

# School inspection update

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## Message to inspectors from the National Director, Education

Welcome to this special edition of our school inspection update (SIU). I hope you all had a relaxing summer and are looking forward to inspecting under the new education inspection framework (EIF). It was good to meet many of you at our inspector training conferences across the country back in July and more recently.

As you know, inspections under the EIF will focus on the real substance of education: the curriculum. We will be spending less time looking at test and examinations data on inspection, and more time looking at what is taught, when it is taught and how schools have achieved their results: 'Why that, why then and what is the result?'

We want to make sure that good results come from teaching a broad, rich curriculum, not from narrowing and hot-housing for tests. Ofsted grades will reflect the areas that matter most to parents and for educational effectiveness:

- quality of education
- behaviour and attitudes
- personal development
- leadership and management.

In this special edition of the SIU, we focus on the **transition arrangements** for section 5 inspections under the EIF, as well as applying the transition to section 8 inspections of good schools.

We also include articles on:

- the new Ofsted Parent View questions
- outstanding primary schools
- meetings with curriculum leaders
- clarification on schools keeping books between different academic years
- the healthy school rating scheme



- use of progress 8 estimates for the 2019 examinations round.

We hope this special edition of SIU is a useful resource to complement other guidance and materials that you have for this year.

Best wishes

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

**Sean Harford HMI**  
**National Director, Education**

## Transition arrangements for section 5 inspections under the EIF

We have been asked by some leaders what state of readiness is expected of schools regarding their curriculums come September and the commencement of the EIF. For most schools, curriculum development is a continuous, dynamic process and so in some ways there is no sense of everything being 'done' and 'ready' when adopting or constructing a curriculum. Clearly though, some schools are further down the road than others in establishing their curriculums. Ofsted is aware that schools are in different places on this journey and so, to ensure that schools are treated fairly during the introduction of the new inspection framework, transition arrangements are in place. These apply to four of the 'good' criteria of the quality of education judgement and are clearly marked in the school inspection handbook.

The following section explains in more detail how inspectors will use the transition arrangements.

Transition arrangements are in place to enable inspectors to determine a best-fit judgement of 'good' for the quality of education judgement.

- Inspectors will use their professional judgement when a school has taken appropriate action but is still in the early stages of developing its curriculum.
- Appropriate actions are likely to result in a good quality of education judgement within **two years**.
- The transition arrangements apply **only** to a judgement that the school is '**good**'. They are not used for outstanding, requires improvement or inadequate.

### **The transition period only applies to the school's curriculum intent.**

Transition statements appear in square brackets in each of the four grade descriptors for intent. These statements are likely to apply when, based on clear actions to improve curriculum, the quality of education in the school could reasonably be expected to be good in two years' time.

**Curriculum intent includes the school's curriculum content and planning.** It is **not** only the school's broad ambitions or vision (an emerging 'myth' in the sector). Inspectors should go back to the detailed content of the first four bullets in the quality of education judgement, to which the transition applies.

**A school must still 'best fit' to the good criteria of the quality of education grade descriptor for implementation and impact to be judged good for quality of education.** Our expectations of implementation and impact will not be changed. These are set out in the grade descriptors.

Inspectors will consider whether the school's actions are likely to result in a good quality of education judgement within two years, **all other things being equal**. This is a useful 'rule of thumb' for inspectors to consider. That is, does the school's work on curriculum content and planning so far, and the capacity and commitment

of senior and curriculum leaders, give us confidence that sufficient action will be taken to bring the quality of education fully up to good within two years?

**Lead inspectors will always call the duty desk if they are considering using the transitional arrangements.** Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine when the transition arrangements apply, but they will then take advice from the duty desk to ensure regional and national consistency in the way that the transition is used.

**In schools with primary aged pupils, transition arrangements do not apply to reading, writing and mathematics.** Ofsted has been clear for some time that the teaching of reading holds the very highest importance, so if the school's teaching of reading does not meet the good judgement, the school would not be good. Therefore, in infant, junior, primary and middle schools deemed primary, transition arrangements can only apply to science and the foundation curriculum.

**If inspectors use the transitional provision, they should report on it clearly in the inspection report.** While the curriculum will **always** be reported on clearly in the inspection report, inspectors will need to write in the 'what does the school need to do to improve?' section that the transition has been taken into account.

**The transition period applies only to the good grade.** To be graded outstanding for quality of education, a school must meet **all** of the criteria for good and should also be exceptional.

**The transition period lasts for one year from September 2019.** It is anticipated that inspectors will have greater expectations of schools as the transition period progresses. The transition period will be reviewed in summer 2020.

## **Applying the transition to Section 8 inspections of good schools**

A section 8 inspection will focus primarily on the quality of education and whether safeguarding is effective. The criteria for quality of education should be applied in the same way as outlined above. Lead inspectors should **always** contact the duty desk if they wish to consider using the transitional provision.

The transitional provision affects the outcome of a section 8 inspection in the following ways:

- **The transitional provision is used only for schools if quality of education remains good (outcome 1).** Inspectors' considerations here should mirror the process that they carry out under section 5. If, following discussion with the duty desk, agreement is reached that the transition does apply and consequently the best fit judgement for the quality of education criteria is good, then they should judge that the school remains good (outcome 1).

- **The transitional provision does not apply in the case of good, with marked improvement (outcome 2);** to improve to outstanding, the school must meet **every** good criterion, without the need for the transitional provision.
- **It is not possible to say that the transitional** provision applies and then judge the school as good, if the lead inspector is not satisfied that the school would receive a good grade if inspected under section 5 at that time (outcome 3). If the school would be good if the transition were to be taken into account, then the school remains good (outcome 1).
- **The transitional provision does not apply to the outstanding grade.** It should therefore **not** be taken into account when carrying out section 8 inspections of non-exempt outstanding schools (pupil referral units, special schools and maintained nursery schools).

## New Ofsted Parent View

From September 2019, we are updating the questions we ask in the Ofsted Parent View survey. This is so that it links more closely to our new education inspection framework.

The survey continues to ask parents how strongly they agree or disagree with statements about their child's school, though the focus of what we ask parents has changed. We have removed and adapted some of the statements. We have also added new questions including a question for parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This reflects the new framework and responds to requests from parents for a question in this area. You can see more detail in our [toolkit](#).

Once a school has received 10 survey responses, the information will be available to view in Ofsted Parent View for schools, parents and the general public. Ofsted Parent View displays data about each school in percentages and easy-to-understand graphs. We save the results for each school in Ofsted Parent View at the end of the academic year.

### Ofsted Parent View questions/statements

Except where indicated below, the survey asks parents whether they strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree/don't know with the following statements and questions:

1. My child is happy at this school.
2. My child feels safe at this school.
3. The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.
4. My child has been bullied and the school dealt with the bullying quickly and effectively. (For this question, parents can select 'My child has not been bullied'.)
5. The school makes me aware of what my child will learn during the year.

6. When I have raised concerns with the school they have been dealt with properly. (For this question, parents can select 'I have not raised any concerns'.)
7. Does your child have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)? (yes or no)  
If yes, the survey asks parents how strongly they agree with this statement: 'My child has SEND, and the school gives them the support they need to succeed.'
8. The school has high expectations for my child.
9. My child does well at this school.
10. The school lets me know how my child is doing.
11. There is a good range of subjects available to my child at this school.
12. My child can take part in clubs and activities at this school.
13. The school supports my child's wider personal development.
14. I would recommend this school to another parent. (This is a yes or no question.)

**For parents with children who board or reside in maintained or non-association independent schools and academies, and some non-maintained special schools:**

1. My child enjoys boarding/the welfare experience.
2. My child is warm enough and comfortable in the residential accommodation.
3. The experience of boarding/welfare helps my child's progress and development.
4. I can easily contact the staff who care for my child.
5. Boarding and welfare is well organised and managed effectively.

**Free text question – only available during inspections**

6. Do you have any additional comments on any of your answers?

## Implications for inspectors

As set out in the last edition of the SIU, from September 2019 survey responses from parents will be split into academic year on provider results pages on the Ofsted Parent View site. There will no longer be a '365 rolling results' tab. The replies from the new survey will be visible in the first tab of results (academic year 2019/20) on Ofsted Parent View results. Replies from the old survey will be available in tabs for previous years.

For the first year, therefore, inspectors will need to look at this and previous years' tabs when they consider Ofsted Parent View results, giving appropriate weight to the number of responses and date of responses in each.

## Outstanding primary schools

To develop further our understanding of the primary curriculum, we will be carrying out a number of inspections of exempt outstanding primary schools between October 2019 and April 2020. These inspections will be in addition to the 10% already identified through risk assessment.

This work will help us better understand strong curriculum management in primary leadership and identify good practice at the level of three individual subjects.

Each inspection will focus on one of the following:

- modern foreign languages
- history
- geography.

The findings of these subject-specific inspections will also feed into our wider analysis of subject practice and contribute to Ofsted's proposed thematic reports on curriculum subjects, beginning in 2020.

Her Majesty's Inspectors with expertise in either primary education or in the subject (and both if possible) will lead inspections. Our regions will ensure that inspectors chosen for this work have the necessary knowledge and experience.

## Meetings with curriculum leaders

Our experience of piloting the EIF has shown that inspectors meet with curriculum leaders more often under the new approach than under our previous inspection framework.

As discussed at the recent training, using our [deep dive methodology](#), inspectors will meet with subject and other curriculum leaders to discuss:

- their area and to form an understanding of the intended curriculum in it
- what leaders expect inspectors will see when they visit lessons, look at pupils' work and speak to pupils and teachers.

Inspectors will invite these leaders to carry out visits and work scrutinies jointly. After gathering first-hand evidence, inspectors will discuss what they have seen with them.

In some schools, these leaders will also have a very full teaching schedule. Inspectors will work carefully with the school to make sure that they have these vital conversations while minimising any unnecessary disruption to the day-to-day work of the school. Issues can often be addressed by careful scheduling of activities on the inspection, based on discussion with senior leaders in the pre-inspection telephone conversation.

Inspectors should note that there is no requirement for senior leaders to be present in those meetings, but neither is it prohibited. There may be circumstances, however, when an inspector needs to speak with a subject or curriculum leader without a senior leader present. In these situations, inspectors are empowered to insist on doing so, but this will be rare.

## Inspectors will not expect schools to keep exercise books and other pupils' work between different academic years

We **do not expect schools to keep pupils' work between academic years** solely to show us.

Inspectors will not be making judgements based on only one type of evidence. Instead, they will tightly connect different types of evidence:

- lesson visits
- work scrutiny
- conversations with subject and other curriculum leaders, pupils and teachers.

'[Inspecting the curriculum](#)' sets out how a valid judgement can be reached by connecting a number of different types of evidence. If there is no evidence available of one particular type, you should balance this by ensuring that the other evidence gathered is particularly robust.

Our pilot inspections showed that this approach enables us to build a clear picture of whether the school is meeting the criteria set out in the quality of education judgement in a variety of different circumstances and at different points in the academic year. If there are fewer books available in the autumn term, for example, then inspectors will balance this by ensuring that the other evidence they gather is robust.

## Requires improvement schools that are subject to directive academy orders

A school that we found previously to be inadequate and that was made the subject of a directive academy order, but has subsequently been inspected and judged as requires improvement, should be treated as **any other school judged as requires improvement** for the first time. This would mean that it would not normally be routinely monitored.

However, a school that receives two or more successive overall effectiveness judgements of requires improvement will normally be monitored between 12 and 30 months following publication of the report that resulted in the most recent requires



improvement judgement. This does not affect the monitoring processes for schools that remain inadequate.

## Healthy schools rating scheme

Schools can notify inspectors about the rating they have achieved in the healthy school rating scheme. They will be able to draw attention to the scheme as evidence of the quality of their provision for pupils.

Where relevant, inspectors may wish to consider the healthy schools rating scheme as evidence when making the judgement on personal development.

## Using Progress 8 estimates before official release

Before the official release of key stage 4 checking data, schools may have estimates of Progress 8 for 2019 from tools provided by some third-party organisations. These data analysis tools are put together by third-party suppliers for schools to analyse their own data. They are not 'internal data' according to Ofsted's definition as they are based on very large datasets across many schools.

During the educationally focused conversation between the lead inspector and headteacher, school leaders should feel free to **tell** inspectors their predicted Progress 8 scores from third-party suppliers only when it is clear that the measures are unbiased and based on a sample size, within the tool, that is large enough and when **all** pupils in the school's cohort are included. In these circumstances, the estimates are likely to be broadly accurate at an 'all-pupils level'. Inspectors **will not consider any other information** from third-party suppliers such as group- or subject-based progress scores.

Inspectors should still be cautious when interpreting data for small cohorts. They should continue to bear in mind that data is only a starting point for discussion and remember that the data is only an indication of the progress made by one year group. If inspectors have any queries about the sample size and whether a third-party supplier's Progress 8 estimate is likely to be accurate, they should **contact the analysis helpdesk** in the usual way.

From late September, the headline checking exercise data will be provided in team rooms with a briefing on the data, provided by the analyst support team. **No data from third-party suppliers will be considered from this point.**



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