

Monitoring inspections of schools whose overall effectiveness is satisfactory

Guidance for inspecting schools whose overall effectiveness is satisfactory under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

This guidance sets out the judgements that inspectors make and report on during monitoring inspections of satisfactory schools, including those schools where behaviour was judged to be no better than satisfactory at the last inspection. Schools can use the guidance to see how inspections will be conducted and how judgements are made. They may find it helpful when evaluating their own performance.

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Background

1. This guidance relates to monitoring inspections of schools whose overall effectiveness was judged satisfactory at their last section 5 inspection and which may not be demonstrating a good capacity to sustain improvement. It includes guidance for the monitoring inspections of schools where pupils' behaviour was judged to be no better than satisfactory at the last section 5 inspection also. Up to 40% of satisfactory schools receive monitoring inspections under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
2. Schools are selected for these monitoring inspections in line with the *Protocol for the selection of schools whose overall effectiveness is graded satisfactory for a monitoring inspection*.¹ Monitoring inspections usually take place 12 to 24 months after the date of the section 5 inspection that judged the school's overall effectiveness to be satisfactory. Schools whose pupils' behaviour was judged to be no better than satisfactory may receive an unannounced monitoring inspection.
3. Satisfactory schools receive their next section 5 inspection in accordance with routine inspection scheduling arrangements. Monitoring inspections cannot change the grade for overall effectiveness, but if the monitoring inspection raises very serious concerns about the standard of education provided then this may influence the timing of the next inspection.
4. This guidance sets out the judgements that inspectors make and report on during monitoring inspections of satisfactory schools. Schools can use the guidance to see how inspections will be conducted and how judgements are made. They may find it helpful when evaluating their own performance.
5. Further general guidance, briefing papers on school inspections and other materials are available on Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk
6. All monitoring inspections are carried out in accordance with the principles and code of conduct for inspectors as set out in *The framework for school inspection*.²
7. Monitoring inspections are normally led by an inspector who was not a member of the previous section 5 inspection team. Between one and three inspectors will carry out the inspection depending on the size of the school and whether or not it is a pupil referral unit or special school. The monitoring inspection lasts for one day and the school is notified of the inspection the day before the inspectors are on site unless the inspection includes a focus on behaviour.

¹ www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/protocol-for-selection-of-schools-whose-overall-effectiveness-graded-satisfactory-for-monitoring-ins

² <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-school-inspection-january-2012>

8. For inspections where there is no specific focus on behaviour, the lead inspector will decide either to complete inspection preparation and planning at the school during the afternoon on the day before the inspection, or through telephone conversations. The arrangements for conducting monitoring inspections, with or without on-site preparation, are set out in the relevant sections below.
9. Where an explicit focus of the monitoring inspection is to be on the pupils' behaviour, the inspection will be unannounced and the school will be notified on the morning of the inspection shortly before the arrival of the inspector(s). If it is not possible for the lead inspector to contact the school before arrival, the monitoring inspection will proceed as planned, unless there are grounds for deferral of the inspection as set out within Ofsted's policy on the *Deferral of inspections*³. The lead inspector will complete all planning and preparation for the inspection on the day before. The arrangements for unannounced inspections are set out in the relevant sections below.

Evaluating the school's progress

Introduction

10. In all monitoring inspections, inspectors are required to **evaluate** the school's progress in:
 - bringing about and sustaining improvement
11. Judgements are made on the four-point scale: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate. Where the areas for improvement from the previous full inspection include specific timescales, inspectors should exercise professional judgement in evaluating the school's overall rate of progress. Progress should not necessarily be judged inadequate simply because a challenging deadline has not been met.
12. Where a focus of the inspection is on the pupils' behaviour, inspectors will also evaluate:
 - the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour.
13. **On a monitoring inspection, inspectors will not make a judgement about the school's overall effectiveness. Neither can a monitoring inspection place the school in a category of concern.** However, the judgements made during the monitoring inspection may influence the timing of the school's subsequent section 5 inspection.
14. Inspectors will make the key judgements about the school's progress, including improving pupils' behaviour where this is relevant, by considering carefully the evidence gathered and by using their professional judgement.

³ www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/deferral-of-inspections-information-for-schools

15. The outline guidance provided is not exhaustive but is intended to guide inspectors as to the range and type of evidence they might collect.

Outline guidance

16. The inspection covers aspects of *The framework for school inspection* but is selective and focused sharply on the **improvements made by the school** (including the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour where this is needed) since the last section 5 inspection and the extent to which the leaders and managers, including the governing body, demonstrate the capacity to address important weaknesses.
17. **Monitoring inspections focus on the areas for improvement identified during the last section 5 inspection. In addition, in some schools, inspectors will focus explicitly on the pupils' behaviour. However, inspectors must use their judgement in the light of the particular circumstances of the school and may also gather evidence for, and report on, other areas of the school's work.**
18. Inspectors should focus on gathering evidence to support a convincing judgement about the school's progress in building a better capacity to sustain improvement. If a satisfactory school has not built a better capacity to improve since the previous inspection, for example because it has not made sufficient progress in dealing with key areas for improvement, it is not well placed to become a good school by the time of its next inspection.
19. Inspectors must take account of the following.
 - **Contextual matters:** including any significant changes to staffing, pupils and the school's status, for example if the school is an academy.
 - **Achievement of pupils in the school:** taking account of their attainment and the quality of learning and progress for all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, and how well the school is narrowing the attainment gap.
 - Inspectors should consider first-hand evidence, **which must include a sample of lesson observations**, and school data for different groups of pupils and, where appropriate, recent test and examination results. Reference should be made to the challenge and impact of the school's targets.
 - Inspectors will need to place particular emphasis on current attainment and progress indicators, particularly when no new national data have been published since the most recent inspection. However, it is important to avoid speculation on likely future test and examination results.
 - The school's success or otherwise in addressing the weaknesses identified by the section 5 inspection, such as improving the quality of teaching, behaviour and safety and pupils' progress and attainment in

lessons, will make a significant contribution to the judgement about the progress the school has made in raising achievement.

- For schools where attainment falls below significant national targets, inspectors should consider the appropriateness of specific strategies being used by the school to meet such targets, including the impact of any external support.
 - Inspectors should judge the rigour and accuracy of the school's own data, for example, assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, which should be considered alongside other evidence such as that gathered by talking to pupils and sampling their work.
 - **Safeguarding arrangements:** inspectors must always check the single central register and may need to review other procedures if they have any concerns.
 - **Specialist status:** this need only be referred to when it is having a significant impact on the overall effectiveness of the school in either a positive or negative way.
20. Where relevant, inspectors should consider also the most significant of the school's areas for improvement from among the following.
- **The quality of teaching** with particular emphasis on: how this promotes learning and progress; the use of assessment; and the impact of teaching on pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
 - **Behaviour and safety of pupils** with particular reference to: pupils' attitudes, conduct and behaviour; the management of behaviour; how well pupils adopt safe practices; and pupils' attendance and punctuality.
 - **The quality of leadership in and management of the school** including: the impact of leaders and managers at all levels, including of the governing body, on school improvement and the school's capacity for sustained improvement.
 - Inspectors should assess the rigour and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation, including its assessment about the quality of teaching and learning.
 - The work of the governing body or interim executive board should be evaluated with respect to the contribution that it makes to leadership and management, and its impact on the school's performance.
 - Inspectors should consider whether the school's leaders can demonstrate convincingly that the school's capacity to improve is strengthening. It is important that the school's leaders are having a significant impact on all of its areas of weakness and are able to sustain this improvement without an over-reliance on external support.

- There should be clear evidence that leaders and managers are having an impact on accelerating learners' progress and thereby raising attainment, particularly in schools where attainment is low.
21. Where a focus of the monitoring inspection is on the pupils' behaviour, inspectors must take account of the following.
- Any specific issues raised in the previous inspection report about the pupils' behaviour and whether these have been tackled effectively and are showing clear signs of improvement.
 - The pupils' attitudes to learning and their conduct in lessons and around the school.
 - The effectiveness of the management of the pupils' behaviour.
 - Pupils' behaviour towards others, including the extent to which pupils are free from bullying and harassment, and pupils' views about behaviour and bullying.
 - The impact of the school's work in managing, and improving, the behaviour of pupils with specific and identified behaviour difficulties.
 - The effectiveness of the school's work in seeking and responding to parents and carers' views about behaviour
 - The school's use of exclusion and its impact on improving behaviour, together with the provision made for pupils who are excluded.
22. If the school has a sixth form or Early Years Foundation Stage provision, this will not usually be inspected unless it was identified as an area for improvement during the last section 5 inspection.
23. If inspectors consider that safeguarding arrangements are **inadequate** this may affect the judgements made during the monitoring inspection. For example, inadequate safeguarding arrangements may be indicative of more general weaknesses in leadership and governance. In these circumstances, inspectors need to exercise professional judgement in reaching a view about the extent to which the school is demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement. When safeguarding is inadequate or where the inspectors have other serious concerns, the lead inspector must call the Schools Causing Concern (SCC) helpdesk to log their concern and email the relevant Managing Inspector for SCC.
- The Managing Inspector (SCC) may recommend one of the following options
 - a further and unannounced monitoring inspection to check safeguarding requirements
 - bringing forward the next section 5 inspection of the school

- scheduling an immediate inspection of the school under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- In making the decision, the Managing Inspector (SCC) will liaise with the relevant Regional Director and take account of:
 - the nature and seriousness of the concerns identified and/or weaknesses in safeguarding
 - the wider performance of the school in terms of the progress it has made in dealing with areas for improvement and building a capacity for sustained improvement
 - the likely impact of any further inspection.

Conducting the monitoring inspection

Before the inspection

Off-site preparation

24. **Inspectors should consider all the relevant guidance before planning their inspection.** This includes *The evaluation schedule for the inspection of maintained schools and academies*⁴, *Conducting school inspections*⁵ and *The framework for school inspection*, as well as the specific guidance for monitoring inspections.
25. Inspectors should use their off-site preparation time to begin to plan the inspection. Planning should be informed by:
 - the previous section 5 inspection report
 - up-to-date self-evaluation, where this is available
 - the most recent RAISEonline report and, where relevant, the sixth form performance and assessment report (PANDA)
 - letters from any previous monitoring or survey inspections
 - any qualifying complaints about the school that have been retained by Ofsted
 - any warning notices issued by the local authority.
26. The purpose of the off-site preparation is to enable the lead inspector to gain a broad overview of the school's recent performance and areas for improvement identified by the last section 5 inspection.

⁴ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/evaluation-schedule-for-inspection-of-maintained-schools-and-academies-january-2012>

⁵ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/conducting-school-inspections-guidance-for-inspectors-of-schools-january-2012>

27. Where applicable, the lead inspector should prepare and distribute brief joining instructions to the inspection team. These should include:
- essential information about the school and the timings for the inspection
 - details of the main focus of the monitoring inspection and the key issues that the team will explore
 - provisional allocation of areas of the school's work for team inspectors to observe and investigate.

Inspections without on-site preparation (but not for inspections where behaviour is a focus)

28. Subject to the availability of the headteacher, or in the headteacher's absence the most senior member of staff, the lead inspector should make initial contact to inform the school of the inspection during the morning of the day before it is due to start. It is important that planning for the inspection is not held up by waiting for a headteacher who might be delayed or who is not due to be at the school. If the school is using a telephone answering machine, the lead inspector should leave a message and state the time at which the message was left. Where the telephone remains unanswered, the lead inspector should persevere, keeping a note of the times at which they tried to make contact with the school.
29. **Requests for a deferral should be referred to the appropriate Regional Director.** Decisions will be made in accordance with Ofsted's policy on the *Deferral of inspections*. This makes clear that the absence of the headteacher is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.
30. As soon as it is certain that the inspection can take place, the lead inspector will notify the inspection service provider who will send formal confirmation to the school by email. The email will also include contact details for the inspection service provider and an outline of the arrangements for publication of the monitoring letter after the monitoring inspection. Where necessary, the inspection service provider will ensure that any team inspectors are informed that the inspection will take place.
31. The lead inspector should arrange an extended telephone call to provide the headteacher with an early opportunity to contribute to the pre-inspection preparation and planning by clarifying the progress that the school has made since the previous monitoring inspection. Any significant changes to the context of the school should be discussed.
32. The lead inspector should ask for and scrutinise, briefly, electronic copies of the key documents provided by the school including, for example, any available self evaluation undertaken by the school, the updated school improvement plan and the most recent information about pupils' current attainment and progress. Any emerging issues should be discussed with the headteacher through a follow-up telephone call whenever possible.

33. In setting up inspection activities, the lead inspector should indicate to the school what needs to be tested and ask the school to suggest the best ways of finding the necessary evidence to substantiate its views about the progress it has made. However, the focus of the inspection may shift as new evidence becomes available or as other issues emerge.
34. The lead inspector should also use the pre-inspection telephone discussions to:
 - agree with the school how senior leaders may engage in the inspection
 - receive an update on staff absence and other practical issues
 - ascertain whether there are particular reasons why any teachers should not be observed, for example if they are subject to informal or formal capability procedures where the use of observations by Ofsted may compromise those procedures
 - ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from lesson observations, whether joint or otherwise, should not be used as evidence in competency/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management.

Inspections with on-site preparation

35. For inspections where behaviour is not a focus, and where some preparation is due to take place on the school site, the lead inspector should telephone the school in the morning of the day before the inspection to inform the headteacher of the inspection and of their arrival later that day to complete on-site preparation. If the headteacher is unavailable the lead inspector should ask to speak to the most senior member of staff present. If it is not possible to contact the school the lead inspector should complete their journey and inform the school of the inspection on arrival.
36. As above, any **requests for a deferral should be referred to the appropriate Regional Director**. Decisions will be made in accordance with Ofsted's policy on the *Deferral of inspections*.⁶ This makes clear that the absence of the headteacher is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.
37. As soon as it is certain that the inspection can take place, the lead inspector will notify the inspection service provider who will send formal confirmation to the school by email. The email will also include contact details for the inspection service provider and an outline of the arrangements for the publication of the monitoring letter after the monitoring inspection.
38. The lead inspector should travel to the school when any initial off-site preparation is complete and arrive during the afternoon of the day before the inspection. Exact timings will depend on travel arrangements and the location

⁶ www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/deferral-of-inspections-information-for-schools

of the school, but the lead inspector should ensure that the arrival time allows for sufficient time to complete the on-site preparation.

39. On arrival at the school the lead inspector must show their identity badge and ask to see the headteacher. If it was not possible to contact the school beforehand, care should be taken not to inform the secretary or others in the school about the purpose of the inspection, before speaking to the headteacher. The headteacher should be told that they may phone the National Business Unit (telephone: 0300 123 4234) to confirm the identity of the lead inspector.
40. If the lead inspector is unable to speak to the headteacher, they should ask to speak to the next most senior member of staff. It is important that preparation for the inspection is not held up by waiting for the headteacher to arrive at the school.
41. The on-site preparation time may be used flexibly at the discretion of the lead inspector and, where appropriate, with the agreement of the headteacher. However, the lead inspector should not start the inspection early by, for example, conducting lesson observations or scrutinising the single central register during the preparation afternoon.
42. The lead inspector is not expected to compile a pre-inspection briefing. However, before leaving the school after completing the on-site preparation, they should ensure that senior leaders have a clear understanding of the key inspection issues and that senior leaders have been given an opportunity to contribute to the planning of the inspection.
43. The lead inspector should also use the on-site preparation time to:
 - agree with the school how senior leaders may engage in the inspection
 - receive an update on staff absence and other practical issues
 - ascertain whether there are particular reasons why any teachers should not be observed, for example if they are subject to informal or formal capability procedures where the use of observations by Ofsted may compromise those procedures
 - ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from lesson observations, whether joint or otherwise, should not be used as evidence in competency/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management.
44. The lead inspector should ensure that the headteacher has time to notify school staff of the inspection. After this, there should be a brief introductory meeting with the headteacher and/or senior leadership team to:
 - explain that the inspection is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

- confirm that the school is able to inform the governing body that the monitoring inspection is taking place
 - make sure that the headteacher understands the purpose and focus of the inspection and the judgements that will be made
 - remind the school that the monitoring letter will be published on Ofsted's website.
45. In explaining the inspection arrangements, the lead inspector should:
- indicate the likely format of the inspection
 - explain that the principles for engagement with senior staff set out in *Conducting school inspections* will be applied where possible, but that the lead inspector has the discretion to manage this in the way they feel is most appropriate
 - discuss the arrangements for giving feedback to teachers
 - request to see evidence of up-to-date self-evaluation, but **should not** expect an evaluation specifically prepared for the inspection team's use
 - indicate that they will need to see the single central register and may need to review other safeguarding arrangements if any concerns emerge during the inspection
 - make domestic arrangements (room, parking, meals, refreshments)
 - indicate the team's intended arrival and departure times noting that it is recommended that inspectors arrive at the school no earlier than 8am and that they depart no later than 6pm, but explaining that these times are advisory and that the lead inspector might arrive later and leave earlier.
46. The lead inspector should provide the headteacher and/or senior leadership team with an early opportunity to contribute to the pre-inspection preparation and planning by clarifying the progress that the school has made since the previous section 5 inspection and explaining the ways in which the school has built a better capacity for sustained improvement. Any significant changes to the context of the school should be discussed.
47. The lead inspector should scrutinise briefly the key documents provided by the school including, for example, any self-evaluation the school may have, the school improvement plan and information about pupils' current attainment and progress. Any emerging issues should be discussed with senior leaders whenever possible.
48. In setting up inspection activities, the lead inspector should indicate to the school what needs to be tested and ask the school to suggest the best ways of finding the necessary evidence to substantiate its views about the progress it has made. However, the focus of the inspection may shift as new evidence becomes available or other issues emerge.

Unannounced inspections, including those where the focus is on pupils' behaviour

49. The lead inspector (and the other inspectors where relevant) will arrive at the school on the morning of the inspection immediately prior to the school day starting. This is likely to be around 8.30 am but may be earlier. The lead inspector will telephone the school shortly before arrival. If the lead inspector is unable to speak to the headteacher, they should ask to speak to the next most senior member of staff. It is important that the inspection is not held up by the absence of the headteacher.
50. If the lead inspector is unable to make contact with the school before arrival, she/he should proceed to the school and explain the purpose of the inspection when they arrive. It is important that start of the inspection is not held up.
51. On arrival at the school the lead inspector must show their identity badge and ask to see the headteacher. If contact has not been made with the school prior to the inspector's arrival, care should be taken not to inform the secretary or others in the school about the inspection before speaking to the headteacher. The headteacher should be told that she/he may phone the National Business Unit (telephone: 0300 123 4234) to confirm the identity of the lead inspector.
52. After contacting the school and the inspection is confirmed, the lead inspector will inform the inspection service provider, who will send formal confirmation to the school by email. The email will also include contact details for the inspection service provider and an outline of the arrangements for publication of the monitoring letter after the monitoring inspection.
53. As above, **requests for a deferral should be referred to the appropriate Regional Director**. Decisions will be made in accordance with Ofsted's policy on the *Deferral of inspections*.⁷ This makes clear that the absence of the headteacher is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.
54. It is important that inspectors see the work of the school at an early stage of the inspection. This should include direct observations of pupils as they arrive at the school. To ensure that observations and other inspection activities begin quickly, the initial meeting with the headteacher should be brief and be used to:
 - clarify the purpose of the monitoring inspection.
 - receive an update on staff absence and other practical issues
 - ascertain whether there are particular reasons why any teachers should not be observed, for example if they are subject to informal or formal capability procedures where the use of observations by Ofsted may compromise those procedures

⁷ www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/deferral-of-inspections-information-for-schools

- ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from lesson observations, whether joint or otherwise, should not be used as evidence in competency/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management.

55. The lead inspector should ensure that senior leaders are given an opportunity to clarify the progress that the school has made since the previous monitoring inspection later in the day. Any significant changes to the context of the school should be discussed.

During the inspection

The start of the inspection

56. The lead inspector should meet briefly with the headteacher and/or senior leadership team at the start of the day to introduce any team inspectors and, where these have been agreed beforehand, discuss any changes to previously planned inspection activities. Where needed, inspectors should clarify the arrangements for the inspection, including those set out above.
57. Where there is more than one inspector there should be a short team meeting to clarify the areas to be explored, inspection activities and individual roles and responsibilities.
58. The lead inspector may provide a short briefing for school staff.
59. In inspections where behaviour is a focus, some or more of these initial activities may be delayed so that inspectors can see the work of the school as early as is possible.

Inspection activities

60. The activities carried out during monitoring inspections are similar to those in section 5 inspections. They may involve: lesson observations; analysis of pupils' work; scrutiny of school records and documentation; discussions with staff, pupils, governors and, where appropriate, the school's partners. While staff interviews are important, the main focus should be on gathering other first-hand evidence, including lesson observations.
61. Inspection activities should be tightly focused on:
- issues which relate directly to the areas for improvement identified during the previous section 5 inspection
 - any concerns raised by pre-inspection analysis
 - behaviour of the pupils where this is a focus of the inspection and pupils' freedom from bullying

62. Inspection activities are likely to cover some or all of the areas set out above although the emphasis will depend on the circumstances of the school and its improvement priorities.
63. In the monitoring letter, written after the inspection, inspectors are required to comment on pupils' achievement, even when this was not a key area for improvement in the previous section 5 inspection, and on behaviour where this is a focus of the inspection. When reaching a view about achievement they should follow the outline guidance in *The evaluation schedule for the inspection of maintained schools and academies* and subsidiary guidance.
64. Inspectors **must always** examine the single central register and follow up any safeguarding concerns. If it becomes clear that there are inadequacies in care, child protection or health and safety, they **must** be reported and may influence the timing of the reinspection of the school and have an impact on the judgements made during the monitoring inspection.
65. School circumstances will require inspectors to exercise flexibility as to how the inspection proceeds but the general shape of the inspection should have been determined during the pre-inspection telephone call, on-site preparation or on arrival at the school. Inspectors may wish to:
- conduct telephone interviews with governors and parents if face-to-face meetings are not feasible
 - examine additional documentation, including, for example:
 - further data on attainment and progress that the school may have gathered
 - reports or action plans from the local authority and/or other key partners
 - governing body minutes – particularly when, for example, a separate committee has been established to oversee progress on the areas for improvement
 - aspects of pupils' work that are closely related to the areas for improvement – for example, to evaluate improvements in writing or use of targets for pupils
 - analysis of records of pupils' behaviour and the impact of actions taken to improve it
66. Where a focus of the inspection is on the pupils' behaviour, inspectors must take into account a range of evidence and should consider the following.
- Any specific issues raised in the previous inspection report and whether these are being tackled effectively and showing clear signs of improvement.
 - The pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in a range of different teaching groups and settings and their attitudes to staff, including support and administrative staff, new and inexperienced staff and supply teachers.

- The effectiveness of the school's work in managing and improving the behaviour of particular groups of pupils, including those who have specific behaviour difficulties.
- The school's analyses of, and response to, pupils' behaviour in lessons over time, for example as shown in incident logs, complaints, the use of exclusion, rewards and sanctions.
- Rates, patterns and trends in exclusions, detentions and other sanctions.
- The pupils' respect for others as shown by their behaviour in and around the school.
- The school's effectiveness in preventing and tackling all forms of bullying and harassment, including the views expressed by pupils and different groups of pupils on behaviour and bullying.
- The school's effectiveness in gathering and responding to the views and concerns of parents and carers.

Recording evidence

67. Inspectors should follow the section 5 guidance on completing evidence forms. Inspectors are reminded of the following points.
- Evidence forms should be clear and legible. They are the main source of evidence for the inspection and may be scrutinised for retrieval, for quality assurance monitoring and used as a source of evidence in the event of a complaint. Inspectors should highlight or identify any information that was provided in confidence.
 - Evidence forms can be used for discrete events, such as lesson observations. They can also be 'open' or 'running', where, for example, a particular theme is pursued across a number of lessons and/or discussions.
 - Although numerical grades are not always required, the text on the evidence form must make clear the overall judgement of progress on the issue being evaluated.
 - Evidence forms should be used for recording the main points of discussion when feeding back to senior leaders and for summarising evidence that underpins key judgements about the school's progress.
 - The evidence base must contain sufficient evaluative information to sustain, under external scrutiny, the judgements reached about the progress made by the school.

Engaging with the headteacher and senior staff

68. The principles for engaging with the headteacher and senior staff set out in *Conducting school inspections* should be applied during monitoring inspections. The lead inspector should exercise discretion in adapting and extending the approach according to the school's circumstances.

69. It is important that an ongoing professional dialogue is maintained throughout the inspection. Emerging issues should be discussed and the feedback at the end of the inspection should not be a surprise to the school.
70. Throughout the inspection inspectors should strike a careful balance between probing the areas of concern and acknowledging where the school has been successful in tackling areas for improvement. However, inspectors should remember that pupils are unlikely to be well served by a school that has dealt with a range of peripheral matters while shying away from tougher and more fundamental actions needed to improve its performance.
71. In order to promote further improvement, inspectors may refer to effective practices, for example, that they have observed in other schools or that have been highlighted in Ofsted survey reports. However, they should not recommend a particular or specific kind of methodology that the school should adopt.

Feedback on lesson observations

72. Feedback on the quality of teaching and learning is an integral and essential part of the inspection. Feedback is valued by schools and is a valuable means of furthering improvement. For any observation of 20 minutes or more, inspectors should offer feedback to the teacher concerned.
73. In addition, inspectors may feed back their general findings to:
 - small groups of staff following a series of short visits
 - key senior staff, for example the head of a key stage and/or senior staff with responsibility for professional development or behaviour
 - subject leaders, for example specialist subject leaders in secondary schools and foundation subject leaders and/or core subject leaders in primary schools.

After the inspection

Oral feedback at the end of the inspection

74. Inspectors must provide brief oral feedback at the end of the monitoring inspection. The headteacher may ask a representative of the local authority, of the governing body, interim executive board, or proprietor or significant external partners in the school's improvement as appropriate, to attend. It is the responsibility of the lead inspector to manage the meeting.
75. The inspector and headteacher should discuss which members, if any, of the senior leadership team will attend the feedback, especially where the feedback is challenging or raises sensitive issues.
76. The feedback must:

- report on the range of evidence gathered
- explain the inspection judgements
- where relevant, comment on the impact of the school's specialist status (see paragraph 19)
- make clear that the text of the monitoring letter which will be written after the inspection may differ slightly from the wording of the oral feedback although it will contain the same clear messages and the judgements will not change
- a judgement about the progress made in improving the behaviour of pupils where this was a focus of the inspection
- indicate any further significant concerns about the school's performance which were not identified at the previous section 5 inspection including, for example, any safeguarding issues.

77. If the monitoring inspection has raised **serious concerns** this may affect the timing of the next inspection. The lead inspector should make sure that the school is aware of this and must inform the appropriate Managing Inspector for SCC. However, the likely timing of any further inspection should not be indicated to the school.

The monitoring letter

78. Before writing the letter, the lead inspector should note the guidance in paragraph 79 and take account also of the specific guidance provided in the letter template and the Ofsted style guide. The letter should be published on Ofsted's website within 15 days of the end of the inspection.

79. The arrangements for publishing the letter are as follows.

- The lead inspector completes the letter on the day after the inspection and sends it to the appropriate inspection service provider by 9am on the second working day after the inspection.
- The inspection service provider edits and sends the letter to the school within 5 working days of the end of the inspection. Twenty per cent of letters are further quality assured by HMI in the QA SCC team
- The school has 24 hours to check the letter and report any factual inaccuracies to the inspection service provider.
- The inspection service provider prepares a final version of the letter, which is sent to:
 - the headteacher
 - the Chair of the Governing Body or interim executive board or proprietor as appropriate
 - the local authority (unless the school is an academy)

- the person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors, if the school has them (including diocesan or other appropriate authorities in the case of schools with a religious character)
 - the lead inspector
 - the Young People’s Learning Agency (for secondary schools with a sixth form).
80. In general, monitoring letters should be between 700 and 1000 words. Inspectors should make appropriate professional judgements about the extent of the detail needed to explain clearly the progress made by the school depending on the complexity of circumstances. The letter must include:
- any significant contextual changes since the previous inspection
 - a summary of the issues for improvement from the previous section 5 inspection
 - the judgement made (using the four-point scale set out in paragraph 8) **on the overall progress made by the school**
 - a brief commentary on pupils’ achievement and any other relevant outcomes
 - an outline of the progress made in making improvements to teaching and learning, and other elements of the school’s provision where relevant and in building a stronger capacity for sustained improvement
 - **an outline of the progress made in improving the behaviour of pupils where this is a focus of the inspection**
 - where the school has specialist status and it is having a significant impact on overall effectiveness, a brief evaluation of its impact should be included
 - a judgement on the quality and impact of any external support provided to the school.
81. The letter must be written on the template provided by the inspection service provider.