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Statistical work plan

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Foreword

The past few years have seen significant developments around the quantitative analysis carried out in Ofsted, and these have been summarised in previous statistical workplans. They include making substantial changes to our administrative and statistical systems, improving investigation and analytical skills, and improving communication and dissemination so that our work achieves greater impact. These changes have brought rewards but are not complete, and this year we will continue to develop more stable systems, more insightful analysis and better ways of supporting inspectors to interpret data and statistics.

While we continue our journey towards excellence on a number of fronts, in 2017–18, we will focus on some specific areas. These include:

- reviewing and simplifying the information made available to schools and further education and skills inspectors
- investigating data science techniques to assist with the consistent interpretation of data by inspectors,
- reviewing our school risk assessment methodology
- re-developing children’s social care pre-inspection briefing to support the new inspections of local authority children’s services.

System development work will continue as data about early years providers is migrated onto a new system and new reports are developed. Alongside these changes, we will ensure that our data and publications remain of high quality and fit for purpose. We will continue to publish official statistics and management information, drawing primarily on Ofsted’s administrative data; but we will also continue to make extensive use of data available through the Department for Education (DfE), the Education and Skills Funding Agency and other external sources.

This is the fourth annual publication of our work programme. It highlights some of our recent developments and outlines some of our future plans. As much of our analysis work is driven by demand, we are unable to account for this in advance. However, a schedule for the release of our official statistics is published on the Gov.uk statistics webpage.^[1]

Helen Barugh, Chief Statistician

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

About us

The Chief Statistician leads the Data and Insight team within Ofsted, working directly with the Director, Strategy and Digital. On professional statistical matters, the Chief Statistician is accountable to the National Statistician. The Data and Insight team has a wide range of responsibilities, using analysis and investigation of data, statistics and quantitative research to provide an evidence-base that underpins Ofsted's activity.

The team:

- supports inspection and improvement, including developing and using statistical models to prioritise providers for inspection
- supports the wider Ofsted organisation by collecting and sourcing data, publishing statistics and developing data sources and measures
- investigates and analyses data, triangulating with other sources to inform decisions and to support Ofsted's strategic aims
- delivers regular reporting against business needs
- maintains and develops Ofsted's data warehouse and associated statistical systems
- is responsible for producing and publishing National and official statistics that meet the responsibilities laid out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics¹, as well as management information about inspection outcomes.

The work plan for the year April 2017 to March 2018 has been developed to meet users' needs of our statistics. This includes inspectors, policy colleagues, other government departments, the media and the public.

Data and Insight work

Supporting inspection

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

Social care analysts provide detailed pre-inspection briefing about a local authority to the lead inspector before the local authority's inspection under the Single Inspection Framework.² Analysts combine internal and external data and soft intelligence to

¹ www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice.

² 'Framework and evaluation schedule: children in need of help and protection and care leavers and Local Safeguarding Children Boards', Ofsted 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-local-authority-childrens-services-framework

brief inspectors about the whole of the local authority area. This includes, but is not limited to, information about its geography and infrastructure, population, health, political composition, employment, its social care and multi-agency services to children and families, and any known performance data or outcomes of services it provides. Social care analysts also support inspectors both on- and off-site during the inspection and they quality assure the data in the final inspection report.

From January 2018, Ofsted will change its approach to the inspection of local authority children's services. The nature of our analytical support will also change. One of our priorities for this year is identifying how our analysis can best support the new types of inspection and where we can add most value.

Further education and skills analysts provide pre-inspection briefings to inspectors. This requires the production of 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, within year data.

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

Over the 2017-18 financial year, a substantive project will take place to review the existing dashboards. We will focus on:

- what is required for inspection
- how can that data and information be best presented
- how can we provide information about potential gaming of the school exam system to inspectors in a meaningful way
- how can analysts improve the validity and consistency of the interpretation of performance data by inspectors.

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 maintains. Inspection dashboards for schools will be included within this system. The data is not publically available because it identifies individual children.

Analysis and insight to support Ofsted's strategic priorities and prioritise resources

Data and Insight continues to provide high-quality analysis and insight into the sectors we inspect and regulate, ensuring that Ofsted's resources are used in an efficient way and provide value for money.

Data and Insight runs – and will review – statistical models to prioritise the selection of providers for inspection. This ensures that inspection resources are focused where they are most needed and can make the most difference. We also model future inspection volumes to assist with financial planning.

We carry out investigations to collate and analyse evidence to understand aspects of Ofsted's work or about national education and care issues. This evidence is used to support decision-making within Ofsted and can be disseminated more widely to influence thinking in government and the sector. Within regions, the insight derived from high-quality and comprehensive analysis is used operationally to target interventions and other inspection activity. Briefing about the findings from analysis and research is used in media work and to communicate with local partners in improvement.

Development work

Data and Insight works with other government departments and with external data providers to improve data quality and to develop new data measures. In particular, we work with the DfE, Ofqual and the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Data and Insight also works to ensure that the systems and processes used to manage Ofsted's data are robust. Exception reports are used to 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 2017–18, we will look to develop our official statistics, by

- building on best practice
- identifying more efficient publishing procedures
- investigating different publishing formats and whether these meet user needs.

We will review our current publication templates, developing the Ofsted brand, as well as adhering to The Government Digital Service (GDS) style guides³ and seeking to publish official statistics in more open formats where practical. We will also review our statement on user engagement for statistics, with a focus on understanding who our users are and how they use our data. We will consider how to best tailor our statistical products, and their communication, to our diverse range of users. This will involve reviewing how we use social media and corresponding analytics to increase our knowledge of user needs.

Data and Insight staff continue to develop skills in data science techniques. These techniques will allow us to help Ofsted to continue making best use of its data and intelligence to achieve its strategic objectives. We have undertaken a number of proof of concept projects and now need to decide which of these will be piloted.

³ www.gov.uk/guidance/style-guide.

Ofsted Annual Report

Data and Insight provides the quantitative analysis and evidence to inform 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 wider users with reliable information that helps develop policy, monitoring and operational decision-making. Official statistics help Ofsted's accountability 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
- independent schools inspections and outcomes
- initial teacher education inspections and outcomes
- maintained schools and academies 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. This is published monthly for maintained schools and further education and skills to give users a timely and up-to-date picture of inspection findings. The methodology used to compile management information and ensure timely publication introduces a small positive bias to the overall view of in-year inspection outcomes. This is corrected within the Official Statistics by using a different methodology.

What we did in 2016–17

In 2016–17, we:

- analysed a wide range of data to support the Ofsted Annual Report publication
- developed an internal automated tool to present statistics about the context and performance of multi-academy trusts
- further developed the Data View tool
- reviewed and published statistical policy documents
- improved the way we presented our official statistics of social care, working with the National Statistician's office

- supported a number of reports, including:
 - How well are colleges implementing the Prevent duty?
 - Getting ready for work
 - Unknown children – destined for disadvantage?
 - Helping disadvantaged young children: how good are local authorities and early years providers?
- improved how we communicated our official statistics through other means, such as Twitter
- published official statistics, management information and Freedom of Information datasets
- ensured that our analysis and insight directly influenced debate and decision making
- explored additional data to be used to inform analysis
- developed capability in data science to support Ofsted in being forward thinking and efficient.

What we will do in 2017–18

We will:

- continue to provide support and analysis for the Ofsted Annual Report
- further develop the Local Authority Intelligence System (LAIS) and our approach to supporting the inspections of local authority children’s services
- review the inspection dashboards used by school and further education and skills inspectors when preparing for an inspection, and examine what further analytical support could be of value in supporting school inspections
- refine processes for the development of Ofsted’s data warehouse
- consult with users of our official statistics about state funded schools and academies with a view to improving the methodology
- consult with users of our official statistics about non-association independent schools with a view to changing the frequency of publication and introducing regular published management information
- establish a process to engage regularly with a range of end users to ensure that products are used and remain fit for purpose
- produce well-timed, insightful briefings and supplementary products that both inform and generate discussion, influencing policy or operational decisions
- review our risk assessment and selection methodology for maintained schools and academies

- produce regular internal management information products at agreed intervals to high standards of reliability, timeliness, accuracy and consistency
- launch the updated Ofsted user engagement strategy, incorporating more use of social media into user engagement activities
- work with the Office for Statistics Regulation to gain National Statistics status for the remaining social care official statistics
- review how we put data into the public domain to identify potential further improvements to accessibility and transparency
- continue to develop data science skills within Ofsted.

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted
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