

Separate graded judgements on the early years in school and the sixth form

A report on the responses to consultation

This is a report on the outcomes of the consultation on proposals to introduce separate graded judgements for the Nursery (where applicable) and Reception Years, and for the sixth form, in our inspections of maintained schools and academies.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

1. Between 18 March 2014 and 13 May 2014, Ofsted consulted on proposals to introduce separate graded judgements on the quality of Nursery and Reception, and post-16 provision in its school inspection reports¹ from September 2014.
2. The consultation sought to gather the views of all interested parties. This report summarises the responses to the consultation and how they have informed revisions to 'The framework for school inspections' and the 'School inspections handbook' for use from September 2014.

Background to the consultation

3. Section 5 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) requires Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) to inspect certain schools at prescribed intervals. As a result, Ofsted is responsible for conducting inspections of all maintained schools and academies.
4. The current framework for inspecting maintained schools and academies was introduced in September 2012. The consultation proposed changes to inspection arrangements, namely to introduce separate numerical grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the sixth form to section 5 inspections.

The consultation

5. The consultation was open to the general public. We invited responses through the Ofsted website and used our newsletters, blogging and Ofsted's Twitter account to promote the consultation. A wide range of key stakeholders responded.
6. This document reports on the responses to this public consultation. The annex provides relevant background information.

Executive summary

7. We will act on the results of the consultation by introducing a separate graded judgement for the EYFS and a separate graded judgement for the sixth form, for all section 5 inspections from September 2014.
8. The graded judgements for the EYFS and sixth form will not limit the school's overall effectiveness judgement. However, inspectors will consider the impact, negative or positive, in the context of the school and make an overall judgement accordingly.

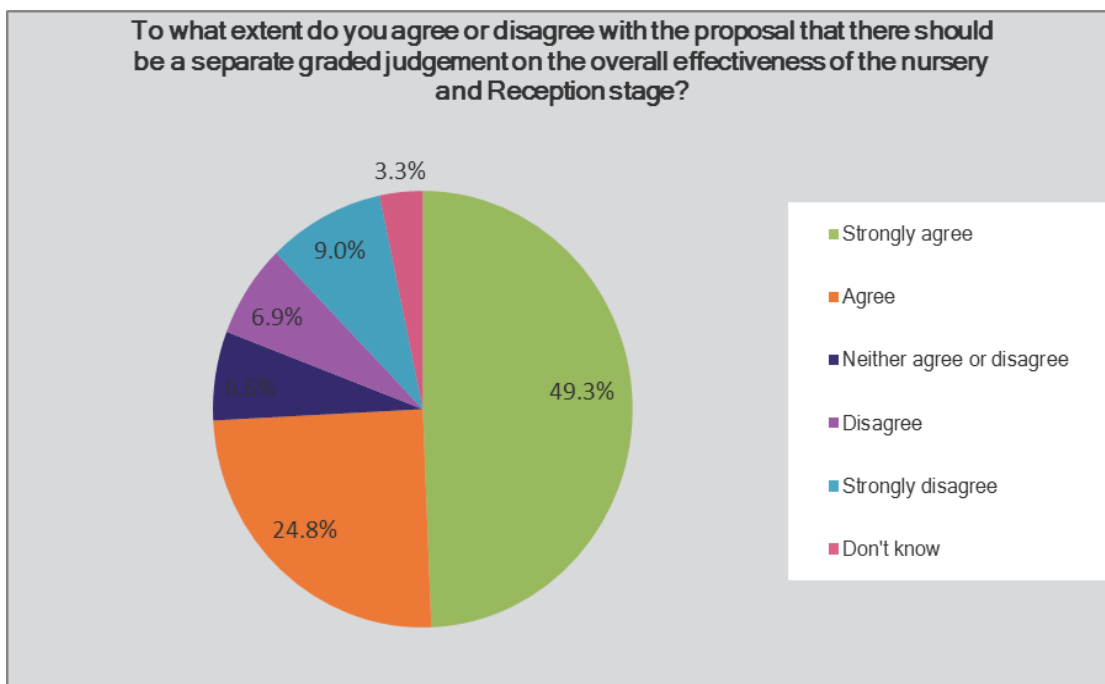
¹ For inspections conducted under section 5 of the Education Act 2005, www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

9. Grade descriptors for each of these judgements are incorporated into our guidance documents and inspection instruments as part of our review of guidance documents for the summer term. The revised guidance will come into effect on 1 September 2014.

Overview of responses

10. The consultation asked two specific questions and also gave respondents the opportunity to comment on the proposals. The section below provides an analysis of the responses received and sets out the action we plan to take to deliver the proposals.
11. Overall, respondents to the online consultation were in favour of Ofsted's proposals. Many of the responses were positive and showed that our proposed changes were welcomed by the sector.

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that there should be a separate graded judgement on the overall effectiveness of the nursery and Reception stage?

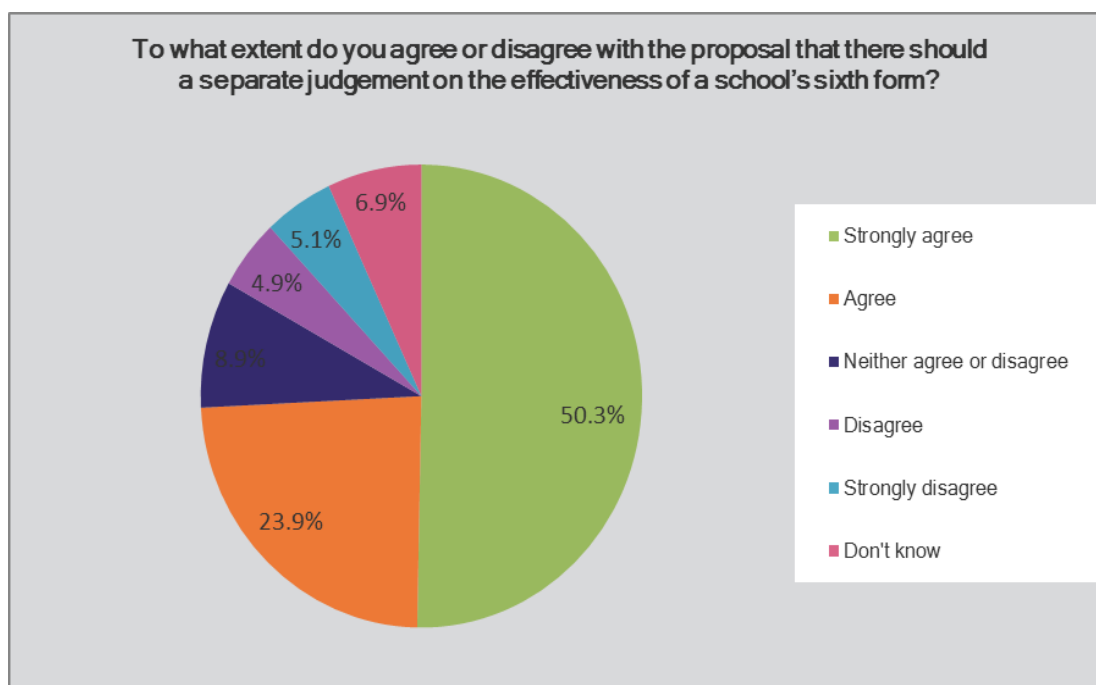


12. A large majority of respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce a separate graded judgement on the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in 'The framework for school inspections' from September 2014. Nearly half agreed strongly.
13. Seventy four per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the introduction of a separate graded judgement, 16% either disagreed or strongly

disagreed, 7% neither agreed nor disagreed and 3% of respondents responded 'don't know'.

14. We received many comments along the following themes from people responding positively:
- inspectors should have a good understanding of EYFS and have relevant or current experience; as there is a separate framework for EYFS
 - the grade descriptors for EYFS in schools and other provisions should be the same
 - EYFS judgements should influence the overall effectiveness judgement (for example, a school should only be judged outstanding if its EYFS provision is judged at least good, and, alternatively, if the EYFS provision is judged inadequate then the school's overall effectiveness should also be judged inadequate).
15. Respondents disagreeing with this approach felt that the EYFS is part of a whole school, so should not be judged separately. They felt that this was a retrospective step that could unnecessarily complicate the inspection process.

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal that there should be a separate judgement on the effectiveness of a school's sixth form?



16. The large majority of respondents agreed with the proposal to introduce a separate graded judgement on the effectiveness of a school's sixth form in the inspection framework from September 2014. Just over half agreed strongly.

17. Seventy four per cent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed to the introduction of the separate graded judgement, 10% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, 9% neither agreed nor disagreed and 7% responded 'don't know'.
18. Respondents' comments in relation to question 2 were similar to those for question 1. Many of those who agreed commented on the need for inspectors who would be making judgements on the effectiveness of a school's sixth form to have suitable expertise and experience.
19. A common feeling among those respondents who disagreed was that the sixth form should be reported on as part of the whole school, rather than through a separate judgement.

Breakdown of responses

20. The consultation received 1,498 responses. The majority of responses came from teachers (39.6%) with headteachers following closely (20%). A full breakdown is provided below. We are grateful to all respondents who contributed.

Which of the below describes you best?		
Answer options	Response Count	Response Percent
A governor	63	4.6%
A headteacher (including equivalents such as principal and acting headteacher)	271	20.0%
A local government representative	82	6.1%
Other school staff	115	8.5%
Other service provider	107	7.9%
A pupil/student (including youth panels)	4	0.3%
A parent/carer	109	8.0%
A teacher	536	39.6%
A member of the general public	41	3.0%
Prefer not to say	27	2.0%
Answered question		1355
Skipped question		143

Conclusion

21. Ofsted will introduce separate graded judgements for the EYFS and sixth form in September 2014. These judgements will be underpinned by separate grade descriptors. As with all other inspection grades, inspectors will be expected to gather evidence during the course of the inspection in order to arrive at a professional judgement for each area. Ofsted will deploy inspection teams with appropriate expertise.
22. When arriving at the judgement on the quality of education provided by a school, expressed by the overall effectiveness, inspectors will take account of the EYFS and/or sixth form judgements (where relevant). However, these will not be 'limiting judgements' on the school's overall effectiveness. Inspectors will consider the outcomes for the EYFS and/or sixth form and make a professional judgement of the impact on the school's overall effectiveness grade.
23. We believe that these changes will increase focus in these important areas of school provision and help to ensure that many more children and young people have the best education possible.

Annex

Consultation dates

18 March 2014 to 13 May 2014

Consultation proposals

We propose to introduce separate graded judgements for the Nursery (where applicable) and Reception Years, and for the sixth form, in our inspections of maintained schools and academies.

The proposed changes, due to come into effect from September 2014, are designed to ensure that inspectors place as much emphasis on these important stages of children's education as on the quality of provision for five- to 16-year-olds.

Ofsted wants to hear from schools, parents and other parties about whether they think the plans will provide a more rounded view of those academies and local authority maintained schools that provide these stages of education.

Ofsted's National Director for Schools, Michael Cladingbowl, said:

'We know that the early years of education set children up for life – so it is really important that schools get this right. I want our inspection reports to be even clearer about how well children are doing in Reception and Nursery classes. It's also important that parents and young people have a clear understanding of how well the school's sixth form is doing so they can make informed choices about where to continue their studies when they reach 16.'

We are keen to hear the views of parents and learners as well as providers about our proposals to bring in these separate judgements.'