

This guidance has been withdrawn because it no longer reflects current policy.

The framework for the inspection of local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement

The framework for inspecting local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement in England under section 135 and section 136(1)(b) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

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Preface

This framework constitutes the basis for the inspections of local authority arrangements for supporting improvement in schools and in the education of children and young people, from November 2014.

The aim of these inspections is to assist local authorities in their duty to promote high standards and fulfilment of potential so that all children and young people benefit from at least a good education.

This inspection framework replaces the one published in May 2013. The inspection arrangements have been revised so that:

- focused inspection activity, including the telephone survey, will now form part of the inspection of local authority school improvement (rather than a standalone assessment); this reduces the burden of inspection on local authorities and provides inspectors with a broader evidence base
- the previous overarching judgement of effective/ineffective has been replaced by a narrative judgement; given that configurations of school improvement functions are very diverse and relevant to local circumstances, a more granulated judgement is more appropriate and more helpful to local authorities.

This inspection framework is implemented using Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's (HMCI's) powers to carry out an inspection of the performance of a particular local authority function as set out in section 136(1)(b) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Specifically, HMCI can use this power to inspect how well the local authority is fulfilling its general duty to promote high standards and fulfilment by every child of their educational potential as set out in section 13A of the Education Act 1996.

Reports of the findings of an Ofsted inspection under section 136 may be of assistance to the Secretary of State in the use of powers under Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which enables the Secretary of State to effect swift improvement in the local authority's exercise of its functions and to the improvement of educational performance in the area.

HMCI's recent Annual Reports have drawn national attention to the marked inequality in children and young people's access to a good education across England. This inequality can limit the life chances of children and young people. This inspection framework acknowledges that the role of local authorities has changed in relation to schools and those 14-19-year-olds attending a college outside of local authority control. However, local authorities still have an important role as

champions of educational excellence, as set out in 'Schools causing concern: statutory guidance for local authorities'.¹

This inspection framework acts as a powerful lever for improvement by helping to challenge inconsistencies. It enables Ofsted to report more rigorously on the contribution of local authorities to improving education in England.

Inspection is not universal. We will normally inspect only where concerns about performance are apparent or where requested to do so by the Secretary of State, although, in the future, we may inspect local authorities to gather evidence of good practice. Where inspections are undertaken, they report on the quality of the local authority functions for promoting improvement in relation to education. We believe this helps local authorities to improve their own performance in supporting and challenging schools, and other providers as relevant, in order to raise standards for all children and young people.

¹ *Schools causing concern: statutory guidance for local authorities*, Department for Education, May 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-causing-concern--2.

Introduction

What is the purpose of inspection?

1. The inspection of a local authority's arrangements for supporting school improvement provides an independent external evaluation of how well it carries out its statutory duties in relation to promoting high standards in schools and among other providers so that children and young people achieve well and fulfil their potential as defined by section 13A of the Education Act 1996. This includes support for schools causing concern as set out in Part 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.²
2. Ofsted's inspection of a local authority performs four essential functions and leads to a published report of findings that:
 - provides parents,³ elected council members, schools and other providers and those who lead and manage the local authority with an assessment of how well the local authority is performing in supporting and challenging its maintained schools to improve⁴ and how well it works with other education providers within the local authority area
 - provides information for the Secretary of State for Education about how well the local authority is performing its role in promoting high standards and championing excellence, ensuring equality of access to opportunity, fulfilling children's potential and providing support to schools causing concern⁵
 - promotes improvement in the local authority, its schools and the education system more widely
 - requires the local authority to consider the actions that it should take in light of the report and prepare a written statement that sets out those actions and the timetable for them.
3. It should be noted that this framework for inspection is limited to school improvement. It is very likely that other important services have a part to play in supporting school improvement, such as human resources, early years services, admissions and school place planning and pupil and student services for those with additional needs. These services, where encountered, are not inspected discretely, as they fall beyond the remit of this inspection framework. However, where such services are making a significant contribution to coordinated strategies for improvement or otherwise, reference may be made

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/part/4>

³ The term 'parents' refers to mothers, fathers and/or carers.

⁴ The term 'other providers' relates to all non-maintained schools such as academies, (including free schools, studio schools or university technology colleges) and post-16 partners.

⁵ Under section 118 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

to this when evaluating the strengths and weaknesses and arriving at the key findings.

How does inspection promote improvement?

4. Inspection acts in the interests of children and young people, their parents and employers. It encourages high-quality provision and outcomes that meet diverse needs and foster equal opportunities. Ofsted is required to carry out its functions in ways that encourage those it inspects and regulates to improve, be user-focused and be efficient and effective in their use of resources.⁶ By inspecting and reporting, Ofsted will ensure that the local authority is able to consider the steps that need to be taken to effect improvement and set out formally the actions it intends to take to achieve this.
5. Inspection supports improvement by:
 - raising expectations about the standards of performance and effectiveness of local authorities in supporting and challenging educational provision in a local authority area
 - providing a sharp challenge and the impetus to act where improvement is needed
 - recommending specific priorities for improvement and, when appropriate, checking on subsequent progress
 - promoting rigour in the way that local authorities evaluate their own performance, enhancing their capacity to improve their functions.
 - identifying good or outstanding practice so that it can be shared more widely
6. Local authority inspections will:
 - support and promote improvement by:
 - reporting on whether or not local authority strategies, support and challenge are effective in raising standards in schools and other providers
 - identifying the weakest local authorities, providing challenge and support to elected members, senior leaders, school and other provision, improvement staff, as relevant, and those responsible for supporting governance in schools
 - explaining and discussing inspection findings with those whose work has been inspected
 - identifying precise actions to underpin recommendations
 - adjusting the focus of inspection to have the greatest impact

⁶ Under sections 117(1) and 119(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

- be proportionate by:
 - inspecting where concerns are raised through inspection outcomes or through other means
 - adjusting the frequency of inspection, having regard to any previous inspection outcomes and risk assessment
 - deploying resources where improvement is needed most or where inspection can add value
- focus on the needs of children and young people by:
 - drawing on the views of those who lead and manage the schools and other providers to inform inspectors' judgements and the outcomes of inspection
 - taking account of views expressed by users
 - evaluating the extent to which local authorities foster an inclusive and aspirational environment, ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training in schools and other providers that meets the needs of all pupils
- focus on the needs of local authorities by:
 - making use, as far as possible, of the existing data, documentation and systems of the local authority and avoiding placing unnecessary burdens on them
 - taking account of the way in which arrangements to deliver statutory responsibilities are exercised
- be transparent and consistent by:
 - making clear judgements based on sound evidence
 - inspecting and reporting with integrity
 - having clear, brief evaluation criteria, procedures and guidance that are well understood by local authorities and other users and that are readily available
- be accountable by:
 - reporting the findings of inspection without fear or favour
 - publishing clear, accurate letters that report independently on the quality of the school improvement arrangements of the local authority
 - gathering the views of schools and other stakeholders, and those who have a significant interest in the local authority, to inform inspection
- demonstrate value for money by:
 - targeting inspection resources and deploying them effectively and efficiently

- evaluating the outcomes and processes of inspection and making improvements where necessary.

Inspection policy and principles

What is the statutory basis for the inspection?

7. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes provision for HMCI to inspect the overall performance of any local authority of particular functions that are within his remit.
8. This framework applies to all local authorities in England, who have a legal duty to promote high standards and fulfilment of potential in relation to their relevant education functions under section 136 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
9. The general duty for local authorities to promote high standards of education is set out under section 13A of the Education Act 1996, as follows:

‘Duty to promote high standards and fulfilment of potential

(1) A [local authority] in England must ensure that their relevant education functions and their relevant training functions are (so far as they are capable of being so exercised) exercised by the authority with a view to—

- (a) promoting high standards,
- (b) ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training, and
- (c) promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person to whom this subsection applies.

(2) Subsection (1) applies to the following—

- (a) persons under the age of 20;
- (b) persons aged 20 or over but under 25 who are subject to learning difficulty assessment.

(5) In this section—

“education” and “training” have the same meanings as in section 15ZA;

“relevant education function”, in relation to a [local authority] in England, means a function relating to the provision of education for—

- (a) persons of compulsory school age (whether at school or otherwise);

(b) persons (whether at school or otherwise) who are over compulsory school age and to whom subsection (1) applies;

(c) persons who are under compulsory school age and are registered as pupils at schools maintained by the authority;

“relevant training function” means a function relating to the provision of training.’

10. HMCI may inspect a local authority’s education function at any time under section 136(1)(b) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.⁷ This may happen, for example, where concerns are identified through the performance of individual schools and other providers or if Ofsted becomes aware of concerns about the standards of education provided to children and young people.
11. The reported findings of Ofsted’s inspection may be of assistance to the Secretary of State in relation to his powers to effect swift improvement in the local authority’s exercise of its functions. The Secretary of State has the power to require HMCI to carry out an inspection of a local authority’s education functions under s136(3).

What determines the timing of an inspection?

12. Ofsted does not inspect all local authorities to a specific cycle or regular interval. Where inspections of schools or other providers, under either section 5 or section 8 of the Education Act 2005, raise concerns about the effectiveness of a local authority’s education functions or where Ofsted becomes aware of other concerns, an inspection may be carried out.
13. In practice, this means that some local authorities may not be inspected at all, while others may be inspected more than once over a particular period.
14. HMCI may cause a local authority to be inspected, in relation to its arrangements to support school improvement, including where one or more of the following apply:
 - where the proportion of children who attend a good or outstanding school, pupil referral unit and/or alternative provision is lower than that found nationally
 - where there is a higher than average number of schools in an Ofsted formal category of concern and/or there are indicators that these schools are not improving rapidly enough
 - where there is a higher than average proportion of schools that have not been judged to be good or outstanding by Ofsted

⁷ Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 136;
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/136.

- where attainment levels across the local authority are lower than the national average, where the trend of improvement is weak, or where there is a decline
 - where rates of progress, relative to starting points, are lower than the national average, where the trend of improvement is weak, or where there is a decline
 - where pupils eligible for the pupil premium achieve less well than pupils not eligible for the pupil premium nationally
 - where qualifying complaints to Ofsted about schools in a local authority are a matter of concern
 - where the Secretary of State requires an inspection of local authority school improvement functions.
15. Inspection of a local authority will normally start with the inspection of a number of individual schools within the normal notice periods. Notice of up to five days will normally be given for the inspection of the local authority's school improvement arrangements. This will always be after the schools to be inspected have received their normal notice of inspection. The purpose of the inspection, the powers under which it is carried out and the arrangements for reporting on the inspection will be set out in writing to the local authority.

Who carries out the inspection?

16. All inspections of local authority school improvement arrangements will be led by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI). The individual section 5 or section 8 inspections will be led either by HMI or Ofsted Inspectors (OI).
17. All inspectors undertake regular training to ensure that they are familiar with changes in inspection frameworks, inspection methodology and developments in educational practice.
18. An inspection team will normally consist of four HMI. However, where circumstances dictate, the team may be smaller as Ofsted will not use any more inspectors than are required and will always seek to minimise disruption to the local authority and stakeholders during inspection.
19. Ofsted will quality assure all inspections during the fieldwork stage. The relevant Ofsted Regional Director, together with the National Director, Education, will review all letters reporting inspection findings prior to publication.

What will be inspected?

20. The inspection will take place over a two-week period and consist of the three discrete elements set out below. Bringing these separate elements together will ensure that the outcomes of the local authority school improvement inspection will be informed by a broad evidence base.

Inspections conducted under section 5 or 8 and additional evidence gathering

21. **Firstly**, Ofsted will carry out a number of section 5 and, where appropriate, section 8 inspections of maintained schools in the local authority. As the starting point to gathering evidence of the quality and impact of the local authority's school improvement arrangements, inspectors conducting the inspections will ask additional questions of headteachers, governors and local authority officers to ascertain the extent to which the support and challenge provided by the local authority is helping to raise standards for individual pupils and groups of pupils, and to improve overall performance. This focused inspection activity will take place during week 1.
22. The schools that will form part of this focused inspection activity will be selected either because they are due to be inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 during the academic year in accordance with the maximum permitted interval between inspections prescribed by Regulations⁸ and with our standard inspection windows, or because they are subject to inspections conducted under section 8(2) of the Act.⁹ In some instances, this may include section 8 inspections of exempt schools that are selected for inspection following risk assessment.
23. The evidence collated through the additional enquiries about the quality of the local authority school improvement arrangements will not form part of the evidence base for each section 5 inspection or section 8 inspection, which will be conducted and reported on as standard and in accordance with the 'School inspection handbook'¹⁰ and the 'School inspection handbook: section 8'¹¹.
24. Information will be gathered during meetings conducted separately with the headteacher, the chair of the body that is responsible for the governance of the school and, if available, a representative of the local authority (for maintained schools). Evidence from these discussions will be recorded on separate evidence forms. It is important to note that this evidence is gathered for the purpose of informing the evaluation of local authority school improvement services and will not influence the judgements inspectors make about the school. However, as part of every school inspection, inspectors are required to

⁸The Education (School Inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended); www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2009/1564/made.

⁹ These include monitoring inspections of schools that are judged as 'requires improvement', monitoring inspections of schools judged to be causing concern, and short inspections of good and outstanding non-exempt schools. Section 8 inspections carried out under the no formal designation process or section 8 unannounced inspections of behaviour **do not** form part of focused inspection activity.

¹⁰ *School inspection handbook*, Ofsted, August 2015; www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015

¹¹ *School inspection handbook: section 8*, Ofsted, August 2015; www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-short-monitoring-and-unannounced-behaviour-school-inspections

report on the impact of any external support to the school, whether that is provided by the local authority or other partners. They will continue to do so in the usual way.

Telephone survey of schools not under inspection

25. **Secondly**, Ofsted will undertake a telephone survey of a sample of headteachers of schools or academies that are not being inspected to gather evidence on the quality and impact of the local authority's relationships, support and challenge. This telephone survey will also take place during week 1.
26. Schools previously judged good or outstanding will be contacted in order to ascertain the extent to which they support other schools to improve and the extent to which the local authority facilitates or supports this. Schools previously judged as requires improvement or inadequate will be contacted in order to explore the extent to which they recognised that their performance was not good or outstanding before they were inspected and how they receive support from the local authority in order to improve. Academies will be contacted to explore the nature and quality of the local authority's engagement and relationships with them.

Evidence from the focused inspection activity and the telephone survey

27. **Thirdly**, evidence from both these activities will inform the inspection of the local authority's school improvement arrangements.¹²
28. Ofsted will collate, analyse and assess the evidence. The analysis will look for trends and patterns in:
 - the information provided by the schools in response to inspectors' questions about the strengths, weaknesses and impact of the local authority's support
 - the areas for improvement identified by the inspections
 - the responses given by schools included in the separate telephone survey.
29. The findings of the focused inspection activity and the telephone survey will be recorded in the evidence notebook and the summary notebook for the inspection of the local authority school improvement service, which takes place in week 2. They will be considered alongside all other evidence gathered during the inspection of the local authority's school improvement functions and will inform the outcome of this inspection, as set out below.

¹² Ofsted collects evidence through these additional activities according to the power of entry set out in section 136 of the Education Act 2006, as further defined by section 139 of the same Act

Inspection of the local authority arrangements for school improvement

30. Ofsted will assess the quality of local authority education functions in relation to promoting improvement, high standards and the fulfilment of educational potential of children and young people in schools. Ofsted recognises that the configuration of school improvement functions will be diverse and relevant to local circumstances. Ofsted has no fixed view on the configuration of such functions, but will focus on their impact, strengths and weaknesses. Ofsted recognises that local authorities are discharging their statutory duties within the context of increasing autonomy of schools. It is also the case that improvement should be led by schools themselves within a framework of accountability. In particular, Ofsted will evaluate:

- the effectiveness of corporate and strategic leadership of school improvement
- the clarity and transparency of policy and strategy for supporting school improvement and how clearly the local authority has defined its monitoring, challenge, support and intervention roles
- the extent to which the local authority knows schools and, where appropriate, other providers, their performance and the standards they achieve and how effectively support is focused on areas of greatest need
- the effectiveness of the local authority's identification of, and intervention in, underperforming maintained schools, including, where applicable, the use of formal powers available to the local authority
- the impact of local authority support and challenge over time and the rate at which schools and other providers are improving, including impact of the local authority strategy to narrow attainments gaps
- the extent to which the local authority brokers and/or commissions high quality support for maintained schools
- the effectiveness of strategies to support highly effective leadership and management in maintained schools and other providers
- support and challenge for school governance
- the way the local authority uses any available funding to effect improvement, including how it is focused on areas of greatest need.

What judgements will inspectors make?

31. In inspecting the local authority, inspectors will evaluate the quality of arrangements to support school improvement. They will focus on the impact of the actions taken on the effectiveness of individual schools and other providers. They will identify the strengths and weaknesses of the support and challenge provided. The evaluation will take account of a local authority's statutory duties set out in section 13A of the Education Act 1996 and the key areas of focus set out in paragraph 19 above, in so far as they are capable of being exercised.

32. In doing this, they consider all the evidence gathered to support the inspection findings. Inspectors will consider and report on the extent to which the support and challenge the local authority offers the schools for which it is responsible is promoting improvement in those schools. They will also explore whether local authorities seek to work constructively with academies in their area and, where they have concerns about standards or leadership in an academy, whether they alert the Department for Education through the Regional Schools Commissioner as appropriate. Inspectors will set out key priorities for improvement. Where the inspection raises significant concerns, Ofsted may carry out further inspection of the local authority's arrangements for school improvement at an appropriate time in the future. Any such inspection will consider the progress made against the recommendations of the previous inspection.

What happens during the inspection?

How many days do inspectors spend in the local authority?

33. Inspections do not normally last longer than five days, which in most cases will be consecutive. In some instances, inspections may be shorter, as concerns leading to the inspection and its circumstances will vary. In other instances, inspections may be extended in order to gather additional evidence.

How do inspectors use their time during the inspection?

34. Inspectors will spend their time gathering robust, first-hand evidence to inform their judgements. This will involve meeting with key leaders and other stakeholders, and scrutinising relevant data and other information.

How is evidence recorded?

35. During the inspection, inspectors will gather, analyse and record evidence in an evidence notebook (EN) and note their judgements in a summary notebook (SN). Both notebooks are part of the evidence base for the inspection. The lead inspector is responsible for compiling and assuring the quality of the evidence base.

How are judgements secured?

36. The lead inspector has responsibility for ensuring that judgements about the local authority are agreed collectively by the inspection team and based on the guidance contained in the inspection handbook, and are supported convincingly by recorded evidence. Inspectors will identify the strengths and weaknesses, including those identified through the focused inspection activity and telephone survey, of the local authority school improvement functions and what it must do to improve. Emerging findings will be discussed with the nominee/senior officers at regular intervals and, where appropriate, other senior staff. The local authority will be given the opportunity to provide evidence, where it is relevant.

37. Inspectors will arrive at their final findings only when all evidence has been collected and considered. The inspection findings represent the corporate view of the inspection team. They will be subject to quality assurance before the report is published.

How do senior officers and senior staff engage in the inspection?

38. Inspection has the strongest impact on improvement when those inspected understand the evidence that has led to the findings and what it needs to do to improve. The lead inspector, therefore, will ensure that the senior officers and senior staff:

- are kept up to date about the inspection
- understand how the inspection team arrives at the findings
- have opportunities to clarify how evidence is evaluated
- are given the opportunity to present evidence.

39. Senior officers will be invited to:

- support the planning of the inspection
- attend the formal inspection team meetings during the inspection
- receive regular updates from the lead inspector

and, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so,

- comment on the inspectors' recommendations to ensure that these are understood.

40. Participation in inspection activities, such as attendance at team meetings, will not be mandatory and nominees/senior officers may choose whether or not to accept.

41. The absence of the Director of Children's Services or their equivalent will not normally be grounds for the deferral of an inspection. Ofsted does not anticipate having to defer the inspection of a local authority's school improvement service except in very exceptional circumstances, such as an extreme weather event or other major incident. Where local authorities have concerns about the timing of the inspection they may submit a deferral request, with any supporting reasons, to the lead inspector at the point of notification. Ofsted will consider each individual request on its merits.

What is the code of conduct for inspectors?

42. Inspectors are required to uphold the highest professional standards in their work and to ensure that everyone they encounter during inspections is treated fairly and with respect. These standards are assured through a code of conduct, which is set out below.

Inspectors will:

- evaluate objectively, be impartial and inspect without fear or favour
- uphold and demonstrate Ofsted values at all times¹³
- evaluate provision in line with frameworks, national standards or regulatory requirements
- base all evaluations on clear and robust evidence
- declare all actual and perceived conflicts of interest and have no real or perceived connection with the provider that could undermine objectivity
- report honestly and clearly, ensuring that judgements are fair and reliable
- carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
- take all reasonable steps to prevent undue anxiety and minimise stress
- act in the best interests and well-being of service users, prioritising the safeguarding of children and learners at all times
- maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected and communicate judgements sensitively but clearly and frankly
- respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work
- respond appropriately to reasonable requests
- take prompt and appropriate action on any safeguarding or health and safety issues
- use their title of HMI or Ofsted Inspector only in relation to their work for Ofsted.

43. When inspectors meet senior officers, elected members, school-based staff and governors or other stakeholders, every endeavour will be made to ensure that individuals and individual comments are not identified in the further exploration of issues or in the inspection report. However, there may be circumstances where it will not be possible to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewee, for example where a safeguarding issue is disclosed. Inspectors have a duty to pass on disclosures that raise child protection or safeguarding issues and/or where serious misconduct or potential criminal activity is involved.

¹³ For more information about Ofsted's values, see *Raising standards, improving lives: Ofsted's strategic plan*, Ofsted, July 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/raising-standards-improving-lives-ofsted-strategic-plan-2014-to-2016

How should local authority staff engage with inspectors?

44. To ensure that inspection is productive and beneficial, it is important that inspectors and local authorities establish and maintain an appropriate working relationship based on courtesy and professional behaviour. Ofsted expects senior officers, elected members or other stakeholders to:
- apply their own codes of conduct in their dealings with inspectors
 - enable inspectors to conduct their visit in an open and honest way
 - enable inspectors to evaluate the local authority objectively against the inspection framework and handbook
 - provide evidence that will enable the inspectors to report honestly, fairly and reliably about their provision
 - work with inspectors to minimise disruption, stress and bureaucracy
 - ensure that the health and safety of inspectors is not compromised while they are on local authority premises
 - maintain a purposeful dialogue with the inspectors
 - draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of inspectors promptly and in a suitable manner
 - understand the need for inspectors to secure evidence and talk to staff and stakeholders without the presence of a senior officer.

What feedback do inspectors give to local authority staff during the inspection?

45. Inspectors will offer oral feedback on emerging inspection findings to senior officers and elected members in order to promote improvement. Constructive dialogue is essential between inspectors and local authority staff and particularly between the lead inspector and the Chief Executive or Director of Children's Services and/or her/his representatives.

How is the quality of inspection assured?

46. Ofsted monitors the quality of inspections through a range of formal processes. All local authorities will be visited to check the quality of the inspection. Their feedback is confidential to the inspectors conducting the quality assurance visit. As part of quality assurance, a sample of inspection evidence bases will be evaluated.
47. In the rare event that an inspection and/or inspection letter report, before publication, are judged by Ofsted to be flawed, the local authority will be notified that the inspection is incomplete and that a further visit may be necessary, to make sure that enough evidence is gathered to make the inspection findings secure.

What feedback is provided to the local authority?

48. Before leaving the inspection, the lead inspector must ensure that the local authority is clear:
- about the relative strengths and weaknesses of arrangements for supporting and challenging maintained schools and other providers
 - that the main points provided orally in the feedback will be referred to in the text of the report letter subject to quality assurance
 - about the procedures leading to the publication of the report letter
 - about whether, in light of the findings, the inspection team is likely to recommend that there be further inspection of the local authority's arrangements for school improvement at an appropriate point in the future
 - about what to do if there are complaints.
49. After the inspection team has reached its conclusions, the draft findings will be presented and briefly explained to senior representatives of the local authority. In some instances, inspectors may need to return to the local authority to provide oral feedback if there remains a need to consider evidence further. While any oral feedback should be consistent with the inspection findings, all final outcomes will be subject to moderation and quality assurance by senior Ofsted staff.

What happens after the inspection?

The written reporting arrangements

50. Ofsted will publish the inspection findings in letter form, setting out briefly the context of the inspection, the evidence gathered, any strengths and weaknesses and areas recommended for improvement. Letters constitute an inspection report under section 137 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
51. Ofsted will offer local authorities the opportunity to make factual accuracy comments on the report in line with other inspection remit reports.
52. Local authorities will be required to respond with a written statement setting out what action it proposes to take in light of the report of inspectors' findings and setting out a timetable for those actions. The local authority must publish the letter report and action plan.¹⁴

¹⁴ The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Inspection of Local Authorities) Regulations 2007; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2007/462/contents/made

When is the report letter issued?

53. The report is normally sent to a local authority within 20 working days of the end of the inspection and published on Ofsted's website within 25 working days of the end of the inspection.
54. A copy of the letter is sent to:¹⁵
 - the Chief Executive of the local authority
 - the Director of Children's Services in the local authority (or their equivalent) and the lead elected member for Children's Services in the local authority
 - the Secretary of State.

How do local authorities complain about their inspection or inspection report letter?

55. Any concerns that the local authority has about the inspection should be raised and, where possible, resolved with the lead inspector (and/or visiting inspector who is carrying out a quality assurance visit) during or as soon as possible after the inspection.
56. If it has not been possible to resolve concerns directly, individuals or local authorities are able to lodge a formal complaint. The complaints procedure is available on Ofsted's website.¹⁶

¹⁵ Under section 137(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

¹⁶ *Complaints procedure: raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted* (130128), Ofsted, 2013; www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted.