

A good education for all

Ofsted will be introducing some significant changes to the way further education and skills providers are inspected from September 2012. We want to make sure learners and providers understand how we have listened and weighed the many different responses to the consultation. We also want to ensure that providers are fully aware of the changes to inspection we will be introducing and why, and what they can do to use inspection as a lever for improvement.





I am very grateful to all those who took the time to respond to our recent consultation on proposed changes to the way Ofsted inspects

further education and skills providers from September 2012. We have received several hundred responses from learners, parents, providers and other interested parties and we have listened carefully to what you have said. There were some conflicting views and it has been a demanding role to identify what we believe is the best way forward. I made clear at the start of the consultation that I wanted to use inspection to raise expectations and ensure that this country provides the best possible education for the nation's children, young people and adults.

I know that providers want the very best education for their learners and I want Ofsted to play its part to the full in helping you achieve this.

In June, Ofsted launched a revised framework for inspection of the further education and skills sector. This framework raises expectations and gives a very strong focus on the importance of teaching, learning and assessment. I want, however, to do more for our children, young people and adult learners. I believe that all providers must be at least good and this must be viewed as the minimum expected standard. I realise that there are providers where the journey from where they are now to being good may take longer than others.

I will ensure that all inspection reports make absolutely clear whether the provider is making strong progress to becoming a good provider or not, and what they need to do to improve. Ofsted is here to support learners and providers and I am committed to ensuring that we play our part to a consistently high standard. This means producing clear, well written and unambiguous inspection reports.

I firmly believe that an outstanding provider must have outstanding teaching, learning and assessment and be a model of excellence with very strong leadership. The best teachers, trainers and assessors should be properly supported, developed and rewarded, and I want to see inspectors evaluating the rigour of decisions made by providers regarding performance management.

When I was a headteacher I welcomed inspection. I wanted inspectors to see the school as it really was. I had nothing to hide because I knew that pupils were achieving well and I was proud of their achievements. That's why I have reduced the notice period to up to two days. I know how important inspection is in helping all types of providers to improve standards. The changes that are explained in this leaflet will ensure that many more learners have the best education possible and can play a full and active part in their future and the future of our country.

Sir Michael Wilshaw HMCI

What we consulted on and what you told us

On 9 February 2012, Ofsted published six proposals for further education and skills inspections from September 2012. A 12-week consultation period resulted in excess of 400 individual responses to an online consultation, many focus group discussions, presentations to providers at national and regional conferences and a number of specific meetings with learners, provider groups and stakeholders.

All our proposals have received very strong support from learners. Providers were not as enthusiastic about some, particularly unannounced inspections. In reviewing how we shape the arrangements for inspection from September, Ofsted has considered carefully the views of learners who are our primary users, as well as listening carefully to the views of providers. A summary of the consultation responses and how Ofsted has responded to them can be found at:

www.ofsted.gov.uk

We will be implementing fully these proposals:

- Outstanding providers should have outstanding teaching, learning and assessment.
- A single grade of 'requires improvement' should replace the 'satisfactory' grade.
- Introduce earlier, full re-inspection of providers judged as 'requires improvement'.
- Providers to provide an anonymised summary of the outcomes of the most recent performance management of all teachers, trainers and assessors.

We will be implementing modified arrangements to these proposals:

- At a provider's third consecutive inspection, if it has not made sufficient progress to be judged 'good', it will be deemed 'inadequate'.

We are aware of the reservations some providers have expressed about this proposal.

We will normally limit the number of times a provider can be judged as 'requires improvement' to two consecutive inspections before it is considered to be 'inadequate' for overall effectiveness. However, the lead inspector will consider what progress has been made since the last inspection, and the judgement of inadequate will not be automatic.

- Inspections should be unannounced. We have heard the very strong message from learners that we should see providers 'as they really are'. However, providers who responded to the consultation have also raised concerns about the practical issues that arise from completely unannounced inspections. We tested this proposal through 'pilot' or consultative inspections and found that in some instances it worked well and in others it did cause some logistical difficulties. These practical issues will be relieved by giving providers a small amount of notice. This will ensure that key staff are available and arrangements can be made to see a representative selection of lessons and training sessions, and to visit learners at their place of work. We have therefore decided that in most cases we will give providers up to two days' notice of an inspection. HMCI reserves the right to inspect any provider without notice where there are serious concerns.

Myth busting!

Q I think our provider is due an inspection shortly. Do I need to have a lesson plan for the inspector?

A. No. You should do what your provider normally expects you to do when planning lessons. One of the greatest advantages of short-notice inspections is that there will be no special preparation for inspection.

Q Is it fair to judge the quality of teaching through a 30-minute observation?

A. Inspectors make judgements on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by collecting evidence in a number of different ways, including visits to workplaces, lessons, training and assessment sessions to evaluate the impact of the teaching on how well people learn. When inspectors observe teachers and trainers they make a judgement that contributes to the inspection team's evaluation of the quality of teaching overall. It is worth pointing out that inspectors judge the quality of teaching and not the quality of the teacher. Observations contribute to the judgement on teaching, learning and assessment. This also takes account of how well learners are assessed, and how this helps them to improve.

Q I have heard that providers need to have a certain proportion of lessons or training sessions observed during the inspection as 'outstanding' before the provider can be judged 'outstanding'. Is this correct?

A. This is incorrect. Ofsted has not established a required proportion of lessons or training sessions that need to be judged outstanding. Inspectors do not observe all sessions during the inspection and when they do visit they may only stay for part of the session. Clearly, it would be unusual for an 'outstanding' provider to not have any 'outstanding' lessons or training session observations during an inspection, but it is worth stressing that a wide range of evidence drawn from across the provider is used in conjunction with lesson observations to determine whether the provider is outstanding or not.

Q Will my provider be downgraded if I do not have an up-to-date self-assessment report?

A. There is no contractual requirement for further education and skills providers to complete a self-assessment report. There is an expectation that providers will rigorously assess their own performance. If a provider chooses to upload their self-assessment to the Learning and Skills Gateway then inspectors will look at this before the inspection. It will help inspectors to select an appropriate sample of sector subject areas to give a balanced view of the provision offered. In addition, when we notify a provider of their inspection, the lead inspector will ask for their most recent self-assessment report, in whatever format the provider has chosen to use. Inspectors will want to analyse the impact of the self-assessment process as part of their

evaluation of leadership and management. Inspectors will be critical of providers that do not establish accurate and robust self-assessment processes and/or do not regularly share this information with the governing body, where appropriate.

Q I have heard that the 'outcomes for learners' judgement is based purely on success rates data and a comparison with national averages. Is this true?

A. This is not true. None of the judgements are based on data alone. Although inspectors will look at success rate data they will also look at retention, progress and whether learners go on to further learning or into sustainable employment. Inspectors will also talk to learners about whether they enjoy their course and whether it is meeting their needs.

Q Will the two key grades for 'Outcomes for learners' and 'The quality of teaching, learning and assessment' become the new 'limiting' grades? Surely it will be impossible to be judged outstanding?

A. The revised framework raises expectations. Providers will only be judged outstanding for 'overall effectiveness' if 'the quality of teaching, learning and assessment' is judged to be outstanding. We would expect that this high quality teaching, learning and assessment would result in high success rates and very good and sustained progress for learners. However, if 'outcomes for learners' is not judged to be outstanding this will not necessarily 'limit' the overall effectiveness grade.

Q Why is Ofsted tougher on sixth form colleges than sixth forms in schools?

A. Since January 2012 inspections of schools with sixth forms have not resulted in a separate numerical judgement on the quality of the sixth form. However, inspectors still assess the quality of the sixth form as part of the inspection, and this informs the judgements about the school overall.

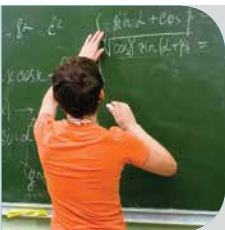
Inspectors use the performance data produced by the relevant government agencies as a source of evidence to inform their judgements. We welcome the recent developments that are intended to create a single performance measure for all 16–18 learners.

What we will do as a result of the consultation

We published the results of the consultation on 30 May 2012. Following careful consideration of the various views expressed during the consultation we have finalised the inspection framework and handbook and these will be published by 15 June 2012.

The handbook explains how the inspection will be conducted and the judgements that will be made by inspectors. It also contains the grade descriptors that are used by inspectors when making their judgements. You will be able to find the handbook after 15 June at www.ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted has begun to prepare the training materials that will be used by all inspectors during the summer so that they are fully aware of the important changes. We have engaged with our inspection services provider and tested systems to make sure they are fit for purpose. This is crucial for the changes we will be implementing from September to ensure that inspections go smoothly.



What does the revised Common Inspection Framework mean for inspections?

Last autumn, prior to the publication of 'A good education for all', we consulted on broader revisions to the Common Inspection Framework. In March 2012, we published the feedback and the changes that would happen as a result. From September 2012 we will:

- make the following judgements in our inspections – overall effectiveness; outcomes for learners; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; the effectiveness of leadership and management
- continue to inspect sector subject areas, and include a grade and text in the report
- continue to inspect but no longer grade separately equality and diversity, capacity to improve and safeguarding.

We have made the link between outstanding providers and outstanding teaching unequivocal in the revised Common Inspection Framework. We do not expect every lesson observed to be outstanding, but we do believe that the cumulative impact of high quality teaching and learning drives up learners' progress and achievement.

For providers previously judged outstanding where teaching was not judged outstanding we will check on the progress made by these providers through our annual risk assessment process. We do not plan to inspect these providers unless concern arises.

Inspectors will no longer judge a provider as 'satisfactory'. Inspectors will make absolutely clear in the inspection report whether a provider is making good progress or not. We have improved our inspection reports to make them clearer. The first page includes straight-forward and jargon-free information about the quality of the provider. Where a provider is not yet good, we will say so, but we will also say whether it is making progress or not and we will explain what it needs to do to improve. If inspectors judge a provider to require improvement, but judge that the leadership has the capacity and drive to deliver improvement, this will be highlighted in the report.

Inner City College - general further education college



Inspection dates		12–16 November 2012	
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement	
	Previous inspection:	Good	
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement	2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- Generally, the proportion of students, including apprentices, who achieve qualifications across the college provision is average and on a small minority of learning programmes and courses the proportion achieving qualifications is low.
- Students and apprentices make only satisfactory progress compared with their starting points.
- Progression to higher level qualifications is satisfactory. Some students are following courses

Sound Tec Ltd - independent learning provider



Inspection dates		21–24 September 2012	
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good	
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	2
Outcomes for learners		Good	3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good	2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good	2
		Good	2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- A high proportion of apprentices complete their apprenticeship in performing arts, media and communication.
- Apprentices develop good personal, social and thinking skills.
- Apprentices make good progress demonstrated by their good understanding and successful application of technical skills.
- Teachers, trainers and assessors have very good specialist expertise in their occupational areas and support apprentices effectively to develop knowledge and skills to match demanding industry standards.
- The company is led and managed effectively. Sound Tec provides apprentices with learning experience especially in the workplace and helps them to complete their qualification.

This is not yet an

Currently, providers judged as 'satisfactory' are usually inspected again after four years. The majority of these colleges or providers receive a monitoring inspection after approximately two years. Following the consultation 'A good education for all', we will fully re-inspect all providers judged as 'requires improvement' from September 2012 within 12 to 18 months of their last inspection.

The handbook provides guidance to explain when different providers' next inspection is likely to be. It can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk. However, the timing of an inspection is also based on the latest information we have about how providers are performing and an assessment of the risk so may vary considerably.

In the future, Ofsted will no longer give up to three weeks' notification of inspection but will normally contact the provider between 8.30am and 10.30am two working days before the inspection. Inspectors will be required to prepare for the inspection before making contact with the provider in advance. They will gather information by reading the previous inspection report, analysing the latest available data, scrutinising the results of our new online questionnaires, and will consider any other evidence made available to Ofsted, including the self-assessment report.

The initial contact will be made by the inspection services provider shortly followed by a telephone call from the lead inspector. An email will confirm the arrangements. This approach will reduce the stress that can occur in the lead up to inspection.

In addition, providers will no longer be required to administer the learner email questionnaires.

We are developing three online questionnaires to gather the views of learners, parents and carers, and employers. The questionnaire for learners will be called 'Learner View'. Respondents will be able to complete these short questionnaires at any time during the year. We will be writing to providers in September to ask them to send a letter to learners, parents and carers, and employers to give them a link to the relevant questionnaire. When we notify a provider of their inspection we will also ask them to tell learners, parents and carers, and employers about the inspection, and remind them about the questionnaire, giving them a further opportunity to complete it by the end of the second day of the inspection.

An indicative inspection timetable

Up to two days before the inspection begins	Approximate time
Initial contact by inspection services provider followed by the lead inspector by telephone to the provider	Normally between 8.30am and 10.30am two days before the inspection is due to begin
Day one	
Inspection team arrives at the provider	Agreed time on the morning of the first day
Inspection team begin observing activities, talking to learners and employers	As normally happens at the provider
Initial discussion between lead inspector, Principal or Chief Executive and nominee	During the first day
First full inspection team meeting including the nominee	4.30pm on the first day of the inspection
Day two to four, as appropriate	
Meeting between lead inspector and Principal or Chief Executive and nominee	8.30am
Inspection team begin evidence gathering	8.30am – 5pm
Inspection team meeting including nominee	5pm
Final day	
Inspection team meeting including nominee	Usually 10am
Feedback to senior staff including chair of governors or appropriate body	1pm
Inspection team depart	4pm onwards

The revised framework places greater importance on the role of governors, where appropriate, in supporting and holding the provider to account. Inspectors will expect to see evidence from the provider that the process of performance management is robust, and that salary progression

and promotion are strongly related to performance. Inspectors will discuss these arrangements with the Principal or Chief Executive. We believe this approach will support providers in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

What does the revised framework mean for providers?

The changes we are introducing will establish clearer expectations for providers. We believe that the new arrangements will eventually enable every provider to become a 'good' provider. This will significantly raise the bar for some providers and will result in improved performance from leaders, managers and staff.

There are some significant advantages for providers in the changes we are introducing. By reducing the notification period for providers there should be significantly less stress for staff in the lead up to inspection and less time devoted to preparing for the inspection. It will mean that inspectors see the provider as it really is.

We intend to continue with the aspects of the inspection process you have told us you value. The full involvement of the nominee (a senior member of the management team), during the inspection, the feedback offered to staff following an observation of a learning session and the regular discussions with the lead inspector will continue. In addition, we will continue to expect providers to have evidence of their self-assessment process because we know this is a strong indicator of an improving provider.

Providers should consider where the inspection team will meet together in the providers' premises. We realise that space

may be at a premium and inspectors will be as flexible as possible over this.

The most important change that providers will see when they are inspected is the shorter notification period. Inspectors will prepare for the inspection by looking at the provider website for a calendar of major events, the times of the provider day, basic information on how the provider is organised, the names and responsibilities of staff and information provided for parents. Keeping this information up to date on providers' websites will assist the inspection team and will ensure that the inspection runs as smoothly as possible.

When inspectors arrive at the provider they will ask for information or evidence relating to matters that are fundamental to the work of any provider, if it is available. Material should be provided in the form in which it is held in the provider, whether paper-based or on the management information system.

Organisation information to be provided as soon as the inspection team arrives:

- information about the provider day, timetable and work-based activity
- information about the organisation of the provider, with staff names and responsibilities
- details of any changes to normal routines.

Operational information to be provided by lunchtime of the first day of the inspection:

- evidence of internal monitoring and evaluation processes and how the findings are used
- evidence of improvement planning and subsequent progress
- findings and use made of performance management processes
- evidence of the work of governors and their impact, where applicable.

Inspectors will also need:

- access to the single central register, which summarises the checks and vetting of all staff working with learners, where appropriate
- access to the logs that record complaints, incidents of poor behaviour, racist incidents and incidents of bullying.

What does this mean for learners?

We have given the views of learners significant prominence in our evaluation of the consultation findings. We believe this is the right approach because they are the key users of the provision.

Learners' perceptions are crucial in coming to a view about the effectiveness of a provider. Ofsted is establishing 'Learner View' to allow learners to share their views at any time, including at the point of inspection. Inspectors will analyse the results when they prepare for the inspection. After the provider has notified learners of the inspection inspectors will further review the responses shown on Learner View. They will also talk to learners during the inspection. In addition to the results of the Learner View survey, inspectors will take into account the results of any surveys carried out by the provider or commissioned by the provider.

We have amended the inspection report to include a new short section on the front page called a 'Summary of key findings for learners'. The full report will be published on Ofsted's website approximately 25 working days after the inspection has finished.

The inspection report will explain in straightforward language what the provider is doing well and what it needs to improve.



What will change in the way inspectors judge providers?

Inspectors will continue to judge the quality of education provided by the provider – its overall effectiveness – taking account of three other key judgements:

- outcomes for learners
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- the effectiveness of leadership and management.

In reporting, inspectors will also consider:

- how well the provider safeguards learners
- the extent to which the education provided by the provider meets the needs of the range of learners at the provider and their local and/or national community.

Inspectors will continue to place great importance on the rates of progress of groups and individual learners when

evaluating their achievement. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment will remain a major factor in driving forward improvements in learners' achievements and will contribute strongly to the judgement on leadership and management. Inspectors will continue to devote a significant proportion of their time to observing learning, and listening to learners.

From September 2012 inspectors will:

- expect providers to be 'good'
- no longer use the term 'satisfactory'
- use the term 'requires improvement'
- expect outstanding providers to have outstanding teaching
- evaluate fully the arrangements for performance management
- place greater importance on the role of the governing body.

Further questions

If you have any questions about the guidance in this leaflet please contact lands@ofsted.gov.uk



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