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Office for Standards
in Education

Inspecting schools

Framework for inspecting schools

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Effective from September 2003



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in Education

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Introduction

This edition of *Inspecting schools (Inspecting schools or the Framework)* sets out the requirements for school inspections in England from September 2003. It incorporates significant developments in the policy for school inspections and education more generally. Inspections will, for example:

- promote and draw from school self-evaluation;
- evaluate leadership and management at all levels in the school;
- recognise the increasing diversification of the curriculum in many schools;
- focus more on the inclusivity of the school and how well it meets the needs of individual pupils;
- take greater account of the views of pupils, as well as parents and staff; and
- recognise that an increasing number of schools provide for children and families beyond the school day.

Inspection has improved significantly since 1993. Most schools find inspection a positive, though challenging, experience. Inspection complements school self-evaluation and is helpful in stimulating and steering school improvement. Inspection provides a valuable opportunity for the people working in schools to experience clear, impartial evaluation of the quality of their work and an analysis of strengths, weaknesses and priorities for improvement.

Changes to the inspection system have reduced the size of an inspection for most schools. The most effective schools will be inspected less frequently than others. Inspections must be tailored closely to individual schools. Ofsted remains concerned to minimise the demands that inspections make on schools. Inspection forms are partially pre-filled with data and are normally completed through Ofsted's web site. Ofsted neither requires nor expects teachers to engage in extra work of any sort because of a forthcoming inspection.

Inspecting Schools outlines what inspection will cover and the work that inspectors need to do. It is arranged in four parts.

- **Part A** sets out the basis for inspections and describes the inspection model for different types of school.
- **Part B** describes the inspection process and sets out the requirements of lead inspectors and inspection teams.
- **Part C** is the *Evaluation Schedule* that specifies what inspectors must consider in order to judge how effective the school is and to explain why.
- **Part D** is about how the quality of inspections is assured.

Guidance on implementing *Inspecting Schools*, particularly the *Evaluation Schedule*, is provided in Ofsted's three inspection handbooks:

- *Handbook for inspecting nursery and primary schools* (HMI 1359);
- *Handbook for inspecting secondary schools* (HMI 1360); and
- *Handbook for inspecting special schools and pupil referral units* (HMI 1361).

***Inspecting Schools* sets out the requirements for inspection. Inspectors must meet these requirements fully and inspection providers must ensure that they do, recognising that the lead inspector is ultimately responsible for the composition of the inspection team, the quality of the inspection and the inspection report.**

Role of Ofsted

- 1 The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) is a non-ministerial government department headed by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England (HMCI). It is independent of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and other departments although it works closely with them and undertakes some inspections at the request of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. This independence enables educational matters to be inspected and reported impartially.
- 2 Ofsted provides advice to ministers informed by inspection evidence. Ofsted is responsible for inspecting schools, including Early Excellence Centres, further education and sixth form colleges, initial teacher training, Connexions and youth services, local education authorities and other educational provision. It is also responsible for the regulation and inspection of childcare and early years education.
- 3 The following principles apply to **all** inspection activities carried out by or on behalf of Ofsted. They are intended to ensure that:
 - the findings of inspection are **valid, reliable and consistent**;
 - the findings of inspection contribute to **improvement**;
 - the process of inspection promotes **inclusion**; and
 - inspection is carried out **openly** with those being inspected.

Inspection Principles

- ❑ Inspection acts in the interests of children, young people and adult learners and, where relevant, their parents, to encourage high-quality provision that meets diverse needs and promotes equality.
- ❑ Inspection is evaluative and diagnostic, assessing quality and compliance, and providing a clear basis for improvement.
- ❑ The purpose of inspection and the procedures to be used are communicated clearly to those involved.
- ❑ Inspection invites and takes account of any self-evaluation by those inspected.
- ❑ Inspection informs those responsible for taking decisions about provision.
- ❑ Inspection is carried out by those who have sufficient and relevant professional expertise and training.
- ❑ Evidence is recorded and is of sufficient range and quality to secure and justify judgements.
- ❑ Judgements are based on systematic evaluation requirements and criteria, are reached corporately where more than one inspector is involved, and reflect a common understanding in Ofsted about quality.
- ❑ Effectiveness is central to judging the quality of provision and processes.
- ❑ Inspection includes clear and helpful oral feedback and leads to written reporting that evaluates performance and quality, and identifies strengths and areas for improvement.
- ❑ The work of all inspectors reflects Ofsted's stated Values and its code of conduct.
- ❑ Quality assurance is built into all inspection activities to ensure that these principles are met and inspection is improved.

Part A: The inspection system

Purpose of school inspections

The law requires all maintained and certain independent schools to be inspected regularly. The approach to Ofsted school inspections has been developed and improved continuously since these were established by the Education (Schools) Act 1992. The main purposes and features of the inspection system from September 2003 are explained here.

Why do we have inspections?

- 4 Inspection provides an independent, external evaluation of the quality and standards of the school. Inspectors must tell the school what it does well and what it needs to do to improve. They must explain how and why they have come to their conclusions. They also look at whether or not the school has improved since its previous inspection.
- 5 The published inspection report and summary inform governors, parents, the school and the wider community about the quality of education at the school and whether pupils achieve as much as they can. The inspection team's findings provide a measure of accountability and help the school to manage improvement.
- 6 Periodic external inspection should be complemented by continuous internal evaluation. Transparency in the inspection process and the publication of the inspection *Framework* are also aimed at promoting a culture of rigorous self-evaluation and improvement.
- 7 HMCI's annual report to parliament on the quality and standards of education in England is based on all the inspections conducted in the previous academic year, including thematic inspection exercises conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and additional inspectors appointed by HMCI.

How frequent are inspections?

- 8 School inspections are governed by section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 (the Act), as amended by the Education Act 2002. All schools must be inspected at least once within six years of the end of the school year in which they were previously inspected. Inspections are proportional to need, the most effective schools having the longest interval between inspections. When HMCI considers it necessary, he will arrange for a school to be inspected more frequently.

What is inspected?

- 9 In law, inspections must report on:
- **the educational standards** achieved in the school;
 - **the quality of the education** provided by the school;
 - **the quality of leadership and management**, including whether the financial resources made available to the school are managed efficiently; and
 - **the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils** at the school.
- 10 The *Evaluation Schedule* in Part C of the *Framework* covers these four requirements by requiring inspectors to evaluate the following aspects of the school's work:
- standards achieved;
 - pupils' attitudes, values and personal development;
 - teaching and learning;
 - the quality of the curriculum;
 - the care, guidance and support of pupils;
 - partnerships with parents, other schools and the community;
 - leadership and management;
 - the areas of learning, subjects and courses of the curriculum; and
 - other matters that HMCI may specify.
- 11 Inspection helps the school by:
- providing an overall judgement on the effectiveness of the school; and
 - identifying its strengths and weaknesses and the most important points for improvement.
- 12 Inspectors must use the *Evaluation Schedule* in Part C of this document and take account of guidance and benchmarks in the inspection *Handbooks* when they make their judgements.
- 13 Some schools have a religious character and teach denominational religious education. Under section 23 of the Act, religious education and the content of collective worship are not included in the section 10 inspection of such schools, but are inspected separately. Often, these inspections coincide at the request of the governing body.
- 14 Where the school makes community or care provision that is subject to inspection under Part XA of the Children Act 1989, the checking of compliance with the Care Standards is not part of the section 10 inspection. Inspectors will, however, need to see the most recent Children Act report, if applicable, and find out what action the school has taken in respect of any recommendations made in the report.

Which schools are inspected?

- 15 All maintained schools and some non-maintained schools are covered by the legislation on inspection. The following categories of schools are inspected under section 10 of the Act:
- community, foundation and voluntary schools;
 - maintained nursery schools;
 - city technology colleges;
 - city colleges for the technology of the arts;
 - Early Excellence Centres that have maintained nursery provision;
 - community and foundation special schools;
 - pupil referral units (PRUs);
 - non-maintained special schools approved under section 342 of the Education Act 1996; and
 - Academies.

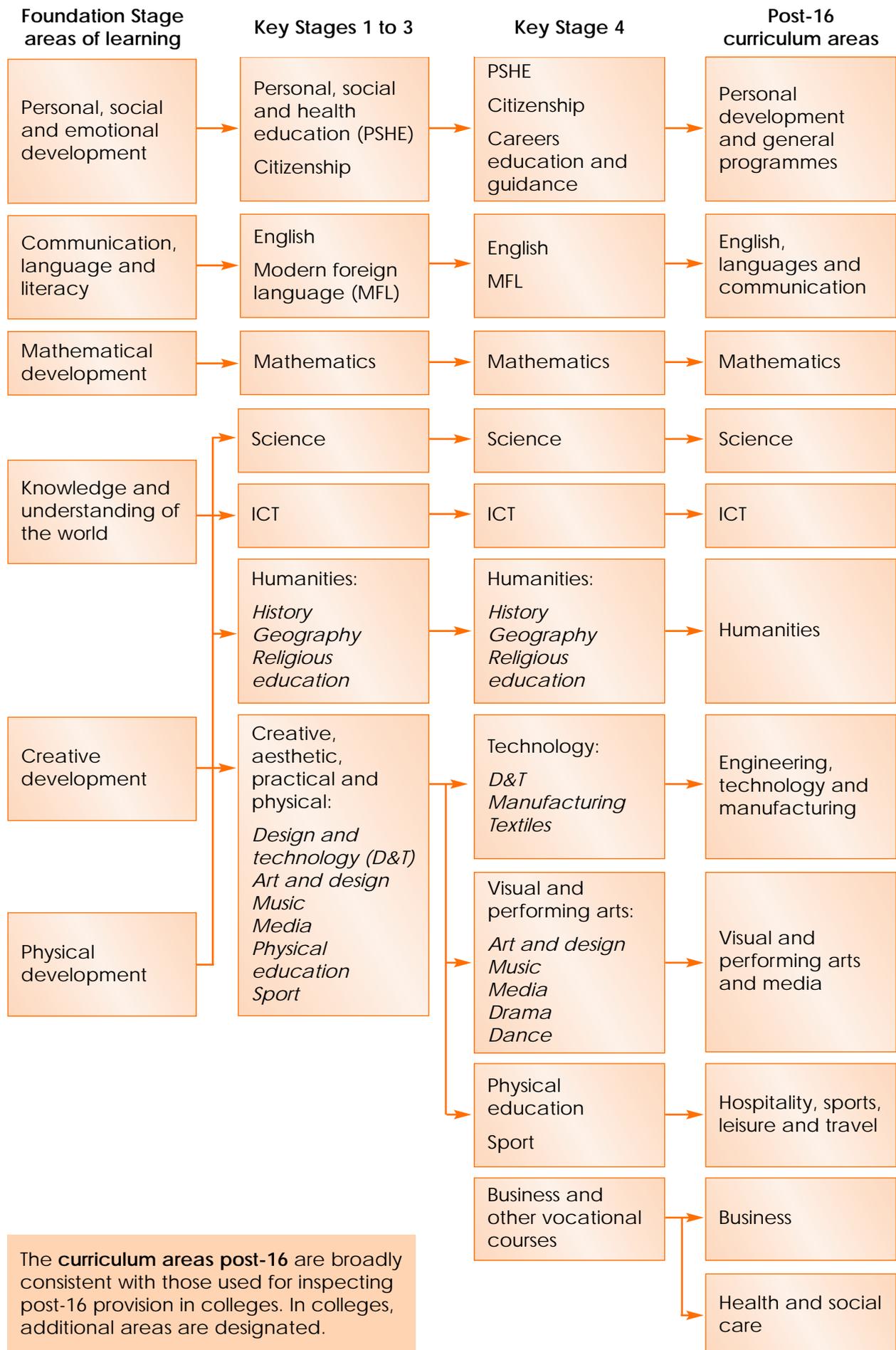
Types of inspection

Common elements apply to all inspections, but lead inspectors must ensure that for each school the inspection and report reflect its special features, quality and needs, recognising the successful features of the school and helping the school to focus on priorities for raising achievement.

What types of inspection are there, and to which schools do they apply?

- 16 The inspection system embraces one type of inspection for schools in each sector.
- 17 One model of inspection, for example, applies to all primary, including nursery, schools. A more extended model applies to secondary schools, while a model that reflects the distinctive features of special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) is used for them.
- 18 The proportionality of inspection to the effectiveness of the school is reflected in the timing of inspections, subject to the intervals prescribed in law. Less effective schools are inspected more frequently than more effective ones.
- 19 For the purposes of inspecting and reporting, subjects and courses of the curriculum in Key Stages 1 to 4 are grouped into **curriculum areas**. These link with the areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage and the curriculum areas that are common for the inspection of education and training post-16. The curriculum areas are shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. Curriculum areas



How does the inspection system differentiate between successful and less successful schools?

- 20 Differentiation of inspection is achieved by tailoring the inspection to the circumstances and performance of the school. This must be done in consultation with the school so as to take account of its self-evaluation and performance indicators. Where standards in core subjects are high, for example, inspection will be able to give more time to the rest of the curriculum. In a school where standards are low, particularly in core subjects, inspectors will focus more on these subjects to diagnose weaknesses. Differentiation may also mean focusing more on some year groups than others, on particular groups of pupils or on particular aspects of the school.

How do inspections reflect the specialist status or other distinctive features of schools?

- 21 The lead inspector must ensure that the inspection is focused so as to reflect any distinctive features or specialist status of the school. Inspectors must understand the specific objectives of these schools and assess how well they achieve their objectives.

What do inspections include?

- 22 The inspections of nursery, primary, secondary and special schools (including PRUs), cover all the main evaluation requirements on **aspects** of the school's work as set out in the *Evaluation Schedule* in Part C of *Inspecting Schools*. The areas of learning, subjects and courses inspected in different types of school are specified below.
- 23 **Nursery school inspections** include the evaluation and reporting of the standards achieved by children, taking account of their progress towards Foundation Stage early learning goals, as well as the quality of teaching and learning in each of the six areas of learning and the quality of curriculum leadership.
- 24 **Primary school inspections** include the evaluation and reporting of standards achieved by pupils, the quality of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership, and any other factors that have a bearing on pupils' achievement, as applicable, in:
- the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 3;
 - English (including literacy across the curriculum), mathematics (including numeracy), science, information and communication technology (ICT) and ICT capability across the curriculum and religious education (where it is inspected); and
 - work seen in other subjects.
- 25 **Secondary school inspections** include the evaluation and reporting of standards achieved by pupils, the quality of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership, and any other factors that have a bearing on pupils' achievement, as applicable, including the evaluation of and reporting on:
- the National Curriculum subjects in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4, as applicable, religious education (where it is inspected);
 - at least one vocational course in Key Stage 4;

- work seen in as many other subjects and courses as possible; and
- a sample of between 4 and 13 subjects or courses in the sixth form chosen according to the following principles.

26 A cross-section of sixth-form subjects to be inspected in detail should be chosen using the following principles.

- English, mathematics and a science subject should always be included.
- Other subjects should be drawn from across as many curriculum areas as possible. Where possible, a modern foreign language should be included in addition to English from the 'English, languages and communications' area.
- Subjects that, from pre-inspection data, appear to be particularly weak must be inspected.
- Vocationally related courses should be duly represented.
- Courses at different levels should be inspected. Where a subject or course is offered at two levels, for example advanced and intermediate vocational courses, standards and quality at both levels should be evaluated.
- Where a school is part of a shared sixth form, the subjects inspected in detail should be in that school where possible, with sampling in other schools. Circumstances may dictate more inspection outside the inspected school. Where substantial provision is made outside the school, this should be inspected to test the effectiveness of the management decisions to provide for the sixth form in this way.
- In small sixth forms (up to 100 students), attention should be given mainly to the subjects or courses followed by most students, but English, mathematics and a science should be inspected where possible.

27 **Special school inspections**, and the inspection of **pupil referral units (PRUs)**, include the evaluation and reporting of standards achieved by pupils, the quality of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership, and any other factors that have a bearing on pupils' achievement in:

- English (including language and literacy across the curriculum), mathematics (including numeracy), science, information and communication technology (ICT) and ICT capability across the curriculum, and religious education (where it is inspected); and
- work seen across other curriculum areas as appropriate, considering the nature of the school.

These inspections must also include other important features of the school's provision such as outreach functions or support services.

How many days will inspectors spend in the school?

28 Ofsted allocates indicative on-site inspection time to inspections. The tariffs of inspector days are published separately. The specification for the inspection, based on *Form S1*, may require more time for the inspection of particular aspects of provision.

How are schools selected for inspection?

- 29 Ofsted decides the timing of each school's inspection using the following factors:
- the date of the previous inspection;
 - the findings of the previous inspection;
 - trends in performance over time; and
 - performance in relation to national averages, and in relation to similar schools.

Internal school evaluation

Ofsted recognises the importance of school self-evaluation as a continuous process that is complemented from time to time by external inspection. Self-evaluation makes an important contribution to inspections. It provides the school and the lead inspector with a means of ensuring that inspection covers matters of potential significance to the school.

What part does school self-evaluation play in inspection?

- 30 Schools have a range of internal processes for monitoring their own performance and evaluating the effectiveness of their work in raising achievement. Such monitoring and evaluation should contribute, directly or indirectly, to periodic updating of the school improvement plan, which maps the priorities for action and sets out programmes for implementing them.
- 31 Inspection takes account of or contributes to these processes in several ways.
- a. A brief self-evaluation report (*Form S4*) prepared by the school helps to focus inspection effort where it matters most and to respond to any specific issues that the inspection can usefully include. The school's summary of its self-evaluation is used as the basis for discussion between the lead inspector and the headteacher and, where possible, governors of the school, when the inspection is being planned.
 - b. The quality and use made of school self-evaluation is a good indication of the calibre of management. Evidence of how effectively schools undertake self-evaluation and the use they make of it helps inspectors to evaluate the quality of management in the school and the capacity of the school to improve.
- 32 In order to promote the use of self-evaluation, the self-evaluation report (*Form S4*) which is completed by the school before inspection, is constructed so as to match the *Evaluation Schedule* used by inspectors. Many schools use the *Evaluation Schedule* as the basis for their internal evaluation processes.
- 33 The lead inspector must allow sufficient time, both in the school before the inspection and in preparation, to analyse and interpret the school's performance, identify issues and themes, and design and plan the inspection so that it will reflect the essence of the school. This process must be thorough and consultative.

Inspectors and inspection teams

Most school inspections are conducted by teams of independent inspectors recruited, trained, assessed and enrolled by Ofsted. Only registered inspectors are entitled to lead inspections. Independent inspectors are engaged to inspect schools by inspection providers who are contracted by Ofsted to organise inspections. Lead inspectors must ensure that:

- inspectors on the inspection team are fit, proper, competent and effective, as required in law; and
- the team is composed of inspectors best suited for the inspection, and that they are effectively deployed so that the inspection is well tailored to the school.

Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), all of whom are on the permanent staff of Ofsted, also inspect some schools.

Who inspects schools?

- 34 Most school inspections are led by registered (lead) inspectors, who work with teams of one or more enrolled inspectors. HMI or additional inspectors may also be part of an inspection team where HMCI has authorised such an arrangement.
- 35 There are provisions for HMCI to arrange for a school to be inspected by HMI when he considers it expedient to do so.
- 36 An inspection team must include at least one inspector, a lay inspector, without personal experience in the management of a school or the provision of education in a school (other than as a governor or voluntary helper). The lay inspector must spend at least one day, or at least 10% of the total inspection time (whichever is the greater), on direct inspection. The maximum time allocation is four days (or five in schools with sixth forms).
- 37 A lay inspector who is a registered inspector may not lead a team in the inspection of a special school, or any type of school to which fewer than eight inspector days have been allocated. A lay registered inspector must always ensure that the inspection team contains sufficient educational expertise and experience related to the school being inspected.
- 38 Inspectors must be endorsed to take the lead responsibility for the inspection and reporting of particular subjects and courses. To gain endorsement, inspectors must satisfy Ofsted of their qualifications and experience in and competence to inspect the particular subjects and courses. An inspector may lead the inspection and reporting of a curriculum area in which he or she holds a subject endorsement.

What expertise must inspection teams have?

- 39 In schools with children in the **Foundation Stage**, at least one member of the team must be endorsed to lead the inspection and reporting of the school's work in this stage.
- 40 In **Key Stages 1 and 2**, the team must include the expertise and experience to inspect all subjects and aspects of the primary curriculum across the full range of pupils in the school. Where primary schools teach a modern foreign language to any significant extent, the team should include a team inspector endorsed to take lead responsibility for inspecting and reporting on a modern foreign language.

- 41 In **Key Stages 3 and 4**, inspectors' subject knowledge should cover as wide a range of subjects and vocational courses as possible. The team must include inspectors competent to inspect English, mathematics, science, ICT, religious education (where it is inspected) and the other foundation subjects of the National Curriculum. In Key Stages 3 and 4, and in **the sixth form**, inspectors must be endorsed to lead and report on any of the subjects and courses that are inspected and reported in detail. For the inspection of secondary schools that offer vocational courses, the inspection team must include inspectors competent to inspect at least one of these courses. Coverage of vocational courses must be proportional to the extent to which the school offers them.
- 42 For the inspection of **special schools**, or special needs units in mainstream schools, teams must be competent and effective in inspecting the main types of need or disability represented in the school or unit.

How are inspection teams assembled and deployed?

- 43 The lead inspector is responsible for agreeing the composition of the inspection team, and managing the team's deployment, to match the particular circumstances of each school. He or she must also ensure that no one on the team has a connection with the school that might raise doubts about the ability of that inspector to act impartially.
- 44 Inspection teams must include one or more inspectors responsible for co-ordinating the inspection of each of:
- the education of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools;
 - where relevant, the education of pupils in the Foundation Stage; and
 - where relevant, the education of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- 45 The lead inspector is responsible for co-ordinating the inspection of inclusion, including race equality. While other inspectors might be allocated responsibilities for co-ordinating the inspection findings for other aspects of the *Evaluation Schedule*, they should not be seen as solely responsible for inspecting those features. All members of the inspection team must contribute fully to the evaluation of whole-school matters such as leadership, management and the behaviour of pupils. The *Evaluation Schedule* must be treated as a unified map of the scope of inspection. Inspection and reporting of aspects listed in the schedule must not be artificially compartmentalised.
- 46 Individual inspectors will have responsibility for inspecting and reporting on particular subjects or curriculum areas, especially in secondary schools.
- 47 Lay inspectors are full and equal members of inspection teams and it is important that they take a wide-ranging view of the school from the perspective of those who use and depend on it. They should take a particular interest in users' levels of satisfaction with the school. So that lay inspectors have sufficient time and scope to fulfil this role, lead inspectors should take care not to encumber them unduly with lead responsibility for major areas of the school's work set out in the headings in the *Evaluation Schedule*. Lay inspectors may contribute to the inspection by leading and reporting on particular features of the school, but they must not take responsibility for the inspection of subjects, courses or curriculum areas. A lay registered inspector, however, has overall responsibility for the report when leading an inspection.
- 48 Inspections may include trainee inspectors.

How are inspections arranged?

- 49 Ofsted determines the programme of inspections to be carried out in each academic year, based on the selection of schools which will allow the prescribed intervals to be met, and which will provide inspection evidence to inform HMCI's annual report. Inspection providers are invited to bid, under competitive tender, for contracts to carry out these inspections. The bids are assessed against predetermined evaluation criteria, including value for money, quality and past performance. Only inspection providers who meet Ofsted's Quality Assurance Standard (an audit-based system for assuring that the work of providers and inspectors meets requirements) are invited to bid, and compliance with the Standard is a condition of the contract.
- 50 After the award of contracts, and about one term in advance of the inspections for which they are responsible, inspection providers plan the inspections, building and scheduling teams, and identifying resources to support the inspections. Teams are adjusted in consultation with the lead inspector when the school provides information on *Forms S1 to S4*, to match the needs of the school and its inspection. Inspection providers operate their own quality control procedures to support their lead inspectors and satisfy contractual requirements.
- 51 Inspection providers also investigate and respond to complaints about inspections and the inspectors they engage.

Who are the inspection providers and how do they select inspectors?

- 52 Inspection providers are generally commercial organisations (small or large companies, partnerships or sometimes sole traders), or local education authorities, that may arrange inspections as well as conduct other education-related work.
- 53 The inspection providers assemble inspection teams using enrolled inspectors who are either the employees of the providers or who work under contract to them. The composition of each team is subject to approval by the lead inspector for the inspection.

How much training do inspectors have?

- 54 Ofsted requires all inspectors to be properly trained and assessed to specified standards. Initial training for candidates who meet the selection criteria takes place over several months and includes placement on inspections. The training leads to a formal assessment by HMI. Once inspectors have passed this assessment and are enrolled, they are required to complete a minimum of five days of professional development every year and keep up to date with inspection practice. This includes an element of subject-specific training, except for lay inspectors. Where Ofsted considers that all inspectors need to complete further training in a particular area, for example in the inspection of educational inclusion, this is made mandatory.

Part B: The inspection process

Before the inspection

For inspectors to make the best use of their time in the school, and for inspection to be of most value to the school, they must gain an understanding of the school and the emphases and issues for the inspection before they begin their work on site. Pre-inspection activities, and contacts with the school, must ensure that:

- good communications and effective working relationships are established with the school;
- the school, its staff and governors are fully briefed about the inspection, and that arrangements for the inspection are agreed;
- demands on the school are kept to a minimum and the school is dissuaded from producing extra documents for the inspection;
- pre-inspection evidence, including the views of parents and pupils about the school, has been harnessed and thoroughly analysed;
- the issues and themes for the inspection have been established and shared with the school; and
- members of the inspection team have a clear understanding of what the school offers, have a shared view of inspection issues and arrangements, and are well prepared for the inspection.

Inspectors must take full account of the school's analysis of its own performance, reflected in its self-evaluation summarised on *Form S4*. This should feature strongly when the lead inspector discusses the inspection with the school and plans the composition and deployment of the team.

When are schools notified about inspections?

- 55 Well before the inspection, Ofsted informs providers about the schools they are to inspect and any issues specified by HMCI that will be included in inspections. This is to enable providers to assemble inspection teams.
- 56 Schools are notified 6 to 10 school weeks before a planned inspection. Ofsted will specify what information and data are needed from the school before the inspection.

What information will inspectors need from the school?

- 57 Inspectors need a certain amount of information and data about the school to prepare the pre-inspection commentary.
- 58 Information about the school, its pupils and its self-evaluation, is gathered using four forms that are completed electronically by the school via the Ofsted web site.
- *Form S1* includes basic information about the school, pre-entered where possible. This form is used by Ofsted to prepare a specification for the inspection.
 - *Form S2* includes more detailed information about the school and its pupils.
 - *Form S3* is completed by the governing body and includes its assessment of how far statutory arrangements and policies are in place. This avoids the need for the school to provide all such policies before the inspection.
 - *Form S4*, provides the school with an opportunity to summarise its own perceptions of its quality and standards, gained through monitoring and self-evaluation.
- 59 Each lead inspector will have access to the web pages that contain the school's data, from the point at which the inspection is announced. The system allows for the school to update or remedy any errors. The lead inspector should, therefore, be able to access the Internet in the pre-inspection period.
- 60 Inspectors also refer to documents provided by Ofsted:
- the Performance and Assessment (PANDA) report for each school; and
 - the previous inspection report(s).
- 61 The school is asked to provide one copy of each of:
- the school's current development or management plan;
 - the prospectus or school brochure;
 - the most recent LEA monitoring report on the school's progress against its targets;
 - the school's timetable; and
 - a plan of the school.
- 62 If any or all of these documents are available on the school's web site, lead inspectors should retrieve them from this source and not ask the school to provide them. Schools must not be asked to provide multiple copies of school documentation.
- 63 To keep the demands on schools to a minimum, lead inspectors must not request any further information before the inspection. On no account should inspectors ask for any particular form of lesson planning.

What contacts should providers and lead inspectors make with the school?

- 64** The inspection provider, or the lead inspector, must contact the appropriate authority (normally the governing body) and the headteacher as soon as possible after the school knows that it is to be inspected, to introduce themselves and to begin the process of agreeing dates for the inspection and other key dates. A good working relationship with the school must be established. The first contacts are important in helping the school to understand the inspection process and how the inspection will proceed.
- 65** The lead inspector must arrange to visit the school before the inspection (see paragraph 68), and to agree when documents provided by the school will be made available to help in preparing for the inspection. It is helpful if the school can provide a copy of its timetable at an early stage. This is particularly important for secondary schools where it will influence when and how specialist inspectors are deployed on the inspection.
- 66** In the build-up to inspection, there will usually be several contacts with the school to clarify points and discuss arrangements for the inspection. These are essential to promote a good working relationship and to share with the school how the inspection will be organised and focused.
- 67** As early as possible, the reporting inspector should discuss arrangements for seeking the views of governors, parents, pupils and staff about the school.

What is the purpose of the pre-inspection visit to the school?

- 68** The lead inspector must visit the school before the inspection begins to meet the headteacher, staff and governors, and some of the pupils. The visit or visits must be the equivalent of no less than one day, and may include other inspectors.
- 69** This visit is crucial in the process of designing the inspection, particularly in:
- getting to know the school;
 - understanding the full scope of the school's work;
 - meeting staff, governors and some pupils, and briefing staff and governors about the inspection;
 - helping to shape the inspection so that it is of most value to the school and reflects its individual characteristics and performance;
 - agreeing the arrangements for the inspection; and
 - continuing the process of establishing a good professional relationship with the school.
- 70** Before the meeting the lead inspector must have begun compiling the pre-inspection commentary based on analysis of the pre-inspection evidence, particularly the

performance data in the PANDA report and *Forms S1 to S4*. The lead inspector will share his or her initial impressions with members of the inspection team.

- 71** During the meeting with the headteacher, discussion should focus particularly on the school's self-evaluation. It should lead to identification or confirmation of issues that will be followed through in the inspection.
- 72** At the meeting, the lead inspector will confirm:
- the members of the inspection team and when they will be on site. The lead inspector must consider any comments or concerns raised by the school; and
 - the subjects that it will be possible to inspect.
- 73** Summaries of the curriculum vitae of the team should be given or sent to the school.
- 74** Informing the school about the arrangements for the inspection must not extend to telling schools which lessons will be visited in any part of the inspection, although meetings with key staff should be agreed with the school.

How is educational provision elsewhere than at the school inspected?

- 75** Where significant provision is made for pupils in colleges, other schools or elsewhere, for example through link courses, outreach, or shared teaching arrangements in the sixth form, inspectors need to inspect this work. Inspectors have a right of access to other schools and colleges or other premises in these circumstances.
- 76** The likely extent of visiting beyond the school should be discussed with the school. The lead inspector must contact the other institutions involved so that they are aware of the likelihood of inspection visits. Procedures should be agreed before the inspection. The main points are that:
- evaluations of provision in other schools relate to the school being inspected; and
 - feedback should be offered to teachers after lessons whether they are on the staff of the school being inspected or not.
- 77** The practical details of how to find lessons in other schools or colleges should be worked out before the inspection so that inspectors' time is not wasted.

How does the inspector seek the views of parents, pupils and other partners about the school's work?

- 78** The governors should be invited to use standard questionnaires and other survey materials developed by Ofsted for seeking the views of parents and of pupils. Ways in which the materials for pupils are used should be discussed with the school. If the school has recently surveyed the views of its parents and pupils, and wishes to provide the evidence of these views, inspectors should use the results.

- 79 Responses to surveys should be returned, in confidence, to the lead inspector if possible before the pre-inspection meeting with parents. The lead inspector should ensure that responses are analysed and should incorporate views and issues in the pre-inspection commentary.
- 80 Surveying **pupils' views** through questionnaires should not diminish the discussions with pupils during the inspection. Inspectors should also take opportunities to talk to groups of pupils, for example year-group representatives, the school council or other pupils' forums.
- 81 The governing body must arrange a meeting between the lead inspector and those parents of pupils at the school who wish to attend. Parents should be given as much notice as possible and the meeting must take place before the on-site inspection begins. The meeting is to explain the inspection and to seek parents' views about the school. A standard letter to parents should be given to the school; the letter and questionnaires for parents are available in a range of community languages.
- 82 Where parents ask to see inspectors during the inspection, inspectors should do what they can to accommodate their requests as far as it is practicable.
- 83 The school should be encouraged to seek the views of any **significant partners** in the school's work. The school should contact any such partners and ask that any comments be sent to the lead inspector.
- 84 Lead inspectors should take account of any **external views** of the school proffered by the school and should ask the school for a copy of the LEA's latest monitoring report (or any equivalent) on the performance of the school against its targets. If an LEA officer asks to meet the inspectors this should be accommodated.
- 85 Lead inspectors should ensure that any inspection findings that comment on the involvement of the LEA in the work of the school take account of evidence from the LEA as well as the school.

How is the pre-inspection commentary used?

- 86 The lead inspector should complete the pre-inspection commentary after the visit to the school. It should draw on the full range of pre-inspection evidence including:
- the interpretation of performance and other information from the school;
 - the school's self-evaluation;
 - the pre-inspection visit to the school and discussions with the headteacher, governors and staff; and
 - the views of parents, pupils and others involved in the school's work.
- 87 The commentary should provide the inspection team with a brief but clear analysis of the main features of the school, well-supported hypotheses for the team to test and further issues that will need exploring during the inspection. The pre-inspection commentary should indicate clearly how the hypotheses lead to the particular emphases of the inspection. Team inspectors must have a copy of the pre-inspection commentary sufficiently in advance of the inspection for the team to prepare thoroughly.

- 88** Before the inspection begins, the lead inspector must send the pre-inspection commentary to the school and, prior to or early in the inspection, discuss the commentary with the headteacher and, if practical, the chair of governors. This gives the school the opportunity to contribute evidence focused on the issues for inspection, and to become involved in constructive dialogue about the inspection and its findings.

How are team inspectors involved before inspection?

- 89** In some inspections, a team member, possibly the lay inspector, may accompany the lead inspector on the pre-inspection visit and play a significant part in it, for example by conversing with staff or pupils, or may join the lead inspector at the parents' meeting.
- 90** The lead inspector must ensure that all team inspectors are well briefed about the inspection before it begins and hold a pre-inspection briefing meeting of the team. There must be a shared understanding of the context of the school, the main issues for the inspection and its focus, so that there is common purpose in the team's work; all team members must contribute to inspecting the school as a whole. The lead inspector must ensure that copies of all the documents listed in paragraphs 58, 60 and 61, as well as the pre-inspection commentary, are sent to all team inspectors, including the lay inspector, well before the inspection.
- 91** It is good practice to ensure that members of the inspection team, or as many members as are going to be present at the beginning of the inspection, meet before the inspection commences. This enables any final briefing to be completed, the work of the first day to be confirmed and procedural and quality assurance procedures explained. Inspectors who join the team later in the inspection should be fully briefed on the progress of the inspection and emerging findings, as well as on the work they need to do.

On-site inspection

The time allocated to inspection must be used mainly for gathering first-hand evidence that leads to conclusions about the effectiveness of the school, its main strengths and weaknesses and what it must do to improve. On-site inspection activity must ensure that:

- the inspection is refocused after the team's first day in the school, and subsequently if necessary;
- sufficient evidence is gathered so that judgements about the school are secure and reliable;
- inspection hypotheses, and emerging findings, are thoroughly tested and followed through so that the inspection is focused on matters of importance in the school;
- all inspectors record evidence on evidence forms and compile an inspector's record;
- the main judgements about the school are agreed corporately;
- the conduct of the inspection is to a high standard so that professional relationships are strong and inspectors' work is respected; and
- teachers and those with leadership and management responsibilities in the school receive well-informed and helpful feedback.

What are the principles for gathering evidence?

- 92 Inspectors must collect sufficient evidence to secure the required judgements. Their sampling of the work of the school must be representative so that a fair assessment of the school is made. At the same time, they should be flexible enough to follow up particular issues that emerge. All inspectors must contribute evidence on all sections of the *Evaluation Schedule* so that corporate judgements can be reached.
- 93 Inspectors must use the allocated inspection time for gathering first-hand evidence. Time must not be taken from inspection for team meetings.
- 94 Information held by the school must be freely available for inspectors to see, and the school must co-operate in the inspectors' task of gathering evidence.

What sort of evidence is collected?

- 95 Most of the time on site is spent gathering first-hand evidence by:
- observing teaching and learning;
 - talking with staff, pupils and others in the school;
 - observing extra-curricular activities and the way in which the school runs on a day-to-day basis;
 - tracking school processes such as evaluation and performance management;

- analysing samples of pupils' current and recent work;
- joining meetings such as school council or management meetings, and observing management processes, such as the monitoring of teaching, directly;
- analysing documents provided by the school, including teachers' records of pupils and their progress; and
- analysing records relating to pupils with special educational needs, including individual education plans, statements, annual reviews and transitional reviews.

96 Inspectors will not always observe complete lessons or sessions. Indeed there will be times when scanning across the work of several groups of pupils is desirable. However, inspectors should spend sufficient time in any single lesson to make a secure assessment of the teaching seen.

97 Policies, procedures and systems are important, but inspectors must focus on their effectiveness. It should not be necessary for inspectors to analyse policies in any detail since it is the practice that stems from them that takes precedence. Inspectors should refer to policies only as the need arises from the observations they make, or to track how individual policies or issues become reality in the school and the effect they have. Assertions that are made in discussions must be thoroughly tested.

How is evidence recorded?

- 98** During inspection, inspectors must gather and analyse first-hand and other evidence and record judgements on standard forms:
- Evidence Forms* are used to record first-hand evidence from observations and discussions, and the analysis of data and other documentary evidence;
 - the *Inspector's Record* includes the main issues for the inspection, and a copy is used by each inspector to record a range of judgements about the school as a whole during the inspection. It includes 'grades' that are used as codes for the judgements. All members of the inspection team have a copy of the *Inspector's Record* in which they record their contributions to judgements about the school and any subjects for which they are responsible; and
 - a further copy of the *Inspector's Record* should be used by the lead inspector as the *Record of Corporate Judgements*.

99 The forms, together with any briefings, plans or instructions prepared by the lead inspector, contribute to the evidence base for the inspection. The lead inspector is responsible for compiling and assuring the quality of the evidence base. It must be retained by the lead inspector or the inspection provider for 12 months from the end of the on-site inspection and supplied to Ofsted if required.

How are judgements secured?

100 Inspection teams should meet throughout the inspection to share and review their findings. Inspectors and schools should expect the emphasis of the inspection to change as issues are resolved and others emerge. Inspection should centre on explaining how and why pupils in the school are achieving as they do.

- 101** The lead inspector must manage the team meetings to ensure that judgements about the school, particularly the main evaluation and reporting requirements in the *Evaluation Schedule*, are corporately agreed, and that the strengths and weaknesses of the school and what it must do to improve are identified. Judgements must be convincingly supported by evidence. Judgements relating to each secondary criterion in the *Evaluation Schedule* need not be corporately agreed, but the lead inspector must assure the quality of the evidence and all judgements.
- 102** The **overall judgements** must reflect all the evidence considered by the inspection team. Final judgements should be made only when all first-hand evidence has been collected and considered, and must represent the corporate view of the whole inspection team including any members who were not present at the final team meeting.
- 103** At the end of the inspection, the team must consider whether the school falls into any of four particular categories of schools that are a cause for concern. The requirements are set out in the section of this document about 'Schools causing concern'.

How are judgements summarised?

- 104** Inspectors make a wide range of judgements during an inspection. These must be expressed clearly and accurately on a seven-point scale, using adjectives such as those shown in table 1. Judgements are also summarised for data-collection purposes as grades recorded on *Evidence Forms*, *Inspectors' Records* and the *Record of Corporate Judgements*, they are summarised using a numerical scale.

Table 1. The seven-point judgement scale

Quality descriptor and alternatives	Grade	Implications
Excellent: exceptional; outstanding; first-rate; very highly effective; very rapid (as in progress)	1	Worth disseminating beyond the school
Very good: well above average; highly effective; rapid	2	Worth sharing within the school
Good: above average; effective	3	Worth reinforcing and developing
Satisfactory: average; acceptable; sound; typical	4	Adequate, but scope for improvement
Unsatisfactory: below average; inadequate; slow; ineffective	5	Needs attention
Poor: well below average; very ineffective; very slow	6	Needs urgent action
Very poor: extremely ineffective; extremely slow	7	Immediate radical change needed

What feedback do inspectors give during the inspection?

- 105 Inspectors must offer oral feedback to teachers and other staff about the work they see in lessons. Inspectors must be clear in explaining their judgements about the quality of teaching and any identified strengths and weaknesses, so that teachers will know how to improve their work.
- 106 Constructive dialogue is essential between inspectors and staff, and particularly between the lead inspector and the headteacher.
- 107 Towards the end of the inspection, inspectors should brief heads of department, co-ordinators or other team leaders on their findings about the subjects inspected or significant aspects of the school such as provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Outcomes of inspection

After the inspection team has reached its conclusions, these must be explained to key staff, senior managers and the governing body at separate meetings. After this oral feedback, the written report must contain no judgements that come as a surprise to the school. The findings of inspection, set alongside the school's self-evaluation, provide a basis for action planning for improvement. Post-inspection activity must ensure that:

- feedback is effective in explaining the inspection findings and what the school needs to do to improve;
- opportunity is provided for the school and the governing body to understand why judgements have been made; and
- the inspection report gives a clear and convincing account of the findings of the inspection.

What feedback does the headteacher receive?

- 108 The lead inspector should give brief interim feedback to the headteacher before leaving the school or as soon as possible after the final meeting of the team. At this stage, the inspector should tell the headteacher if the team has judged that the school requires special measures, has an inadequate sixth form, has serious weaknesses or is underachieving, or if the team is still considering these possibilities.
- 109 A full debriefing must be offered within a reasonable time from the end of the inspection, but with a sufficient gap to allow the lead inspector time to reflect on the inspection findings and fully prepare. It should be a full and professional discussion of the findings, and give opportunity for the school to clarify them and to understand what has to be done to improve.
- 110 The headteacher may invite any **staff** of the school to be present, but normally the meeting includes the senior management team only. In exceptional circumstances, a representative of the local education authority (LEA) may be present as an observer. This could be where the school has a temporary headteacher or where the headteacher is likely to be distressed by the findings.

What feedback do governors receive?

- 111** Feedback is offered separately to a meeting of the governing body. It is the governors' meeting and they may invite an LEA or diocesan representative as an observer, subject to the lead inspector's consent. The headteacher should be present.
- 112** Normally, the debriefing to the governors is less extensive than that to the headteacher, but it must be sufficient for the governors to understand the main findings of the inspection and what improvements are needed. Governors should agree the description of the characteristics of the school that will be included in the report.

Are inspection findings discussed with parents?

- 113** Inspectors are not required to give oral feedback to the parents. Governing bodies, however, are encouraged to arrange a meeting to explain the inspection findings to parents and discuss the action they propose to take.

What are the written outcomes of the inspection?

- 114** An inspection report must be written to a prescribed format and include:
- a summary of the school's effectiveness, its strengths and weaknesses, what it must do to improve, and the parents' and pupils' views of the school;
 - a report on each of the matters specified in the *Evaluation Schedule*;
 - reports on each curriculum area inspected, together with more detailed evaluations of subjects and courses as relevant for the type of inspection; and
 - evaluations stemming from the inspection of any issues specified by HMCI.

In addition, the lead inspector must produce a summary of the report for parents.

- 115** Although the format of the inspection report and summary are prescribed, the content and wording are not. The text, balance and tone of the report must reflect the school. Reports should be well argued, written in plain English and based convincingly on the evidence. The report and summary must be readable and informative so that governors, parents and pupils have a fair and accurate assessment of the school and what it must do to improve.
- 116** The report must be factually correct. The final, edited pre-publication draft should be sent to the school for checking after the feedback meetings. It has five working days to comment on the draft. Factual errors must be corrected. Judgements in the report cannot be changed unless factual errors have a significant bearing on them. Any such changes are the responsibility of the lead inspector who must consult the team.

When will the report be issued?

117 The report must be completed within six calendar weeks of the team leaving the school. The lead inspector, or the inspection provider on his or her behalf, must then without delay send a copy of the inspection report and the summary to:

- the appropriate authority for the school;
- Ofsted; and
- the headteacher.

For maintained schools, a copy must also be sent to:

- the LEA, or the governing body where the LEA is the appropriate authority; and
- the person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors, if the school has them (including diocesan authorities in the case of schools with a religious character).

For secondary schools with sixth forms, a copy of the report must be sent to the Learning and Skills Council for England (LSC) at the following address:

The National Director of Quality and Standards
 The Learning and Skills Council
 Cheylesmore House
 Quinton Road
 Coventry
 CV1 2WT.

118 In exceptional circumstances HMCI may extend the period allowed for completion of the inspection report. Application to extend the period should be made to Ofsted, and this is normally done by the inspection provider. Reports are delayed when the school requires special measures or has an inadequate sixth form.

What must the governing body do when the inspection report is received?

119 The governing body must send a copy of the summary report to all parents and carers of pupils at the school within 10 working days of receiving it from the lead inspector. It must also make a copy of the report and summary available for inspection by members of the public and provide a copy to anyone who asks for one. A charge, not exceeding the cost of reproduction, can be made for copies of the report.

120 The appropriate authority must prepare a written statement of the action it proposes to take in response to the inspection report within 40 working days of receiving it. This excludes holiday periods of more than five working days. The plan must show what action the school will take to bring about improvements in response to the issues for improvement identified during the inspection and recorded in the inspection report.

- 121** A copy of the action plan, or a summary of it, must be sent to the parents or carers of all pupils registered at the school. When a school requires special measures, has serious weaknesses or has an inadequate sixth form, a copy of the action plan should also be sent to Ofsted, with copies to each of the other parties listed in section 17 of the School Inspections Act 1996 as amended.
- 122** In the period following an inspection, the school will want to begin to act on its findings. How schools act on the points for improvement in their report is a matter for them; the inspection report sets out what should be done, not how.

Schools causing concern

Most schools emerge with credit from their inspections. Some, though, are not achieving enough and cause concern. Inspectors are required to judge whether or not the school requires special measures, has serious weaknesses, is underachieving, or has an inadequate sixth form. In these cases the lead inspector must ensure that:

- Ofsted is informed;
- the school is clear about the inspection team's judgement; and
- procedures for dealing with each category of school are followed closely.

What happens if inspectors have concerns about any aspect of the school?

- 123** Towards the end of the inspection of every school, the inspection team must corporately reflect on whether the school is achieving as well as it should or whether it is a cause for concern.
- 124** The inspection team must ask the following question:

Is the school failing, or likely to fail, to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and therefore requires 'special measures'?

If the school is giving its pupils an acceptable standard of education, the inspection team must ask a second question:

Does the school have 'serious weaknesses' in one or more areas of its work?

If neither category applies, the team should ask a third question:

Is the school 'underachieving'?

- 125 Where a school has a sixth form, inspectors must consider whether, although overall the school is providing an acceptable standard of education, it has an **inadequate sixth form**.

A school has an inadequate sixth form where it:

- is failing, or likely to fail, to provide an acceptable standard of education for pupils over compulsory school age; or
- provides an acceptable standard of education, but has significant weaknesses in one or more of its activities for pupils over compulsory school age.

- 126 Guidance on making the judgements are set out in the *Handbooks*. The procedures for informing Ofsted about these judgements, and what further action is needed, are also given in the *Handbooks*.

Part C: The *Evaluation Schedule*

Structure of the *Evaluation Schedule*

The *Evaluation Schedule* lists the judgements required of inspectors, all of which contribute to an overall evaluation of the effectiveness of the school and what makes it so. The criteria are presented as statements of good practice, and the reporting requirements are stated.

In applying the *Evaluation Schedule*, inspectors must take into account the characteristics of the individual school, particularly the school's evaluation of its own performance. The *Evaluation Schedule* therefore maps the scope of the inspection, but the lead inspector determines the balance of time that is spent on different enquiries.

What is the structure of the *Evaluation Schedule*?

- 127 The *Evaluation Schedule* should be viewed in terms of the outcomes for pupils and the factors that contribute to these outcomes. Some of these contributing factors are more immediate and direct than others. Teaching and learning, for example, are central to the cluster of processes that affect the outcomes. The quality of leadership and management are also very significant factors in the effectiveness of most schools. In using each section of the *Evaluation Schedule*, inspectors should take into account what is achieved by, and provided for, **all** pupils in the school, whatever their age, capability, attainment, sex, background, ethnicity or special educational need.
- 128 The *Evaluation Schedule* helps to find the answers to a fundamental set of questions about the school as a whole. All inspectors, whatever their roles and responsibilities as members of the team, must contribute to the corporate view of the school. In order to do this, they must keep in mind the links between different parts of the *Evaluation Schedule* so as not to lose any opportunity to contribute evidence to the main judgements when observing particular areas of work. An example of practice involving this is the pursuit of inspection trails that contribute evidence on curriculum leadership and performance management while inspecting different lessons in a subject.
- 129 The pre-inspection process starts with an analysis of the outcomes, particularly the school's results. As the inspection progresses, inspectors are able not only to judge achievements but also to focus increasingly on the reasons that account for them. This contributes to a cumulative view of the quality of leadership and management. The inspection process, in practice, is one that starts with outcomes and penetrates the work of the school sufficiently to see what accounts for them. It is in this sense that the *Evaluation Schedule* should be viewed.

What is the detailed content of the *Evaluation Schedule*?

- 130 The *Evaluation Schedule* applies to the inspection of all nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, pupil referral units and any other publicly funded provision. The most important question is: **How effective is the school and why?** The *Evaluation Schedule* asks the key questions that inspectors must consider.

Evaluation Schedule: Contents

Effectiveness of the school

1. How successful is the school?
2. What should the school do to improve?

Standards achieved by pupils

- 3.1 How high are standards achieved in the areas of learning, subjects and courses of the curriculum?
- 3.2 How well are pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities developed?

Quality of education provided by the school

4. How effective are teaching and learning?
5. How well does the curriculum meet pupils' needs?
6. How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported?
7. How well does the school work in partnership with parents, other schools and the community?

Leadership and management of the school

8. How well is the school led and managed?
9. How good is the quality of education in areas of learning, subjects and courses?
10. What is the quality of other specified features?

Effectiveness of the school

At the end of the inspection, the inspection team must reach a corporate view of the effectiveness of the school, its strengths and weaknesses, and where improvement is needed. In doing so, it must take into account the characteristics of the school, the context in which the school works and any particular status or features it has. Inspectors should be aware of the school's performance relative to similar schools, and what the best schools in such a group can achieve. These findings must be based on a careful weighing of all the evidence gathered about the school.

1. How successful is the school?

Inspectors must describe:

- **the school**, highlighting its distinctive features including the profile of its pupils, any particular status or designation and unusual aspects of its work,

and judge and report on:

- **the overall effectiveness of the school and its main strengths and weaknesses**, based on the standards achieved by its pupils, the quality of education provided, its leadership and management and the ethos of the school,
- **how the school's effectiveness has changed since its previous inspection(s)**, and
- **how the school is regarded by its pupils and their parents.**

Inspectors should evaluate and report on:

- **the value for money that the school provides** and, where appropriate, the cost-effectiveness of its sixth form or any other specially funded provision.

These findings must draw from the specific areas of evaluation set out in the rest of the *Evaluation Schedule*.

Inspectors must consider whether the school causes concern and, if so, must state whether it requires special measures, has serious weaknesses, is underachieving, or, as appropriate, has an inadequate sixth form.

2. What should the school do to improve?

The report must identify and include the specific matters that the governing body for the school should include in its 'post-inspection action plan', listed in order of their importance in raising achievement in the school.

The report must also state any non-compliance with statutory requirements detected in the course of the inspection.

Standards achieved by pupils

Where national assessments, tests and examinations apply to pupils at the school, inspectors should interpret the results and trends so that parents and others understand what the data mean. The main judgements concern whether the achievements of the pupils are as high as they should be, taking account of their capabilities and the progress they have made in the school. Achievements include pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding gained through the subjects of the curriculum, and the attitudes, behaviour, values and other aspects of personal development fostered by the school.

3.1 How high are standards achieved in the areas of learning, subjects and courses of the curriculum?

Inspectors must interpret and report, where applicable, on:

- **the school's results and other performance data**, reporting any variations between different subjects and groups of pupils,

assessing, as appropriate:

- *how results compare with averages or expectations for all schools and for similar schools;*
- *how well the school is doing in relation to its targets;*
- *the school's analysis of how different groups of pupils perform;*

- **trends in the school's results over time,**

assessing:

- *whether the school's standards are rising, staying at the same level, or falling.*

Inspectors must evaluate and report on:

- **how well pupils achieve in each stage**, based on the progress they make and the standards they reach in the areas of learning, subjects and courses of the curriculum specified for each type of school, highlighting:

- relative strengths and weaknesses in the work seen in different areas and subjects;
- the achievement of different groups;
- the extent to which pupils' English language and literacy skills, and their competence in mathematics and information and communication technology, are sufficient to enable them to make progress in all areas of the curriculum;

assessing, as appropriate:

- *how much progress pupils make from one stage to the next, taking account of value-added data;*
- *how well children in the Foundation Stage are progressing towards the early learning goals;*
- *in Key Stages 1 to 4 and the sixth form, pupils' progress in relation to National Curriculum standards (giving due weight to English, mathematics and science), the local agreed syllabus for religious education and any examination or assessment objectives;*
- *any differences in standards in different courses, subjects or areas of the curriculum;*
- *the achievement of pupils of different capabilities, especially those with special educational needs;*
- *the relative achievement of boys and girls, and different groups and individuals, especially those from different ethnic backgrounds, and those whose home language is not English.*

3.2 How well are pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities developed?

Inspectors must judge pupils' personal development, what the school does to cultivate it, and how well pupils mature during their time in school. Inspectors should also take into account any variations between groups of pupils.

Inspectors must evaluate and report on:

- **attendance**, commenting also on pupils' punctuality,

assessing the extent to which:

- *the school does all it can to promote good attendance;*
- *parents and carers strive to ensure the attendance of their children;*

- **attitudes and behaviour, including the incidence of exclusions,**

assessing the extent to which pupils:

- *show interest in school life and the range of activities provided;*
- *behave well in lessons and about the school;*
- *are enterprising and willing to take responsibility;*
- *are free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment;*
- *form constructive relationships with others;*
- *have confidence and self-esteem;*

and assessing the extent to which the school:

- *stimulates in pupils a desire to learn;*
- *sets high expectations of pupils' conduct and successfully implements policies to achieve them;*
- *promotes good relationships, including racial harmony;*
- *deals effectively with incidents such as bullying, racism and other forms of harassment;*

- **other aspects of personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development,**

assessing the extent to which the school actively enables pupils to:

- *develop self-knowledge and spiritual awareness;*
- *understand and respect other people's feelings, values and beliefs;*
- *understand and apply the principles that help distinguish right from wrong;*
- *understand and fulfil the responsibilities of living in a community;*
- *appreciate their own and others' cultural traditions;*

and the extent to which:

- *children in nursery and reception classes are on course to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Foundation Stage.*

Quality of education provided by the school

Inspectors must diagnose why pupils' achievements are as they are and what accounts for the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school's performance. Distinctions should be made between the work of the school as a whole and work in the different stages of education. The greatest weight should be given to teaching and learning, but other factors that have a significant influence on the quality and standards of the school should be highlighted.

Inspection of the processes of education should also trace the effect of leadership and management in the school.

4. How effective are teaching and learning?

Inspectors must evaluate and report on:

□ **the quality of teaching,**

and

□ **how well pupils learn,**

highlighting relative strengths and weaknesses in English language and literacy, mathematics, particular subjects and stages that help explain pupils' achievement;

assessing the extent to which teachers:

- *show good command of areas of learning, subjects and courses;*
- *plan effectively, with clear learning objectives and suitable teaching strategies;*
- *interest, encourage and engage pupils;*
- *challenge pupils, expecting the most of them;*
- *use methods and resources that enable all pupils to learn effectively;*
- *make effective use of time and insist on high standards of behaviour;*
- *make effective use of teaching assistants and other support;*
- *where appropriate, use homework effectively to reinforce and extend what is learned in school;*
- *promote equality of opportunity;*

and pupils:

- *acquire new knowledge or skills in their work, develop ideas and increase their understanding;*
- *show engagement, application and concentration, and are productive;*
- *develop the skills and capacity to work independently and collaboratively;*

□ **the quality of assessment of pupils' work,**

assessing the extent to which teachers:

- *assess pupils' work thoroughly and constructively;*
- *use assessment to inform their planning and target-setting to meet the needs of individual pupils and groups;*

and pupils:

- *understand how well they are doing and how they can improve.*

5. How well does the curriculum meet pupils' needs?

Inspectors must evaluate and report on the extent to which the curriculum:

- **provides a broad range of worthwhile curricular opportunities that cater for the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils, and ensure progression in pupils' learning,**

assessing, as appropriate, the extent to which the school:

- *has a curriculum that meets statutory requirements, including provision for religious education and collective worship;*
- *provides well for pupils who have special educational needs;*
- *if relevant, has well-developed curriculum programmes for students aged 14 to 19;*
- *provides effective personal, social and health education, including sex and relationships education and attention to alcohol and drug misuse;*
- *is inclusive, by ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all pupils;*
- *prepares pupils effectively for subsequent stages of education, employment or further study beyond school, as relevant;*
- *seeks to develop the curriculum, taking particular account of the effect of any innovative practice;*

- **provides opportunity for enrichment, including through extra-curricular provision,**

assessing, as appropriate, the extent to which the school:

- *provides support for learning outside the school day;*
- *promotes participation in sport, the arts and other interests.*

Inspectors must evaluate and report on the extent to which:

- **the quality and quantity of accommodation and resources at the school meet the needs of the curriculum,**

assessing the extent to which the school has:

- *sufficient teaching and support staff with qualifications and experience to meet the demands of the curriculum;*
- *accommodation that allows the curriculum to be taught effectively;*
- *the resources to meet the needs of the school's pupils and the curriculum.*

6. How well are pupils cared for, guided and supported?

Inspectors must evaluate and report on how well the school:

▣ **ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety,**

assessing, as appropriate, the extent to which the school:

- *has effective procedures for the protection of pupils in line with locally agreed child protection arrangements;*
- *ensures that pupils work in a healthy and safe environment;*

▣ **provides support, advice and guidance for pupils, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development,**

assessing, as appropriate, the extent to which:

- *each pupil has a good and trusting relationship with one or more adults in the school;*
- *pupils have access to well-informed support, advice and guidance as they progress through the school;*
- *the school has effective induction arrangements for pupils;*
- *the school ensures that secondary pupils have information and impartial guidance (including Connexions personal advisers for pupils aged 13 to 19) that are effective in leading them towards appropriate study or career opportunities;*

▣ **seeks to involve pupils in its work and development,**

assessing the extent to which the school:

- *seeks, values and acts on pupils' views.*

7. How well does the school work in partnership with parents, other schools and the community?

Inspectors should assess the contribution that parents and partners make to the school and to pupils' learning. They should consider whether the investment in partnerships is valuable, in the context of the school's priorities.

Inspectors must evaluate and report on:

▣ **the effectiveness of the school's links with parents,**

assessing, as appropriate, the extent to which:

- *all parents are provided with relevant information about the school, and particularly about pupils' standards and progress;*
- *the school regularly seeks, values and acts on parents' views;*
- *the partnership with parents contributes to pupils' learning at school and at home;*
- *the school does all it can to ensure satisfaction, and deals effectively with any concerns and complaints;*

(Note: all references to parents apply equally to carers.)

▣ **the quality of any links with the local community,**

assessing, as appropriate, the extent to which the school:

- *provides a resource for, and draws from, the community;*

▣ **the effectiveness of extended school services and educational and support programmes for parents, families and members of the community, if included in the inspection specification,**

assessing, as appropriate, the extent to which provision:

- *is of high quality;*
- *meets identified needs;*
- *results in educational benefits to pupils enrolled at the school;*

▣ **the school's links with other schools and colleges;**

assessing the extent to which there are:

- *effective mechanisms for the transfer of pupils;*
- *effective educational links and contributions to wider partnerships;*
- *effective management arrangements for shared or linked provision.*

Leadership and management of the school

Leadership and management at all levels in the school should be judged by their effect on quality and standards of the school. Leadership should provide the drive and direction for raising achievement, while management should make best use of the resources and processes to make this happen. Management includes effective evaluation, planning, performance management and staff development. Inspectors should consider the extent to which leadership is embedded throughout the school and not vested solely in the most senior staff. They should explore how well the leadership team creates a climate for learning and whether the school is an effective learning organisation.

8. How well is the school led and managed?

Inspectors must evaluate and report on:

▣ **the governance of the school,**

assessing the extent to which the governing body:

- *helps shape the vision and direction of the school;*
- *ensures that the school fulfils its statutory duties, including promoting inclusive policies in relation to special educational needs, race equality, disability and sex;*
- *has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school;*
- *challenges and supports the senior management team;*

▣ **the quality of leadership of the school, particularly by the headteacher, senior team and other staff with responsibilities,**

assessing the extent to which:

- *leadership shows clear vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school, with a relentless focus on pupils' achievement;*
- *strategic planning reflects and promotes the school's ambitions and goals;*
- *leaders inspire, motivate and influence staff and pupils;*
- *leaders create effective teams;*
- *there is knowledgeable and innovative leadership of teaching and the curriculum;*
- *leaders are committed to running an equitable and inclusive school, in which each individual matters;*
- *leaders provide good role models for other staff and pupils;*

▣ **the effectiveness of management,**

assessing the extent to which:

- *the school undertakes rigorous self-evaluation and uses the findings effectively;*
- *the school monitors performance data, reviews patterns and takes appropriate action;*
- *the performance management of staff, including support staff, is thorough and effective in bringing about improvement;*
- *a commitment to staff development is reflected in effective induction and professional development strategies and, where possible, the school's contribution to initial teacher training;*
- *the recruitment, retention, deployment and workload of staff are well managed, and support staff are well deployed to make teachers' work more effective;*
- *approaches to financial and resource management help the school to achieve its educational priorities;*
- *the principles of best value are central to the school's management and use of resources;*

▣ **the effect of any particular aids or barriers to raising achievement, either within the school or externally.**

9. How good is the quality of education in areas of learning, subjects and courses?

Inspectors must provide an expert evaluation of all the subjects and courses inspected, assessing standards achieved and diagnosing the factors that contribute to or detract from high standards. All inspectors should evaluate the development and application of the skills of English language and literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology in the subjects they inspect, the quality of leadership of subjects and the extent to which teaching is inclusive, that is to say effective in providing for diversity and promoting equality.

Inspectors must evaluate and report on:

- **for each area of learning in the Foundation Stage and each subject or course inspected in depth,**
 - *the overall quality of provision, based on its effectiveness, and any strengths and weaknesses;*
 - *the standards achieved by pupils;*
 - *the quality of teaching and learning;*
 - *the quality of curriculum leadership;*
 - *other factors that explain pupils' achievement;*
 - *how quality and standards have changed since the previous inspection.*

- **work seen in other subjects and courses.**

In determining their judgements, inspectors should use the criteria set out in all applicable parts of the *Evaluation Schedule*.

10. What is the quality of other specified features?

Where additional features are specified for inspection, inspectors must evaluate and report on:

- **the overall effectiveness of the provision, including, as appropriate:**
 - *the effect on achievement;*
 - *the quality of what is provided;*
 - *the effectiveness with which it is led, managed and organised;*
 - *the quality and sufficiency of resources; and*
 - *how well it is monitored and evaluated.*

In determining their judgements, inspectors should use criteria set out elsewhere in the *Evaluation Schedule*, or specific criteria published by Ofsted for evaluating the specified feature.

Part D: Quality assurance

Code of conduct for inspectors

Inspectors must uphold the highest professional standards in their work, and ensure that school staff are treated fairly and benefit from their inspection. These standards are assured through a code of conduct for inspectors and a quality guarantee to teachers and other staff. Equally, it is reasonable to expect school staff and others involved with the inspection to be courteous and helpful to inspectors.

- 131 Inspections should be carried out professionally so as to secure the full co-operation of the school and its staff, inspire confidence in inspectors' work and their judgements, and make a valuable contribution to improvement. To achieve this, inspectors must conform to the highest professional standards required by the code of conduct. Lead inspectors have primary responsibility for ensuring that their inspection teams abide by this code.

What is the code of conduct?

Inspectors are expected to:

- evaluate objectively, be impartial and have no previous connection with the school which could undermine their objectivity;
- report honestly and fairly, ensuring that judgements are accurate and reliable;
- carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy and sensitivity;
- do all they can to minimise the stress on those involved in the inspection, and act with their best interests and well-being as priorities;
- maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected, and communicate judgements clearly and frankly; and
- respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work.

What is the quality guarantee for teachers and other staff?

- 132 The code of conduct aims to ensure that teachers and other staff are guaranteed an inspection of high quality. In practical terms, inspectors will:
- always respect the presence of teachers and other staff, for example, when entering or leaving classrooms;

- not normally observe teachers or teaching assistants for more than about half of the teaching day, and never more than three quarters;
- only make judgements on teaching where it is observed for a sufficient time to gather secure evidence;
- offer feedback on teaching, explain the reasons for their judgements and be helpful in identifying where improvement is needed; and
- not expect staff to create additional paperwork specifically for the inspection.

Quality standard for inspections and the work of inspectors

Ofsted's quality standard requires that schools are fairly and accurately assessed and inspections are conducted, managed and reported to a high professional standard. Inspections and the work of inspectors are monitored and assessed against standards for the quality of judgements, evidence, communication and conduct. The quality of the inspection must be assured by the lead inspector, who must ensure that all team inspectors adhere to the quality standard.

133 Ofsted has a statutory role to assure the quality of inspections, and is committed to inspections being of the highest quality. It does this by:

- keeping the *Framework*, and the inspection *Handbook* under review;
- defining standards for the quality of inspections, the work of inspectors and providers, and for training;
- providing up-to-date guidance to inspectors on inspection, and how the quality standards can best be met; and
- monitoring and assessing the work of registered and enrolled inspectors, and of providers.

134 This *Framework* forms the basis for assuring the quality of inspections and the work of inspectors. It is reinforced by a quality standard for inspections, the work of inspectors and contractors, and the training and professional development of inspectors.

What are the quality requirements that apply to inspections and the work of inspectors?

Registered and team inspectors must ensure that:

- **judgements** about the school and what it needs to do to improve are fair and accurate;
- **evidence** is sufficient and reliable and substantiates all inspection judgements;
- **communication** of inspection findings is clear and helpful to the school;
- the **conduct of the inspection** is to a high professional standard.

An additional requirement applies to registered inspectors. It is that:

- the registered inspector must **assure the quality** of the inspections he or she leads.

Judgements about the school and what it needs to do to improve are fair and accurate when inspectors:

- base judgements on all the inspection evidence taking account of evaluation criteria and benchmarks;
- evaluate the school's effectiveness accurately, and diagnose perceptively the main strengths and weaknesses;
- come to valid conclusions that are argued convincingly, are coherent and are fully consistent with the evidence;
- identify shrewdly the issues that are central to improvement and provide a clear basis for teachers, governors and others to take action;
- agree the main conclusions corporately; and
- cover the requirements in *Inspecting Schools* and the contract specification.

Evidence is secure and substantiates all inspection judgements when inspectors:

- analyse and interpret information carefully, including quantifiable indicators, the previous inspection report, information provided by the school and the views of parents, pupils and others;
- collect sufficient evidence representative of the school's work and its significant features, which enables them to test the pre-inspection hypotheses;
- include evidence drawn from substantial first-hand observation of pupils' and teachers' work, and discussions with pupils, teachers and others;
- make intelligent use of evidence and thoroughly test assertions against evidence from other sources; and
- make accurate and evaluative records of their evidence and findings that underpin inspection judgements.

Communication of inspection findings is clear and helpful when inspectors:

- convey judgements, orally and in writing, in language readily understood by the intended audience, particularly parents in the case of the written report; and
- express judgements unequivocally, explain them convincingly, and illustrate them judiciously.

The **conduct of the inspection** is highly professional when inspectors:

- prepare themselves thoroughly for the inspection, and understand the context of the school, the requirements of the *Framework*, and the subjects, aspects and age-range of the pupils concerned;
- conform to the code of conduct, and ensure that the quality guarantee to teachers and other staff is met; and
- contribute to the value of the inspection to the school through the open and professional relationships they develop with the school community, especially teachers.

The registered inspector **assures the quality** of the inspection when he or she:

- establishes a climate in which the inspection is valued by the school;
- derives school-specific pre-inspection hypotheses that contribute to the shape of the inspection;
- ensures that the team is fully briefed about the school and the focuses for inspection;
- sets high expectations of the team, and plans and manages the inspection processes effectively to meet them;
- monitors and challenges the work of the team effectively to secure the inspection evidence and judgements; and
- ensures that the main judgements about the school are corporate and consistent with the evidence.

How are inspections monitored?

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HMI in Ofsted monitor and assess:

- the quality of inspections and reports;
- the effectiveness of registered and enrolled inspectors;
- the contractors' quality assurance arrangements; and
- the extent of improvement where weaknesses have previously been identified.

- 136 Inspection providers may also monitor the work of inspectors as part of their quality assurance procedures. Assessments are confidential to the inspectors and contractors concerned. Where an inspection report is judged to be seriously misleading or an inspection is seriously flawed, the school will be notified and may be offered a reinspection.
- 137 All schools are invited to take part in a post-inspection survey so that the views of headteachers, governors, staff and others about the inspection of their school are obtained and contribute to inspection development.
- 138 HMI have access to all elements of an inspection, and take account of the school's view during and after the inspection. The registered inspector and other inspectors must give HMI all necessary co-operation, and allow access to the evidence base and any materials relating to the inspection and the evidence base.

Complaints about inspections

The vast majority of inspections are free of problems. Occasionally, schools or other interested parties feel dissatisfied with some aspect of their inspection or inspection report. A complaints procedure sets out how schools can complain about their inspection and what will happen with their complaint.

- 139 Ofsted takes complaints about inspection seriously, and views them as one of its quality assurance measures.

How are complaints about an inspection made?

- 140 Schools, or others, should speak to the registered inspector about any concerns as soon as they arise. The lead inspector must try to resolve any problems.
- 141 As a next step, a complaint should be made to the contractor responsible for the inspection. The name and address of the contractor can be obtained from the school or from Ofsted. Every contractor has a procedure for handling and responding to complaints.
- 142 Where a complaint remains unresolved the person making the complaint should write to:

The Complaints Manager
Subjects and Quality Assurance Division
Ofsted
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE.
- 143 Complaints should be made no later than three months after the school receives its inspection report.

- 144 Where a school or other party is dissatisfied with the way a complaint has been handled by Ofsted, the person making the complaint can contact the Independent Complaints Adjudicator. A request for adjudication on the handling of a complaint must be made within three months of Ofsted's final response to a complaint.
- 145 For further guidance, refer to the pamphlet: *Complaints about school inspections* which is available on Ofsted's web site (www.ofsted.gov.uk). Concerns about any aspect of the inspection can be raised at any point with Ofsted (telephone: 020 7421 6662 or 6680).

Glossary

The *Framework* applies to the inspection of education in a range of settings and affects many different groups of people.

Some terms are more appropriate in some circumstances than others. Where possible, the *Framework* uses a single term to avoid unnecessary complication. In inspection reports, inspectors must use terms that are the most appropriate for the circumstances.

school	This includes pupil referral units (PRUs), Early Excellence Centres and categories referred to on page 6.
pupils	Normally this term refers to those in Key Stages 1 to 4, but it includes young children in the Foundation Stage and students post-16.
parents	This should be taken to include carers as well as parents of children registered at the school.
appropriate authority	The appropriate authority for a school is the governing body except in the case of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a maintained school or Early Excellence Centre that does not have a delegated budget or a pupil referral unit where the appropriate authority is the local education authority; • city technology colleges or city colleges for the technology of the arts where the appropriate authority is the proprietor; • independent schools approved as suitable for pupils that have statements of special educational need, where the appropriate authority is the proprietor.
evidence base	This includes all forms and other documents completed or used by inspectors, including the pre-inspection commentary; those prepared by the school; the Performance and Assessment (PANDA) report; any briefings or analyses, and drafts of the inspection report.
working day	This means any day which is not a Saturday, a Sunday, a bank holiday or part of a holiday longer than a week taken by the school.
teachers	This generally includes teaching assistants when engaged in a teaching role.

