

# Methodology note: the risk assessment of good and outstanding maintained schools and academies

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This methodology note sets out the risk assessment process that Ofsted uses to assist in scheduling short inspections of good schools and to help identify exempt outstanding schools with concerns about performance.

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## Introduction

We use risk assessment to ensure that our approach to inspection is proportionate and to focus our efforts where they can have the greatest impact. We use risk assessment to assist in scheduling short inspections of good schools and to help identify exempt outstanding schools with concerns about performance.

This is a note of the methodology applied using 2016 published data. It will be updated annually.

## The risk assessment process

Risk assessment has two stages:

- stage 1 involves an assessment of each school based on analysis of published data
- stage 2 involves a more in-depth desk-based review of a wider range of available information.

### Stage 1

#### Analysis of published historic data

Risk assessment based on historic performance data supports the emphases in the school inspection handbook on progress from starting points and progress of disadvantaged pupils. The strengths and weaknesses in the inspection dashboard reflect grade criteria in the school inspection handbook and inform risk assessment. Strengths may include consistency across groups or subjects, while weaknesses can relate to single groups or subjects.

Areas of strength and/or weakness considered at each key stage are:

#### Key stage 4

- Progress 8 overall and from different starting points (key stage 2 prior attainment groups) for all pupils and for disadvantaged pupils
- English and mathematics Progress 8 elements overall and from different starting points for all pupils and for disadvantaged pupils
- Progress across the curriculum from different starting points for all pupils and for disadvantaged pupils

#### Key stage 2

- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics overall and from different starting points (key stage 1 prior attainment groups) for all pupils and for disadvantaged pupils
- Average scaled scores in reading and mathematics for disadvantaged pupils

## Key stage 1

- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the expected standard and greater depth from different starting points (EYFS development groups) for all pupils and for disadvantaged pupils
- The proportions of all pupils and of disadvantaged pupils that met the expected standard in phonics in Year 1/Year 2

The methodology aggregates these strengths and weaknesses.

Weaknesses are not assigned to groups of fewer than six pupils or for differences in progress scores that are not statistically significant.

## Additional risk information

Additional information is incorporated into the risk assessment process.

The information, based on historic data, is:

- being below the floor standards
- meeting the coasting definition
- being below the 16–18 minimum standards
- high absence or persistent absence
- high repeat exclusion.

Other information is concern triggered by:

- a sufficient number of negative Parent View (<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk>) responses, if verified as legitimate.

## Inclusion in stage 1

Schools with cohorts of fewer than 11 pupils at the relevant key stage are not included in stage 1 of the risk assessment.

## Stage 2

### Desk-based review

Senior Her Majesty's Inspectors (SHMI) within each region review the information provided by stage 1 of the risk assessment process. They also review risk by considering:

- the outcomes of any inspections, such as survey inspections, that we have carried out since the last routine inspection
- qualifying complaints<sup>1</sup> about the school referred to us by parents
- statutory warning notices
- any other significant concerns that are brought to our attention.

## Timing of inspections

For further information on the use of risk assessment and the timing of inspections, please refer to the school inspection handbook:  
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015).

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<sup>1</sup> Ofsted has specific powers (under sections 11A–C of the Education Act 2005) to investigate certain complaints about schools, known as qualifying complaints.



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