

Statistical work plan

April 2018 – March 2019

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Foreword

Previous statistical work plans have shown significant developments around the quantitative analysis carried out in Ofsted. These developments include:

- making substantial changes to our administrative and statistical systems
- improving investigation and analytical skills
- improving communication and dissemination so that our work achieves greater impact.

These improvements are significant, but there is still much we can do to enhance our methods and improve interpretation and insight. This is so that we better support and inform inspectors, policy and the public through clear and meaningful interpretation and presentation of the data.

In 2018–19, we will focus on some specific areas. These include:

- further improving the information for inspectors in pre-inspection material and briefings
- using data science tools and techniques to help inspectors present and interpret data consistently
- improving how we use and present data to the public, such as through blogs, targeted in areas where we find new insight
- drawing together data from a broader range of sources and collaborating on quantitative research analysis with other organisations.

We will continue developing data and analysis systems as we migrate data about early years providers onto a new system and develop new reports. Alongside these changes, we will ensure that our data and publications remain high quality and fit for purpose. We will continue to publish official statistics and management information. Although we will primarily draw on our own administrative data, we will also continue to make extensive use of data available through the Department for Education (DfE) and other external sources.

This is the fifth annual publication of our work programme. It highlights some of our recent developments and outlines some of our future plans. Much of our analysis work is driven by demand, so we are unable to account for this in advance. However, we publish a schedule for the release of our official statistics.¹

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¹ www.gov.uk/government/statistics?departments%5B%5D=ofsted.

About us

The Head of Profession for Statistics leads the Data and Insight team within Ofsted, working directly with the Director of Digital and Information. On professional statistical matters, the Head of Profession for Statistics is accountable to the National Statistician. The Data and Insight team uses data, statistics and quantitative research to provide an evidence base that informs Ofsted's work.

The team:

- maintains and develops the databases and other technology needed to produce statistical publications
- investigates and analyses data, triangulating with other sources to inform decision-making and to support Ofsted's strategic aims
- supports inspection and improvement, including by developing and using statistical models to prioritise providers for inspection
- reports regularly against business needs
- supports the wider organisation and external customers by preparing and publishing helpful data
- produces and publishes national and official statistics that meet the responsibilities laid out in the Code of Practice for Statistics,² as well as management information about inspection outcomes.

The work plan for the year April 2018 to March 2019 has been developed to meet users' needs for our statistics. Users include inspectors, policy colleagues, other government departments, the media and the public.

² www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/code-of-practice.

Our work

Data and Insight (D&I) provides high-quality analysis and insight into the sectors we inspect and regulate. This ensures that Ofsted's resources are used efficiently and provide value for money: intelligent, responsible and focused.

Supporting inspection

Data and Insight runs and reviews statistical models annually to help Ofsted prioritise which providers to inspect. This ensures that we focus inspection resources where they are most needed and where they can make the most difference. Data and Insight also models future inspection volumes to assist with financial planning.

Data and Insight provides a range of data tools and pre-inspection briefings to support inspectors before and during inspections.

Social care analysts provide lead inspectors with detailed pre-inspection briefings on local authorities and adoption and fostering agencies.³ We previously inspected local authorities under the single inspection framework (SIF). Since January 2018, we have used the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework. We inspect fostering and adoption agencies under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF). Analysts combine internal and external data and other intelligence to brief inspectors about the local authority area and adoption and fostering agencies. For local authorities, this includes, but is not limited to, information about its: geography and infrastructure, population, health, political composition, employment, and social care and multi-agency services for children and families. When available, it also covers local authority performance data.

Further education and skills analysts provide pre-inspection briefings to inspectors. They produce detailed achievement data for school sixth forms, general further education colleges, sixth form colleges and independent learning providers. The team works with a range of performance data, including: Education and Skills Funding Agency achievement rates, DfE derived performance measures, funding data and within-year data.

State-funded schools analysts produce inspection dashboards for inspectors and for schools. These summarise a range of attainment and progress measures and also give contextual information. The team works with a range of performance data, particularly from the DfE.

The RAISEonline service, which in previous years has provided schools and inspectors with analysis of performance data, closed on 31 July 2017. It has been replaced by the Analyse School Performance (ASP) system, which the DfE runs and

³ 'Framework, evaluation criteria and inspector guidance for the inspections of local authority children's services', Ofsted 2018; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-from-2018>

maintains. Data and Insight uses the ASP and other sources to prepare inspection dashboards called IDSRs (Inspection Data Summary Reports). These are not made publically available due to the pupil information they may contain.

In addition, we carry out investigations to collate and analyse evidence to understand aspects of Ofsted's work or national education and care issues. Ofsted uses this evidence to support internal decision-making and we can share it more widely to influence thinking in government and the sector.

Within regions, we use the insight derived from high-quality and comprehensive analysis operationally to target interventions and other inspection activity.

Development work

Data and Insight is part of the Government Statistical Service and works with other government departments and external data providers to improve quality and develop new data measures. It works most closely with DfE data and is increasingly looking to others, such as the Office for National Statistics and academic institutions, to develop thinking and analysis.

Data and Insight also works to ensure that the systems and processes used to manage Ofsted's data are robust. Exception reports identify errors in administrative data in an automated way. Data is triangulated with other sources to identify inconsistencies and data owners are encouraged to correct data issues at source, therefore driving up the quality of administrative data.

During 2018–19, we will develop our official statistics by:

- building on best practice
- identifying more efficient publishing procedures
- adapting our publishing formats to best meet user needs.

To develop knowledge and capability within Data and Insight, we will improve our analytical research skills. We will do this by carrying out new analyses on relevant, topical areas that will bring together data from alternative research and big data sources. To aid the process of linking multiple data sources in a safe environment, we will use the Office for National Statistics' Secure Research Service.⁴ This will allow us to securely load relevant Ofsted data and for accredited 'approved researchers' to carry out analyses.

We will continue to improve the way we communicate the statistics around inspection judgements, seeking to share information in appropriate formats for our different users. This year, we will carry out user research on the use and value of our existing products, ensuring that these are still fit for purpose.

⁴ www.ons.gov.uk/aboutus/whatwedo/paidservices/virtualmicrodatalaboratoryvml.

We will also identify and create new ways of presenting and visualising data, to increase understanding as well as better meeting user needs. We will use topical blogs as a way of sharing important insights quickly.

Data and Insight staff continue to develop skills in data science techniques. These techniques will allow us to help Ofsted to continue making the best use of its data and intelligence to achieve its strategic objectives.

Ofsted's Annual Report

Data and Insight provides the quantitative analysis and evidence that informs the Chief Inspector's Annual Report. In addition, we provide commentary and support to colleagues compiling the report and advise on data presentation. Data and analysis for the Annual Report are provided at national and regional level and by remit.

National and official statistics and published management information

Ofsted statistics provide policy makers, parliament and other users with reliable information that helps develop policy, monitoring and operational decision-making. Official statistics help Ofsted operate transparently and give the public access to our data. Our statistics cover the following areas:

- children's social care
- early years and childcare
- further education and skills inspections and outcomes
- non-association independent schools inspections and outcomes
- initial teacher education inspections and outcomes
- state-funded schools inspections and outcomes.

Our statistics are published at different intervals. Some are published termly, while others are six monthly or annually. We decide how frequently to publish information after consulting with users.

For some areas, we also publish management information about inspection outcomes. We publish this information about state-funded schools and further education and skills on a monthly basis, to give users a timely and up-to-date picture of inspection findings. The methodology we use to compile management information and ensure timely publication introduces a small positive bias to the overall view of in-year inspection outcomes. We correct this bias within the official statistics by using a different methodology.

What we did in 2017–18

In 2017–18, we:

- continued to provide support and analysis for the Ofsted Annual Report
- further developed the local authority intelligence system (LAIS) and our approach to supporting the inspections of local authority children’s services
- reviewed the inspection dashboards used by school and further education and skills inspectors when preparing for an inspection, and examined what further analytical support could be of value in supporting school inspections
- increased staff’s capability and capacity and improved the processes for developing Ofsted’s statistical databases and production systems
- consulted with users of our official statistics about state-funded schools and academies and improved the methodology
- consulted with users of our official statistics about non-association independent schools, which resulted in a change to the frequency of publication
- produced well-timed, insightful briefings and supplementary products that both informed and generated discussion, influencing policy and operational decisions
- reviewed our risk assessment and selection methodology for state-funded schools
- produced regular internal management information at agreed intervals to high standards of reliability, timeliness, accuracy and consistency
- launched our updated Ofsted user engagement strategy, incorporating more use of social media into user engagement activities
- worked with the Office for Statistics Regulation to gain national statistics status for our children’s social care data in England release
- reviewed how we put data into the public domain to identify potential further improvements to accessibility and transparency
- continued to develop data science skills within Ofsted.

What we will do in 2018–19

Externally, we will:

- provide support and analysis for the Ofsted Annual Report
- publish official statistics and management information at agreed intervals to a high standard
- change the statistical methodology for reporting on inspection outcomes for state-funded schools
- improve how we communicate the statistics around inspection judgements and how to interpret these
- develop our analysis function so that we can get better insight from inspection evidence and other sources, which can inform national policy debate and provider practice
- improve data analysis and reporting on Ofsted's work on unregistered schools.

We will directly support/target inspection by:

- delivering a selection of providers for inspection in the education and social care remits
- developing and delivering pre-inspection information/briefings for schools, further education and skills and social care
- identifying areas of concern in terms of 'gaming'/providers exhibiting behaviours that are not in a child's best interests
- identifying opportunities to link data and improve understanding/context
- developing new data science skills and tools.

We will improve our data impact by:

- reviewing how we use technology for data storage and analysis
- optimising how we use early years data following migration to a common data system
- improving links with other organisations to improve access to social care intelligence.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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