must do to comply with the law: www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools.</p>
<p>Making the best use of teaching assistants Education Endowment Foundation guidance to support schools to unlock the potential of teaching assistants in English schools: www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/making-best-use-of-teaching-assistants.</p>

Summary of main questions raised following the launch events

1. **I'm an outstanding school. Will I now be subject to routine short inspections?**

No; you'll continue to be exempt unless you are a maintained nursery, special school or a pupil referral unit (PRU).

2. **What is the risk assessment process for outstanding schools?**

As now, exempt schools are subject to risk assessment. If the risk assessment process raises concerns about the performance of an exempt school, it may be inspected at any time after the completion of the risk assessment. If no concerns are raised from the risk assessment, the school will not be informed.

Where risk assessment identifies concerns about decline in the performance of pupils' academic achievement and overall decline in performance, these outstanding schools will receive a section 8 inspection. If during the course of the inspection, the lead inspector finds that the school may no longer be outstanding, then the lead inspector may convert the inspection to a section 5 inspection.

In addition, exempt schools may be inspected between risk assessments where:

- safeguarding, including a decline in the standards of pupils' behaviour and the ability of staff to maintain discipline and/or welfare concerns, suggests that it should be inspected
- a subject or thematic survey inspection raises more general concerns
- Ofsted has received a qualifying complaint about a school that, taken alongside other available evidence, suggests that it would be appropriate to inspect the school
- concerns are raised about standards of leadership or governance
- concerns are identified about the breadth and balance of the curriculum (including where the statutory requirement to publish information is not met)
- Her Majesty's Chief Inspector or the Secretary of State has concerns about a school's performance.

If any of the concerns listed above are identified for exempt schools, then these schools will usually be inspected under the section 8 'no formal designation' procedures.

3. **Will schools in a multi-academy trust (MAT) be inspected at the same time?**

No. However, if we are to undertake a focused inspection of a MAT, we will inspect a sample of academies, survey the rest and visit the central support to provide commentary on how well the MAT is supporting and challenging its academies to improve.

4. **I'm a good school and I was last inspected in 2010/2011/2012. When can I expect a short inspection?**

We are moving from a five-year cycle to a three-year cycle. However, 2015/16 will be a transitional year which means that we will not be in the three-year cycle for all schools straight away, but will be moving towards it.

Please remember that you cannot predict the date of your inspection based on when the last one took place.

5. **When do short inspections start?**

The first short inspections will take place in September 2015.

6. **Our school was inspected recently and became a good school. We were told that we are very near to being outstanding – how long do we have to wait for another inspection?**

The school will be part of the normal inspection cycle, and so will receive a short inspection after approximately three years. 2015/16 will be a transitional year which means that we will not be in the three-year cycle for all schools straight away, but will be moving towards it. Schools can, however, contact Ofsted's Regional Director to explain their circumstances if they want an inspection to take place.

7. **What about unannounced inspections? When do these happen?**

Ofsted may conduct inspections without notice. When this happens, the lead inspector will normally telephone the school about 15 minutes before arriving on site.

Inspection without notice will be considered where Ofsted receives information that there could be serious concerns about one or more of the following:

- the breadth and balance of the curriculum
- rapidly declining standards
- safeguarding, including a decline in standards of pupils' behaviour and the ability of staff to maintain discipline
- standards of leadership or governance.

8. **If we are judged to be good, and good, and good, and carry on having short inspections – are we a coasting school?**

No; if you secure repeated good judgements, then you are just that – a good school. The DfE is undertaking its own separate development work on the definition of 'coasting' in relation to the Secretary of State's manifesto commitments, but this is a separate matter and not for Ofsted.

9. **If I'm due an inspection this year, as a good provider, will I automatically get a short inspection?**

Yes; good schools will receive short inspections rather than section 5s.

If you are a good further education and skills provider, you will almost certainly receive a short inspection, but our risk assessment means that, where we have concerns, we may undertake a full inspection straight away.

10. **When would a good school ever be given a section 5 inspection?**

All good schools will receive a short inspection following the section 5 inspection which judged it good. However, if there are concerns about a school

then we will inspect the school through a section 8 'no formal designation' inspection and this may be deemed a section 5 inspection.

If, during a short inspection, there is insufficient evidence to confirm that a provider remains good, or if it may have improved, we will convert the inspection to a section 5 inspection.

11. Will the public know that an inspection has been converted from a short to a section 5 inspection?

This information will be included in the published inspection report.

12. How will you handle the logistical challenge of converting schools? Does this mean there is now a quota of schools that aren't good?

There is no quota for the number of good schools and there is no quota for how many inspections we will convert. Conversions will be based on inspectors' professional judgement in light of the evidence gathered on site.

13. When I try to demonstrate my progress/outcomes to inspectors, will they penalise me if I'm still using levels?

No. Inspectors want to see that you have a robust means of gathering information about current pupils and monitoring their progress, presented in a comprehensible way. They will work with whatever information and systems you use, rather than expecting to see – or not see – a particular system.

14. For schools, is RAISEonline now less important due to the focus on the outcomes for pupils who are currently in the school?

RAISEonline is still important and inspectors will always use this as a starting point. However, the focus will be on current pupils that are in the school.

15. Will there be processes to ensure that serving practitioners do not have conflicts of interest?

Yes. All our inspectors must adhere to the code of conduct as set out in the Common inspection framework. This requires them to declare all actual and perceived conflicts of interest and have no real or perceived connection with the provider that could undermine objectivity. Our training, induction, quality assurance and performance management arrangements will also ensure that inspection is objective and in line with Ofsted frameworks and policies.