

School Inspection Update

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Message to inspectors from the National Director, Schools

We are nearly at the end of 2014/15, so this is the final update for inspectors for this academic year. As you will know, we have been consulting on and developing the new *School inspection handbook*¹ for use under the equally new *Common inspection framework*². The framework and handbook have just been published to give inspectors and schools time to digest in readiness for September. However, the issues raised in this update are relevant under the current framework and the new one.

In previous updates this year, I have highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of inspection reporting identified through the half-termly reviews carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors across the country. Overall, the quality of reporting and evidence has improved over the year, which is encouraging. However, I want to focus on two specific areas of concern that have come to light from the recent reviews, namely the recommendations for improvement made by inspectors and the reporting on the use of the Primary PE and Sport Funding.

You will know that I explained Ofsted's position on marking and feedback in the [Ofsted inspections - clarification for schools](#) document, which was updated in March. Can I please re-emphasise how important it is that you pay careful attention to the way you write recommendations to ensure that these do not drive unnecessary workload for teachers.

Although a focus for the latest review only, reporting on schools' use of the Primary PE and Sport Funding was not strong enough compared with other areas. Typical weaknesses in reporting included: lack of a clear indication of impact; the writing too often being short and formulaic; and sometimes reference was made to PE but not sport, and vice versa. Ofsted is committed to encouraging schools to provide a high-quality, broad and balanced curriculum, and this extra government funding seeks to

¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015

² www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015.



support the provision of PE and sport to enable wider curricula opportunities for children. It is, therefore, important that inspectors report diligently on this important area of the curriculum and how the funding is being used to improve provision.

We are now in the middle of our launch events for the *Common inspection framework*, with a focus on how we will inspect good schools through short inspections. Hopefully, I will see some of you at the events.

I hope you have a good break this summer and I am really looking forward to our new ways of working in the autumn.

Best wishes



Sean Harford HMI
National Director, Schools

Academy and multi-academy trust schemes of delegation

Increasingly, inspectors encounter a wide variety of governance arrangements when inspecting academies. As set out in the *School inspection handbook*, it is critical that inspectors aim to establish the precise arrangements at the point of the initial telephone call.

There is now a clear expectation that multi-academy trusts will have published schemes of delegation on their website. Where this is the case, inspectors should aim to review these as part of their pre-inspection preparation and clarify any issues when they contact the trust. Where a scheme of delegation is not available, inspectors should ask the headteacher/principal (or equivalent) to provide relevant information about the governance and accountability arrangements in the trust.

Further resources:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-in-multi-academy-trusts

www.gov.uk/government/publications/governors-handbook--3

Single central record checks of a multi-academy trust's staff

The 'academy family' of schools includes: academy converters; sponsored academies; university technical colleges (UTCs); free schools; studio schools; special

academies; alternative provision academies; and 16–19 academies. UTCs and studio schools also belong to the ‘free schools’ sub-group.

Generally, the requirements in relation to the single central record are the same as for maintained schools. They are set out in part 4 of [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#). Two points of note:

- The checks in relation to the suitability of a proprietor and of the Chair of the Governing Body are carried out by the Secretary of State, not by the school.
- Where the academy is part of a multi-academy trust (MAT), and where a member of the local governing body is also a member of the overarching trust, details of their criminal record checks may not be held at the proposed school but in the MAT office. In such cases, inspectors may wish to seek confirmation from the MAT that relevant checks have been duly carried out in accordance with the regulations. This relates to the standards in 21(6) – 21(7)(b).

Attendance register

Inspectors should note that some schools may have recently had some Year 11 students on study leave. The Department for Education’s (DfE’s) guidance³ states:

‘Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.’

Implications for inspectors

Study leave should be coded as Code S and not Code B in attendance registers. If study leave has been used, inspectors should find out if it was used in accordance with the DfE guidance and coded correctly, and that there is provision for students to come into school.

Inspector qualifications

In terms of Ofsted policy on schools inspectors having Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), it is acceptable for Further education and skills (FES) HMI who do not have QTS to act as team members on UTC and Studio School inspections as they are looking at the FES aspects of the provision only.

³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance

External reviews of pupil premium and/or governance

Where inspectors have recommended an external review of pupil premium and/or governance, they must record and code this information on a separate evidence form. Inspection service providers should ensure that evidence forms (EFs) are completed for this purpose and that the relevant data are included.

Codes for recommendation of an external review of governance and/or pupil premium
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<p>EF code O (other)</p> <p>subject code ER</p> <p>special focus code: 1 governance only, 2 governance and pupil premium, 3 pupil premium only</p>
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School Direct

As part of the introductory discussion with the headteacher in preparing for a section 5 inspection, the lead inspector requests that a copy of the current staff list is made available at the start of the inspection. When requesting this, the lead inspector should clarify if this includes:

- any newly qualified teachers
- any trainees on placement, including those on School Direct or School Direct (salaried) training routes.

Inspectors should aim to meet with any trainees to see how they are being supported in their development. As set out in the Teachers' Standards, assessment of trainees should be undertaken in a way that is consistent with what could reasonably be expected of a trainee teacher prior to the award of qualified teacher status. Trainees' performance should not be taken into account in making a judgement on the overall quality of teaching.

Prevent duty

On 1 July 2015, a new duty will be placed on schools and other providers of education and care, to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The duty relates to provisions in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

The Home Office has published guidance on what this means for schools and other providers: www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance.

The guidance states that schools should be safe spaces in which children and young people can understand and discuss sensitive topics, including terrorism and the extremist ideas that are part of terrorist ideology, and learn how to challenge these ideas. Planned changes to school inspection from September 2015 will take account

of the guidance. Inspectors should be mindful of the fact that in the coming year schools will be familiarising themselves with the expectations set out in the guidance, as well as planning and preparing for how they take account of the guidance in their policies and procedures for keeping children safe. Schools may also be planning training for staff, including 'Prevent' awareness training, but will be reliant on the capacity of accredited training providers in the local area in arranging this. Arrangements in existing 'Prevent' priority areas are likely to be further advanced than in other areas.

Changes to the registration arrangements for early years provision in schools

On 26 May 2015, the provisions in the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act came into force. The Act removes the need for schools to register early years provision for two-year-olds and above separately with Ofsted, where that provision is run by the school and directly managed by the governing body. This means that from 26 May, schools that already directly provide childcare for children aged two and over no longer need to register separately with Ofsted, but must register at least one child attending the early years provision on the school roll. Under these new arrangements, the school's early years provision will be inspected as part of the routine section 5 school inspection whenever this is due.

Ofsted has written to those schools that currently have separately registered provision, but who may no longer require separate registration under the new arrangements. The affected schools have been asked to confirm their current arrangements to Ofsted before the decision to remove their registration is made.

Changes to the process for monitoring inspections

From September 2015, schools that are judged to be inadequate or require improvement will receive their first monitoring inspection between three and six months following the section 5 inspection. The rationale behind the change is the need for inspectors to be in a position to assess more clearly the overall progress made by the school at that first visit and whether effective action is being taken to get the school to good.

In the case of inadequate schools, the judgements on the fitness for purpose of the local authority/proprietor/sponsor statement of action and of the school improvement plans will be made prior to the first visit by the lead HMI allocated to monitor the school. These judgements will be communicated to the school promptly, so that any necessary corrective actions can be taken, but will also be reported in the first monitoring inspection letter.

Further detail on these changes will be included in the revised section 8 guidance, currently being finalised for September. The changes should be implemented with immediate effect.

Changes to the timing of requires improvement re-inspections from September 2015

From September 2015, schools that require improvement will be re-inspected at any time up to the end of the term in which the 24th month falls since the previous inspection (when the school was judged to require improvement).

The rationale behind this change is to allow more flexibility and to line up these re-inspections with the approach to our other inspection windows.

Further detail on these changes will be included in the revised section 8 guidance, currently being developed.

Parent View – introduction of free text comment box

From September 2015, we are introducing a 'free-text' comment facility, which will allow parents to add comments to the Parent View online survey. This facility will only be available at the 'point of inspection' and will be accessible from notification of inspection until noon on day two of the inspection. The free text field allows up to 1000 characters (including spaces) to be added.

The new free text question 'Do you have any additional comments on any of your answers?' has a 'rider' which explains that the 'free-text' field is **not** to be used for urgent issues, safeguarding concerns or complaints. It also explains that users' comments are confidential and that users will not be contacted about their comments as information is anonymised. Should a parent/carer wish to speak with the lead inspector, they should contact the inspection administrators, as detailed in the letter to parents.

These comments will only be viewable by Ofsted personnel involved in the inspection. Members of the public looking at a school's Parent View results will not be able to see the comments.

Implications for inspectors

Inspectors will be able to view the results as they do currently but, from September 2015, they will also be able to view comments provided by parents and consider these as part of the inspection evidence.

Future of education inspection update

On 15 June 2015, Ofsted launched far-reaching changes to the way it inspects maintained schools and academies, further education and skills and registered early years providers. These changes will come in to effect from September 2015 and include:

- the introduction of a **common inspection framework** for all early years settings on the Early Years Register, maintained schools and academies,

non-association independent schools and further education and skills providers

- **short inspections** for maintained schools, academies and further education and skills providers that were judged good at their last full inspection. These short inspections will be conducted approximately every three years
- significant changes to **Ofsted's inspection workforce**. From September 2015, Ofsted will contract directly with inspectors for maintained schools, academies, non-association independent schools and further education and skills inspections

Information outlining the key changes, including materials from Ofsted's national launch conferences, is available at this link: www.gov.uk/changes-to-education-inspection-from-september-2015.