

## Policy statement for inspecting academy schools, including free schools

1. This statement sets out how Ofsted will inspect academy schools from September 2013. When an academy school is established it has a new legal status and is a new school.

Broadly, there are two types of academy school:<sup>1</sup>

- converter academies - existing schools that have been approved to convert to become an academy
  - sponsor-led academies - new schools including Free Schools<sup>2</sup>, Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges.
2. The first section 5 inspection of new academies will usually take place within two years of opening<sup>3</sup>. In most instances, we will not select new academies for a first section 5 inspection until after four terms have elapsed from their opening.
  3. Inspection arrangements for converter academies are also guided by the inspection history of their predecessor school. Certain types of schools judged outstanding before conversion are exempt from routine inspection unless there are concerns about their performance<sup>4</sup>.
  4. Ofsted may conduct a section 8 monitoring inspection of an academy where information we hold or receive about the academy causes sufficient concern. Under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 the Chief Inspector has the discretionary power to inspect any school in England in circumstances where he is not required to do so by section 5 of the Act. Under section 8(1) of the Act the Chief Inspector must inspect a school when required to do so by the Secretary of State.
  5. Following an initial section 5 inspection, academy schools will be subject to the same inspection arrangements as maintained schools.

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<sup>1</sup> There is no legal difference between the two types of academy, albeit that in practice they are treated differently and may be formed by different routes.

<sup>2</sup> Free Schools that were formerly independent schools are not led by a sponsor.

<sup>3</sup> 16-19 academies and 16-19 free schools are inspected under the Common Inspection Framework for Further Education and Skills.

<sup>4</sup> See exemption regulations: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/1293/made>. All exempt schools, remain subject to Ofsted's risk assessment process.