

Annual parents survey 2015

Parents' awareness and
perceptions of Ofsted

19 November 2015

Background and method



- This summary report presents the findings from an online survey conducted by YouGov on behalf of Ofsted on parent's awareness and perceptions of Ofsted
- The objective of this study was to provide Ofsted with robust and timely evidence from parents
- An online survey was developed in conjunction with Ofsted and was carried out amongst parents between 21st and 28th October 2015
- The total number of respondents was 1,067 parents
- The figures have been weighted and are representative of all parents in England by family type, age of family reference person, social grade and region

Key findings



Awareness and perceptions of Ofsted

- A majority of parents (61%) know ‘a lot’ or ‘a fair amount’ about Ofsted; 35% know ‘a little’ and 4% know nothing
 - *Among parents who say they know ‘little’ or ‘nothing’ about Ofsted, this is more prevalent with parents from a lower social grade (C2DE) and aged 18-34*
- Parents are aware that Ofsted inspects schools but there is lower awareness that Ofsted is responsible for inspecting services for vulnerable children
 - *This is more prevalent in fathers and parents whose child attends a private school*
- Nearly three quarters of parents state that Ofsted provides reliable information
- A majority of parents agree that Ofsted is a valuable source of information for education and childcare in the local area
 - *One in ten parents disagree that Ofsted is a valuable source of information for education and childcare*
- A majority of parents agree that Ofsted provides a reliable measure of a school’s quality and helps to improve standards of education

Ofsted ratings and inspection reports

- A majority of parents know the rating of their child's school
 - *One in ten do not know – parents from a lower social grade (C2DE), parents whose child attends a secondary school and parents whose income is less than £15k are more likely to not know*
- Parents tend to find out their child's school rating via the school or the school's website
 - *Ofsted is predominantly used as a secondary source of information rather than the main source*
- Half of parents have read an Ofsted report in the last year. A majority of parents use the reports to inform them about standards of education/childcare that their child already attends
 - *18% of parents have never read an Ofsted report, more likely to be parents from a lower social grade (C2DE)*
- Amongst parents who have read an Ofsted report, eight out of 10 found it useful
 - *Parents who read the report to find out information about the standards of education where their child currently attends found it less useful than those who read the report to help choose a school*
- A fifth of parents (22%) think an Ofsted report that is one year old is out of date and a further two-fifths (39%) that a report that is two years old is out of date

School inspections

- A majority of parents believe that Ofsted should inspect the school every one or two years, as it will ensure that the assessments are up to date and the information provided is current
 - *A higher proportion of parents from lower income levels believe the inspection should take place yearly compared to parents from higher income levels*
- Half of parents believe that Ofsted should inspect more regularly than 3 years, while a third argue that every 3 years is enough

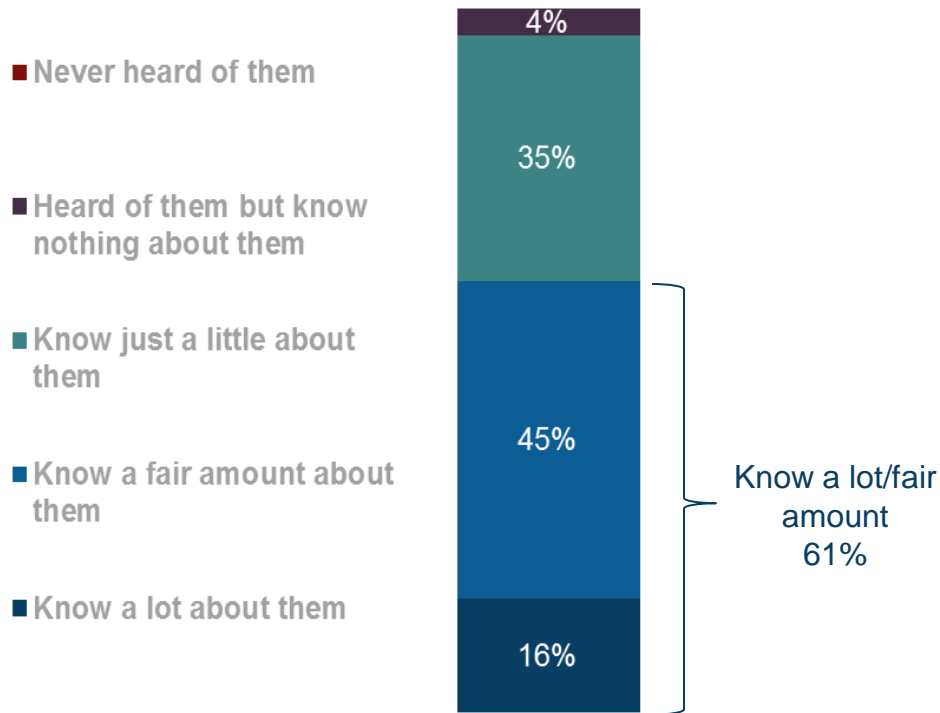
Parent View

- A majority of parents would answer the Parent View online questionnaire, as they believe it will help the school, Ofsted and other parents

Awareness and perceptions of Ofsted



Three in five parents know a lot or a fair amount about Ofsted



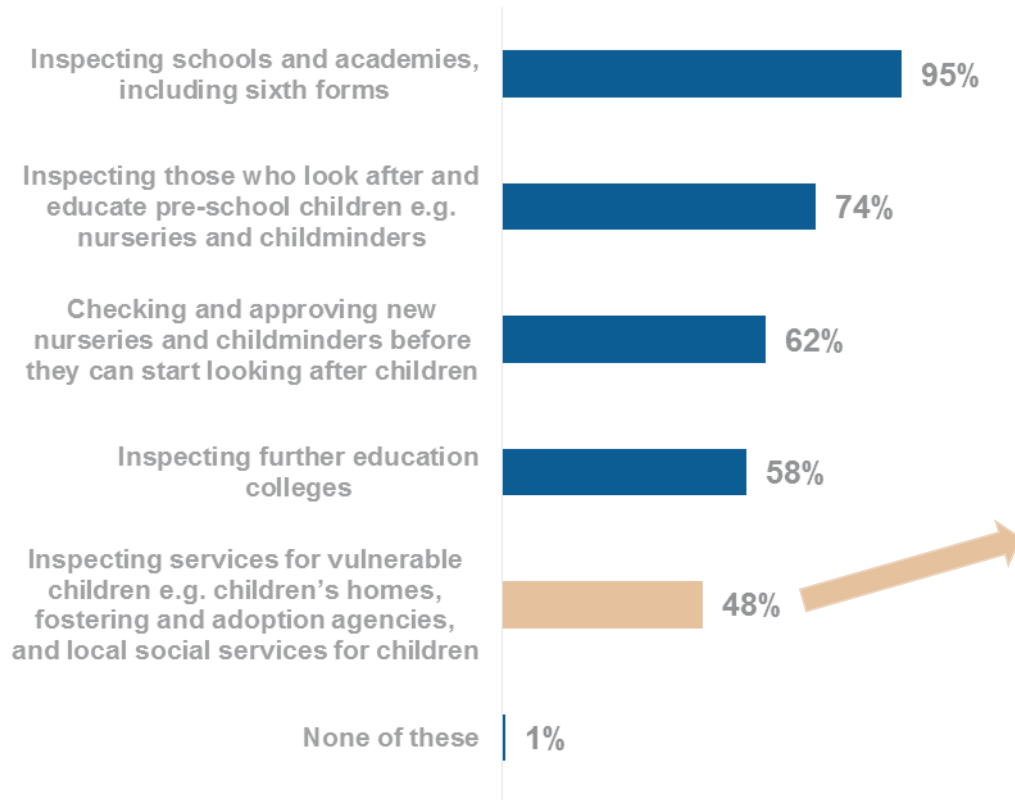
Just four per cent of parents know nothing about Ofsted:

- This is more prevalent in parents from a lower social grade (C2DE) than parents from a higher social grade (ABC1) – with 6% reporting this compared with 2%
- Parents who have a degree or higher qualification are less likely to say that they know nothing about Ofsted than parents who hold qualifications lower than degree level (4% vs 2%)

Two in five parents know 'a little' or 'nothing' about Ofsted:

- Nearly half (48%) of parents aged 18-34 years fall into this category compared with a lower proportion of older parents aged 35-54 years (37%)
- Fathers are more likely than mothers to state that they know a little or nothing about Ofsted (42% vs 36%)

The vast majority of parents know Ofsted is responsible for inspecting schools, with much lower levels of awareness of Ofsted's remit to inspect services for vulnerable children



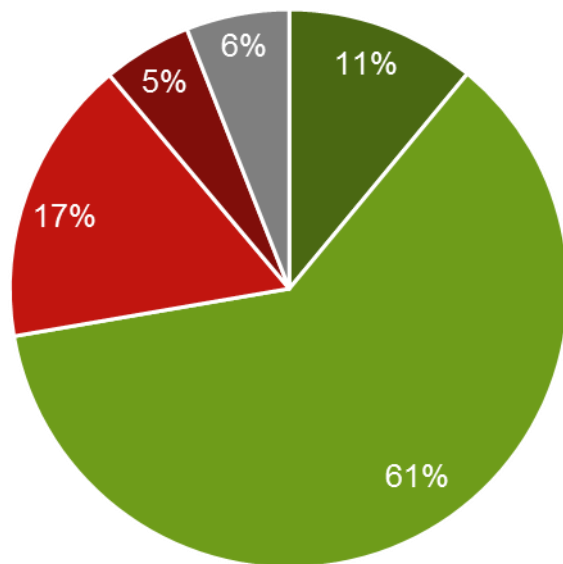
Only half of parents are aware that Ofsted inspect services for vulnerable children

- Lone parent families are more likely to be aware that Ofsted inspect services for vulnerable children than couple families (55% vs 45%)
- Half of mothers (51%) are aware compared to only two in five fathers (43%)
- Only one in four parents (28%) whose child attends a private school are aware that Ofsted is responsible for inspections of services for vulnerable children compared with half of parents whose child attends a state school (49%)

Seven out of 10 parents think Ofsted provides reliable information

Net: Reliable – 72%

Net: Unreliable – 22%



Very reliable

Fairly reliable

Not very reliable

Not at all reliable

Don't know

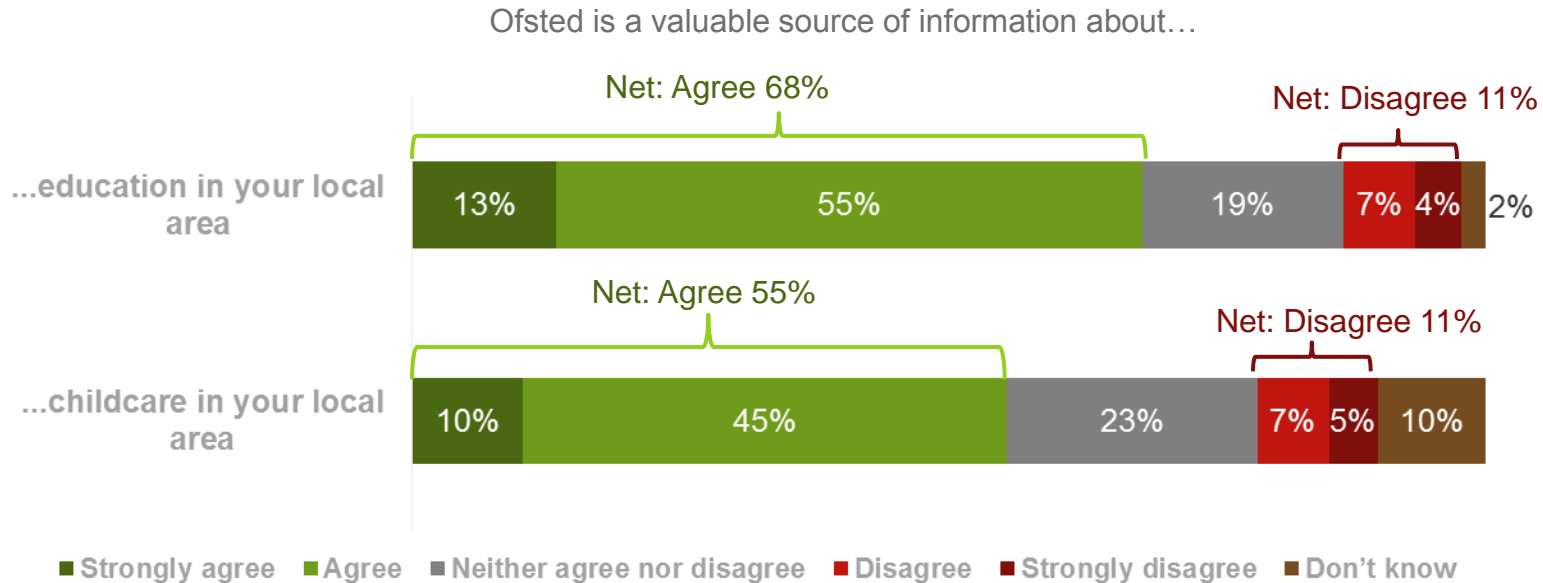
One in five parents do not find the information that Ofsted provides reliable

- Parents of a child who attends a secondary school are more likely than those parents with a child in a primary school to rate the information Ofsted provided as unreliable (25% vs 19%)
- A third (32%) of parents whose child attends a private school find the information unreliable compared to a fifth of parents whose child attends a maintained school (20%)

YouGov

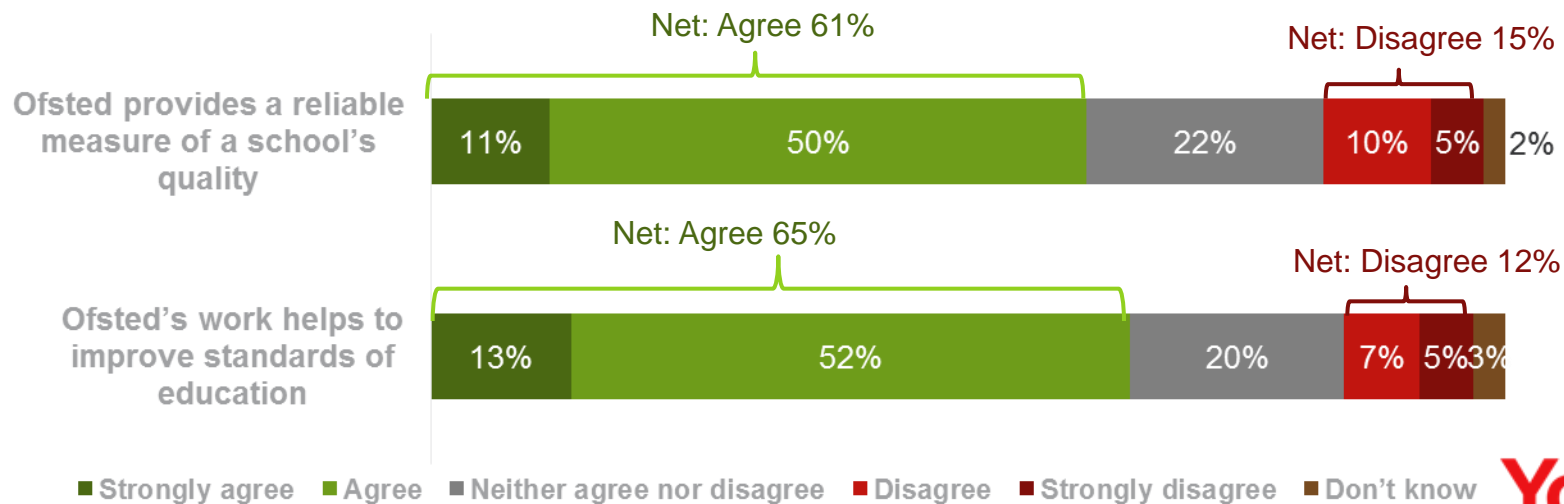
A higher proportion of parents agree that Ofsted is a valuable source of information for education than agree for childcare – although a majority of parents agree with both

- Older parents aged 35 – 54 years (10%) and 55 years+ (22%) are more likely to be unsure if Ofsted is a ‘valuable source of information on childcare’ than younger parents aged 18 – 34 years (4%)
- Parents whose child attends a private school are more likely to say ‘neither’ in ‘Ofsted providing valuable information on education’ than parents whose child attends a state school (30% vs 18%)



Similar proportions of parents agree that Ofsted provides a reliable measure of a school's quality and that Ofsted's work helps to improve standards of education

- Parents whose child attends a secondary school are more likely to disagree that Ofsted provides a reliable measure of school quality than parents whose child attends a primary school (18% vs 13%)
- Similarly, parents whose child attends a private school (24%) are more likely to disagree that Ofsted provides a reliable measure of school quality than parents whose child attends a maintained school (13%)
- Regionally, parents living in the South West of England (21%) have the highest proportion disagreeing that Ofsted provides a reliable measure for school quality, significantly higher than London (11%)
- Parents from a higher social grade (ABC1 - 15%) are more likely to disagree that Ofsted helps to improve standards of education than parents from a lower social grade (C2DE - 9%)
- Almost double the proportion of parents who have a degree or higher educational qualification (15%) disagree that Ofsted improves standards compared with parents who have an educational qualification lower than a degree (8%)

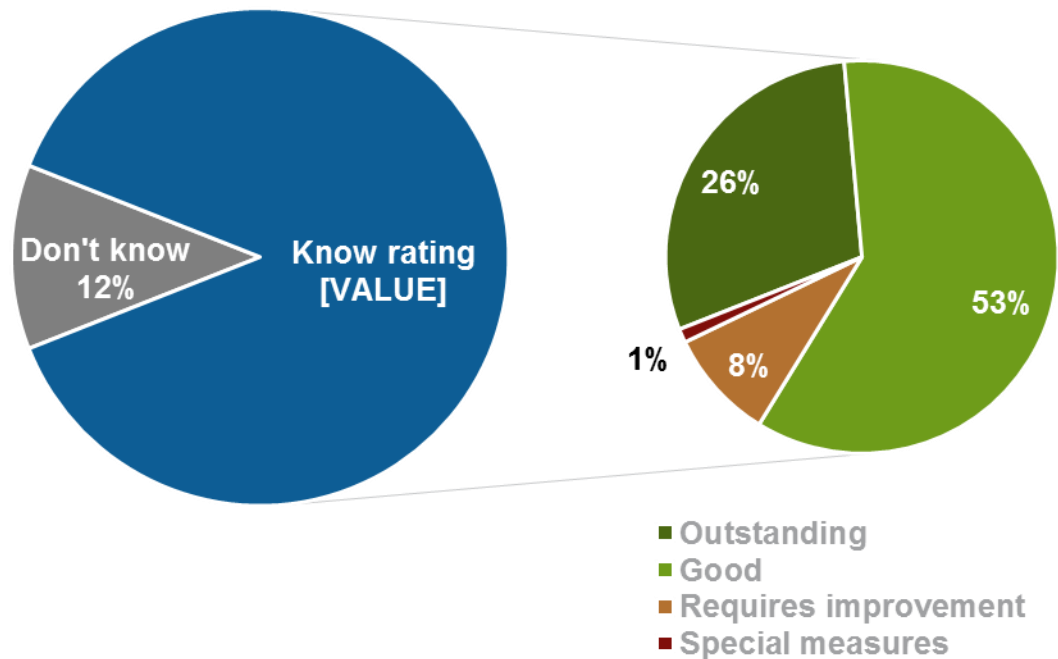


YouGov

Ofsted ratings and inspection reports



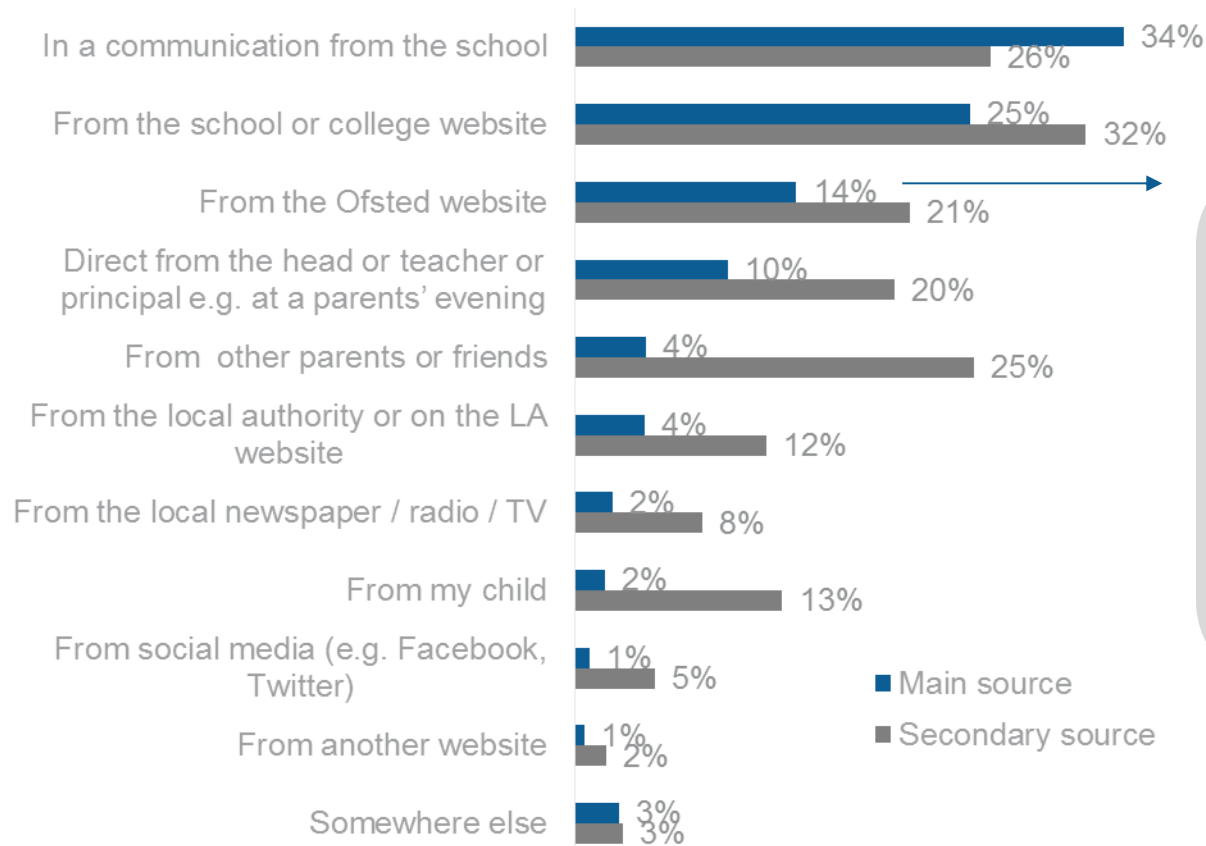
Nearly nine in 10 parents know the rating their school received in the last Ofsted inspection



One in ten parents (12%) do not know the Ofsted rating of their child's school

- Almost double the proportion of parents from a lower social grade do not know the school rating compared to parents from a higher social grade (ABC1 - 17% vs C2DE - 9%)
- Parents whose child attends a secondary school are less likely to know the rating than parents whose child attends a primary school (15% vs 10%)

A higher proportion of parents use Ofsted as a secondary source rather than a main source of information

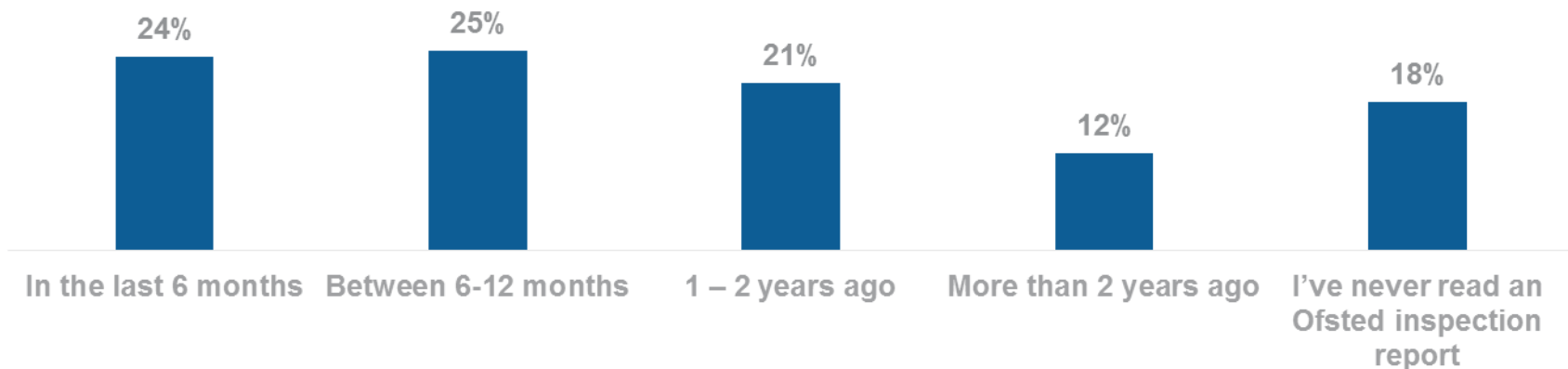


- Over double the proportion of parents whose child attends a primary school (18%) used the Ofsted website compared to parents whose child attends a secondary school (8%)
- Regionally, parents living in London (19%) or the South East (20%) are more likely to use the Ofsted website than parents living in the North West (9%) and East Midlands (5%)

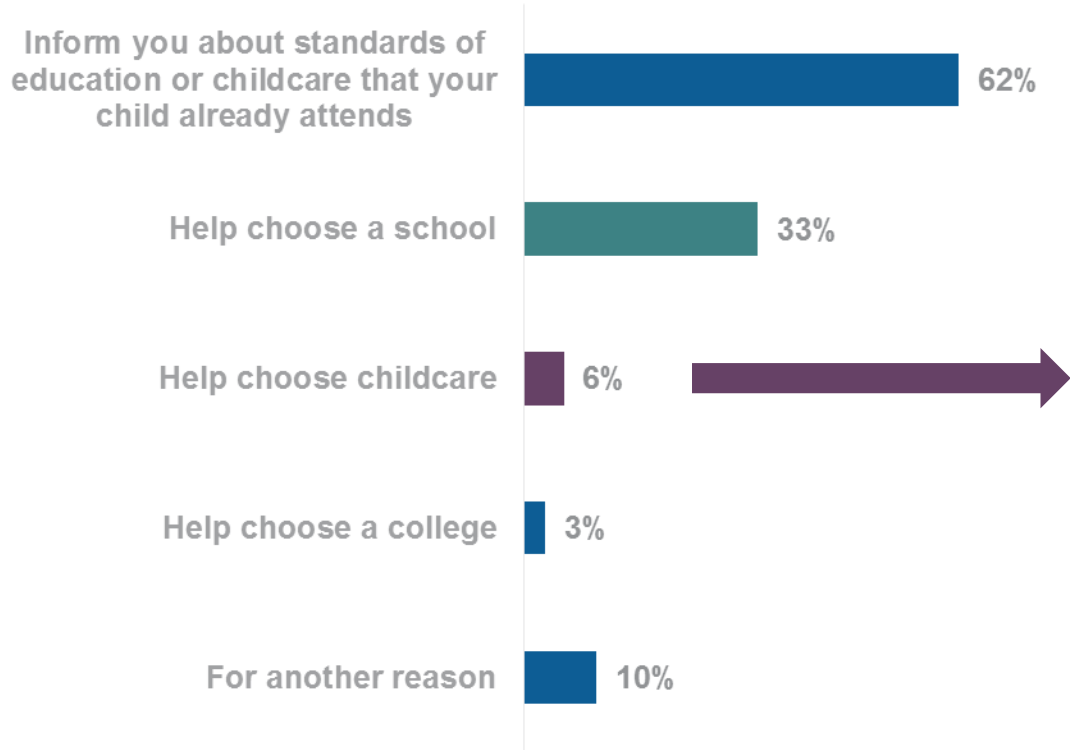
Half of parents have read an Ofsted report in the last year

One in five parents have never read an Ofsted report:

- This is more prominent in parents from a lower social grade (C2DE) with one in four (25%) not reading an Ofsted report compared to one in 10 parents from a higher social grade (ABC1 - 13%)
- Fathers are less likely to have read an Ofsted report than mothers (25% vs 13%)
- Regionally, parents from the South West (28%) are less likely to read an Ofsted report than parents living in London, East of England and South East (16% each)
- Parents whose child attends a secondary school are less likely to have read an Ofsted report than parents whose child attends a primary school (23% vs 15%)



A majority of parents used an Ofsted report to inform them about the school their child already attends

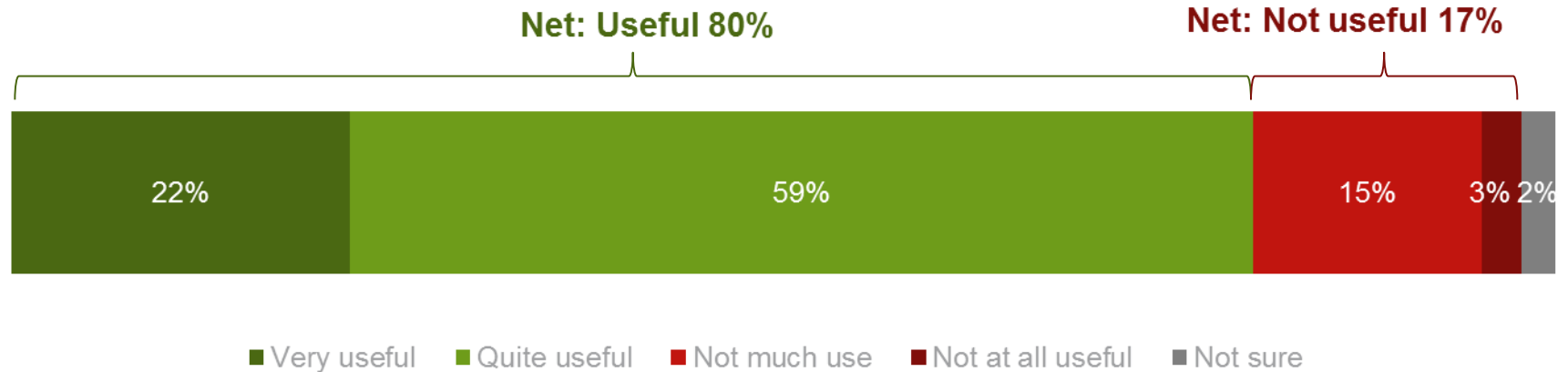


Parents living in London (11%) are nearly three times more likely to use the Ofsted report to help choose childcare than parents in the North West and South East regions (4% each)

Amongst parents who have read an Ofsted report, eight out of ten found it useful

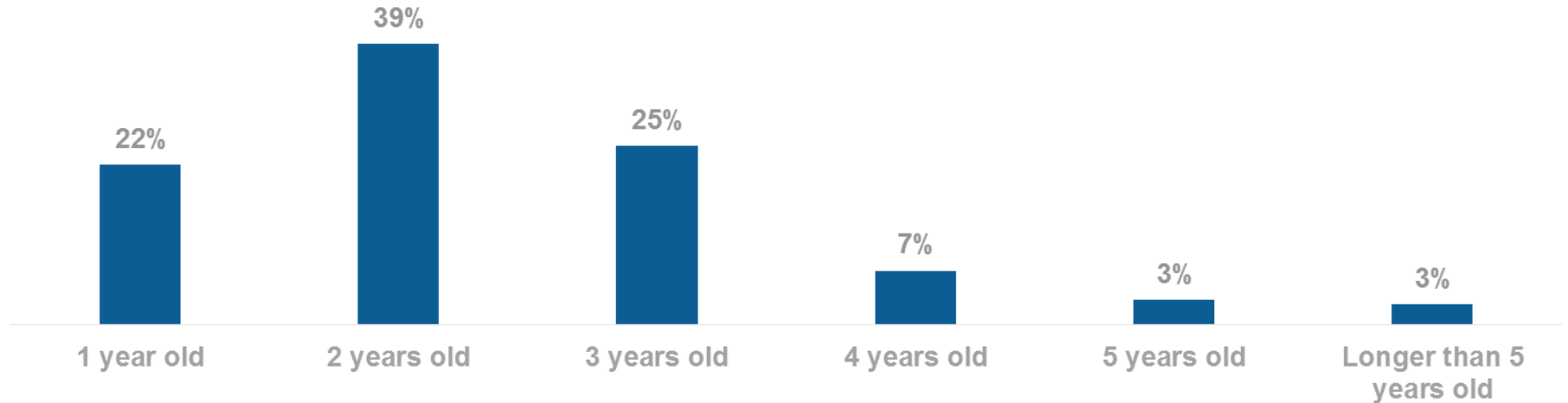
Nearly one in five parents did not find the Ofsted report useful

- A majority of parents who read an Ofsted report to help choose a school found the report useful (90%) compared with three quarters (77%) of parents who read the report to inform them about the standards of education their child currently attends
- Over a third of parents who used the report to help choose a college (36%) found the report 'not useful' compared with 9% of parents who used it to help find a school
- Fathers are more likely to find the Ofsted report they read not useful than mothers (21% vs 15%)



A fifth of parents (22%) think a report that is one year old is out of date and a further two-fifths (39%) that a report that is two years old is out of date

- Parents from a lower social grade (C2DE) are more likely to think that Ofsted reports one year old are out of date compared with parents from a higher social grade (ABC1 - 27% vs 18%)
- Parents whose educational level is below a degree are more likely to state that Ofsted reports are out of date within a year (27%) and within two years (41%) than parents who have a degree or higher qualifications (16% and 38% respectively)

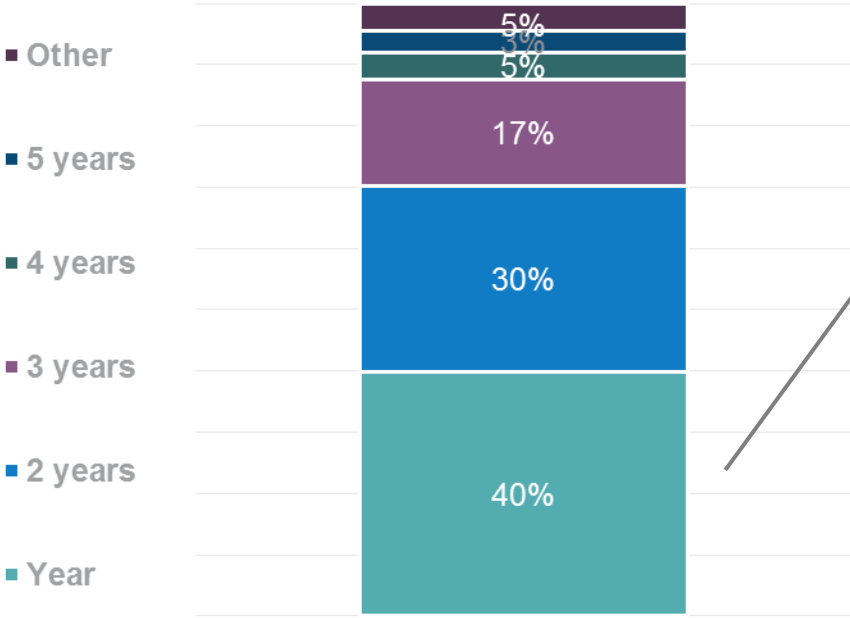


School inspections

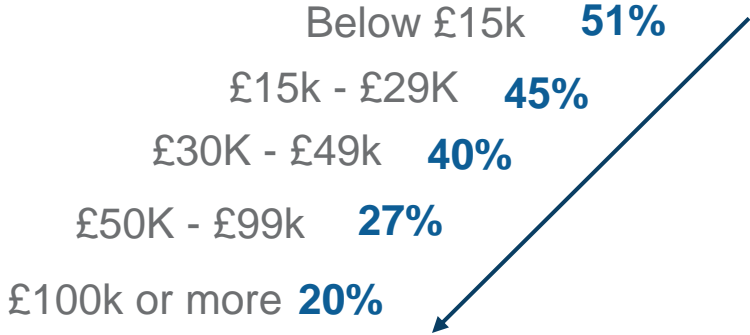


Seven in ten parents believe that Ofsted should inspect schools every one or two years

- Parents whose child attends a maintained school (73%) believe that Ofsted should inspect up to every two years, higher than the proportion of parents whose child attends a private school (58%) who report this
- Lone parents are more likely to suggest Ofsted should inspect every two years (76%) or every year (48%), compared with parents in a couple family (every 2 years- 68%, every year 37%)



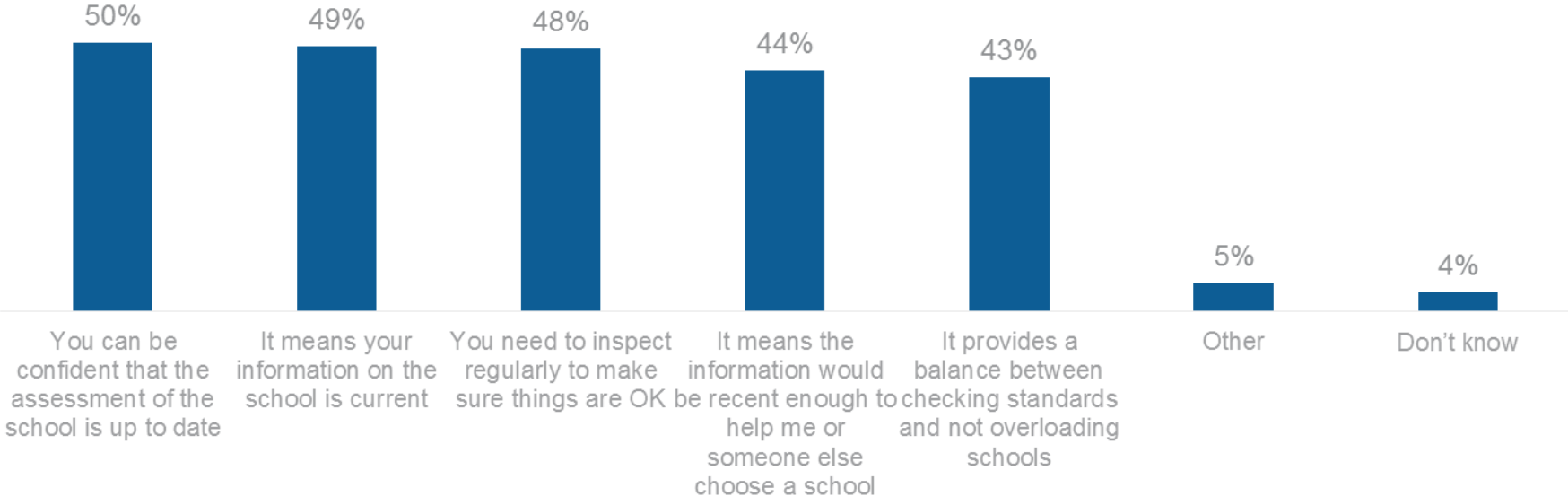
Parents from lower income families suggest that Ofsted should inspect every year in comparison to families from higher incomes



Q14. How often do you think should Ofsted inspect schools? Please think of schools in general, regardless of their current inspection grade. Once every..... (Base all 1067)

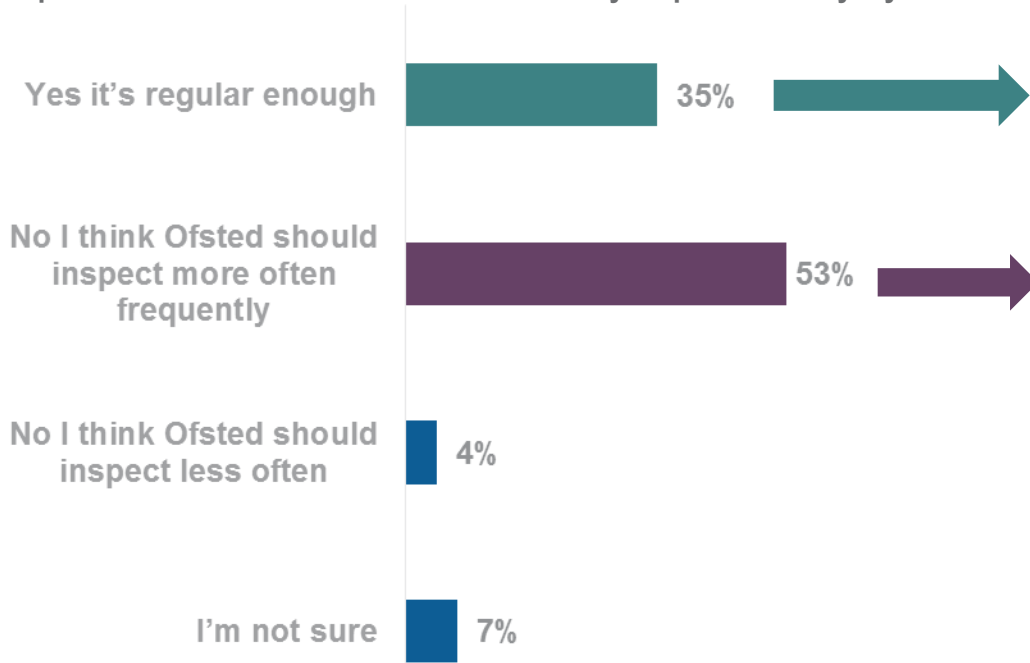
Up to date assessments and having current information are the main reasons parents believe schools should be assessed regularly

- Mothers are more likely than fathers to state that regular inspections provide them with confidence that schools' assessments are up to date (54% vs 43%)
- Nearly half of parents whose child attends a maintained school (47%) believe regular inspection would help them make an informed decision on school choice, compared with two fifths of parents whose child attends a free school or academy (39%)



Half of parents believe Ofsted should inspect more regularly than every three years while a third believe this inspection frequency is enough

Ofsted is inspecting some schools differently from September 2015. Under the new system, 'good' schools now have a shorter but more frequent inspection. 'Good' schools now have a one day inspection every 3 years.



Four in ten parents from a higher social grade (ABC1 - 40%) believe that Ofsted's frequency of inspection is an adequate amount compared with three in ten parents from a lower social grade (C2DE - 30%)

Mothers are more likely to state that Ofsted should inspect more frequently than fathers (57% vs 48%)

Regionally, three in five parents in London (58%) and West Midlands (60%) believe that Ofsted should inspect more frequently compared to two in five parents living in East of England (45%)



Parent View



The majority of parents would answer the Parent View questions online to provide useful information and to help other parents

- A majority of parents who live in the North West (68%) would use the online service to provide useful information to Ofsted while only 55% of parents living in the North East and Yorkshire & Humber would (55%)
- Two thirds of mothers (66%) would use the online service to help other parents decide on the best school while only half of fathers would (53%)

