

Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills from September 2009

This version of the handbook has been updated to apply to inspections from April 2012. This provides minor updates to the September 2011 version in order to address changes arising from the Equality Act 2010.

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Introduction

This handbook is published by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI). It provides guidance for providers, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) from the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and additional inspectors on the implementation of the Common Inspection Framework for inspecting all education and training within the further education (FE) and skills sector.

The handbook has two parts:

- **Part 1:** Guidance for inspectors and providers on the preparation for, and conduct of, inspections
- **Part 2:** The full Common Inspection Framework and guidance on how it will be used by inspectors to award the main and contributory grades.

The handbook is available to providers and other organisations to ensure that they are well informed about the process and procedures of inspection. It seeks to balance the need for consistency in inspections with the flexibility required to respond to the individual circumstances of each provider to be inspected. It should be regarded as an account of procedures normally governing inspection rather than a set of inflexible rules. Additional guidance on the inspection of Next Step providers and dance and drama schools is made available to the relevant providers. There are separate handbooks covering Ofsted's involvement in the inspection of prisons and probation trusts.

Part 1: How do we inspect?

1. The *Common inspection framework for further education and skills 2009* – the Common Inspection Framework – was devised by HMCI in line with the Education and Inspection Act 2006. It is based on the common evaluation schedule which informs all of Ofsted’s inspections. It sets out the judgements inspectors will make during inspection. A summary version of the Common Inspection Framework is available as a separate publication.¹
2. The Common Inspection Framework sets out the principles that apply to the inspections of FE and skills under Part 8 of the Act. The Common Inspection Framework comprises:
 - Ofsted’s principles of inspection
 - the common evaluation schedule.

Purposes of inspection

3. The overall aim of inspection is to evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of the provision of education and training in meeting the needs of learners.
4. Inspection arrangements, together with other government initiatives, are intended to accelerate the pace of quality improvement in the FE and skills sector.
5. The main purposes of inspection are to:
 - provide users with information; this informs their choices and preferences about the effectiveness of the providers they use or may use in the future²
 - help bring about improvement by identifying strengths and areas for improvement, highlighting good practice and judging what steps need to be taken to improve provision further
 - provide the relevant Secretaries of State and other stakeholders with an independent public account of the quality of education and training, the standards achieved and the efficiency with which resources are managed

¹ *Common inspection framework for further education and skills 2009*, Ofsted, 2009; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/090106.

² As defined in the Ofsted user and stakeholder strategy and deriving from the Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 117(4), those who benefit, either directly or indirectly, from the services that Ofsted inspects or regulate: children and young people, parents and carers, adult learners and employers.

How does inspection promote improvement?

6. The inspection of a provider promotes improvement by:
 - setting expectations; the criteria and characteristics set out in the inspection framework and guidance illustrate the quality and effectiveness of provision expected of providers
 - increasing the provider's confidence by endorsing its own view of its effectiveness when that is accurate, and offering a professional challenge (and the impetus to act) where improvement is needed
 - recommending priorities for future action by the provider and, when appropriate, checking subsequent progress
 - fostering constructive dialogue between inspectors and the senior leaders and staff of the provider
 - complementing the provider's self-assessment and promoting its rigour, thereby enhancing the provider's capacity to improve its provision
 - identifying best practice, both in inspection and survey reports, which can be shared with the sector.

Principles of inspection and regulation

7. The principles of inspection and regulation reflect Ofsted's values and ensure that our statutory duties are carried out efficiently and effectively. The principles focus on the interests of service users – children, young people, parents, adult learners and employers. They promote improvement in the services we inspect or regulate, and they promote value for money. They also take full account of our policies on equality and diversity.

8. All inspections carried out by Ofsted must comply with the following principles.

FE and skills inspections will:

- support and promote improvement
- be proportionate
- focus on the needs of users
- focus on the needs of providers
- be transparent and consistent
- be accountable
- demonstrate value for money.

What is the code of conduct for inspections?

9. Inspectors will uphold the highest professional standards in their work and ensure that everyone they encounter during inspections is treated fairly and with respect. These standards are assured through a code of conduct, set out below.

Inspectors' Code of Conduct

Inspectors should:

- evaluate objectively, be impartial and inspect without fear or favour
- evaluate provision in line with frameworks, national standards or requirements
- base all evaluations on clear and robust evidence
- have no connection with the provider which could undermine their objectivity
- report honestly and clearly, ensuring that judgements are fair and reliable
- carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
- endeavour to minimise the stress on those involved in the inspection
- act in the best interests and well-being of service users
- maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected, and communicate judgements clearly and frankly
- respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work
- respond appropriately to reasonable requests
- take prompt and appropriate action on any safeguarding or health and safety issues.

10. It is important that inspectors explain to interviewees that, if requested, every effort will be made to protect the origin of the individual's comments when using them to form judgements. However, inspectors should also make clear that there are circumstances in which it may not be possible to guarantee the interviewee's anonymity. The most likely scenario would be where other factors make it easy to identify which individual had shared particular evidence. Additionally, inspectors have a duty to pass on disclosures which raise safeguarding issues, and/or circumstances where serious misconduct or potential criminal activity is involved. Inspectors should, therefore, make clear that it may not be possible to guarantee confidentiality if an interviewee raises an issue that inspectors are obliged to report.

How should the provider's staff engage with inspectors?

11. So that inspection and regulation are productive and beneficial, it is important that inspectors and providers establish and maintain a professional working environment based on courtesy and professional behaviour. Inspectors are expected to uphold the code of conduct but Ofsted also expects providers to:
- be courteous and professional
 - apply their own codes of conduct in their dealings with inspectors
 - enable inspectors to conduct their visit in an open and honest way
 - enable inspectors to evaluate the provision objectively against the framework
 - provide evidence that will enable the inspector to report honestly, fairly and reliably about their provision
 - work with inspectors to minimise disruption, stress and bureaucracy
 - ensure the health and safety of inspectors while on their premises
 - maintain a purposeful dialogue with the inspector or the inspection team
 - draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of inspectors promptly and in a suitable manner
 - respect the fact that inspectors will need to observe practice and talk to staff and users without the presence of a manager or registered person.

How are providers selected for inspection?

Annual selection of providers for inspection

12. Ofsted will adopt a risk-proportionate approach to inspection to enable inspectors to focus their efforts where they have the greatest impact. Ofsted will use a broad range of indicators to select providers to inspect the following year. Where available, these will include a college or provider's previous inspection record, self-assessment, performance data (including trends over the last three years), Framework for Excellence outcomes and any information on significant changes to the type of provision and learner numbers. Other aspects taken into consideration are:
- providers judged to be satisfactory at the previous inspection are likely to be inspected at least every four years
 - providers judged to be good at the previous inspection may have up to six years between inspections

- colleges and providers³ judged to be outstanding at their previous inspection are currently subject to a full inspection once every eight years, pending further legislation designed to exempt them from inspection (unless their performance drops)
 - the outcome of an interim assessment (see paragraph 15), which is likely to be published within three years after an inspection for high-performing providers (except for outstanding colleges which are subject to risk assessment)
 - new providers will not be inspected until inspectors can consider performance data of at least 12 months
 - HMCI has powers to conduct unannounced inspections and will exercise these where there are justifiable reasons for doing so.
13. Before the inspection, Ofsted will inform inspection service providers which providers are scheduled to be inspected in the next 12 months. This is to enable the inspection service providers to assemble the inspection teams. All learning and skills inspections will be led by an HMI, assisted by HMI and/or additional inspectors.

When are providers notified of their inspection?

14. Learning and skills providers will normally be given two to three working weeks' notice before a planned inspection. Non-working weeks for notification purposes will cover the two-week holiday periods over Christmas and Easter. The inspection service provider will contact the provider to inform them of the planned inspection and send the notification letter which includes the planning meeting agenda and information required for that meeting. The inspection service provider will contact the lead inspector within 24 hours to confirm the inspection. The lead inspector will telephone the provider to confirm arrangements for the planning meeting and start the process of inspection.

What are the types of inspection activity?

15. The following table sets out the frequency and type of inspection. The type of inspection activity will be proportionate to risk and selected according to the level of performance of the college or provider.

Inspection type	Criteria	Aims and publication arrangements
Interim assessment	Within three years of the last inspection if no	To review a provider's performance. Based on the evidence used for the annual selection

³ Except independent specialist colleges, local authorities, dance and drama colleges, prisons and probation trusts.

Inspection type	Criteria	Aims and publication arrangements
	inspection is planned,(except for outstanding colleges which are subject to risk assessment).	<p>process, this is desk based.</p> <p>The outcome of interim assessments will be summarised in a letter to the provider, published on the Ofsted website where no significant cause for concern is identified. This will state that, unless there is no new cause for concern, the provider will not be inspected during the 2010/2011 academic year.</p>
Inspection	<p>Depending on the results of the annual selection process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – providers graded satisfactory overall will normally be inspected within four years of their previous inspection – new providers will be inspected between one and four years of securing the contract – good providers will have up to six years between inspections. Outstanding providers will be inspected every eight years (pending changes to legislation). See paragraph 12 above. 	<p>To inspect the provider’s government-funded provision against all aspects of the Common Inspection Framework 2009.</p> <p>To inspect and grade a sample of subject areas.</p> <p>To carry out a single inspection event where possible; for example, an FE college with boarding provision.</p> <p>To inspect with an increased emphasis on teaching and learning, the learner journey, users’ views, value for money, vulnerability, safeguarding and equality and diversity.</p> <p>A report will be published on the Ofsted website.</p>
Focused	Normally within two	To monitor a provider’s progress in improving

Inspection type	Criteria	Aims and publication arrangements
monitoring visit	<p>years of their last inspection for providers judged to be satisfactory for overall effectiveness and satisfactory or inadequate for capacity to improve.</p> <p>All providers may have focused visit(s) based on outcomes of the annual process for selecting providers; for example, to inspect areas of provision that are new or that give some cause for concern.</p>	<p>aspects of its work according to themes identified during the annual process for selecting providers for inspection and the last inspection report.</p> <p>To inspect with an increased focus on capacity to improve, teaching and learning, and users' views.</p> <p>To inspect and make progress judgements about the provider's self-assessment and improvement planning process and additional identified themes, such as performance in a subject area or a type of programme.</p> <p>To inspect new areas of work.</p> <p>To include, where applicable, good practice or survey inspections.</p> <p>A report will be published on the Ofsted website.</p>
Survey inspection visits	<p>Survey inspection visits will take place at a selected number of colleges and providers each year, including those judged outstanding or good.</p>	<p>To explore a specific aspect of a provider's work as part of a programme of surveys based on topics linked to national priorities.</p> <p>A letter will be sent to the provider and will be published on the Ofsted website.</p> <p>Ofsted would not normally expect to carry out more than two survey visits to the same provider in any one year.</p>

Re-inspection

Re-inspection monitoring visit	<p>All providers judged to be inadequate for overall effectiveness at the previous inspection or for an aspect or subject area will</p>	<p>To inspect themes identified through the previous inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ two core themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – outcomes for learners – the provider's self-assessment and improvement planning process
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	<p>have a re-inspection monitoring visit. These take place six to eight months after the last full inspection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ additional themes that include progress towards addressing inadequate subjects/aspects and other areas for improvement as well as implementing recommendations identified in the previous inspection report. <p>A report will be published on the website.</p>
<p>Following a re-inspection monitoring visit a provider will have either:</p>		
<p>a) partial re-inspection</p>	<p>Inadequate grade for an aspect or subject area from the last full inspection.</p> <p>Takes place 12 to 15 months after the most recent full inspection.</p>	<p>To inspect and grade, against the Common Inspection Framework, the aspects of provision judged inadequate at the last full inspection. This will also focus on a provider's capacity to improve.</p> <p>A report will be published on the Ofsted website.</p>
<p>b) full re-inspection</p>	<p>Inadequate overall effectiveness grade.</p> <p>Takes place 12 to 15 months after the last full inspection.</p>	<p>To inspect the entire provider's government-funded provision against all aspects of the Common Inspection Framework.</p> <p>A report will be published on the Ofsted website.</p>

How do focused monitoring visits and re-inspection monitoring visits differ from full inspections?

16. Both types of monitoring visits are shorter than a full inspection – lasting between one and three days. The main aim of these visits is to judge the progress being made against defined themes. Progress against each identified theme for the visit will be judged 'significant', 'reasonable' or 'insufficient'. The planning for inspection activity and reporting methodology follow the same principles for full inspections. For convenience paragraphs 97 to 109 summarise the methodology for monitoring visits.

How will consortia, partnerships and subcontracted provision be inspected?

17. Skills Funding Agency- and the Education Funding Agency-funded provision that a provider is directly and wholly responsible for falls within the scope of their inspection. In addition, the inspection will include any provision carried out on behalf of a consortium or partnership, or under a subcontract. Inspection of a provider that subcontracts provision to other providers, or that has overall responsibility for a contract on behalf of a consortium or partnership lead, will only include subcontractors and consortium or partnership members that do not have a direct contract with the Skills Funding Agency and/or the Education Funding Agency. However, inspectors may contact or visit the subcontracted providers or other consortium members involved to make judgements on the leadership and management of the contract, including arrangements to quality assure and improve the provision. Inspectors may also use subcontractors' or consortium members' most recent inspection reports if available.
18. Provision identified by the provider and confirmed by the lead inspector as full cost provision will be out of scope of inspection. Full cost provision is where a course or courses, tutor and facilities are fully paid for by learners and/or employers.

How will residential provision in colleges be inspected?

19. Ofsted inspects residential accommodation in colleges against the national minimum standards for the accommodation of students under 18. The standards apply to further education colleges as defined by section 91 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. Each college is inspected at least once in each three-year period or cycle, and the current cycle started in April 2011. The inspections are undertaken by Ofsted social care inspectors. Where a college is registered as a care home, the accommodation is inspected by the Care Quality Commission. Where Ofsted inspections of both the accommodation and the education of a college are due to take place in the same year they will be usually be organised as a coordinated inspection and take place at the same time. Separate reports on the accommodation and education inspections will continue to be produced. Where it is not possible to coordinate the inspections due to the different length of time in between education and accommodation inspections, then the inspection of the accommodation will be conducted as a standalone inspection event.

What happens before the inspection?

How are subject areas for inspection chosen?

20. Subject areas are taken from the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) classified 15 sector subject areas. Most subject areas have a number of secondary subject areas or tiers. For example, subject area seven,

retail and commercial enterprise, covers warehousing, hospitality, hairdressing and beauty therapy, as well as retailing. In providers that offer second-tier subjects, the area for inspection may well be at that level and not the whole subject area.

21. For adult and community learning, a subject will be inspected under a learning category based on the primary objective of learning. The three categories are learning for qualifications in employment (employer responsive), learning for qualifications (learner responsive) and learning for social and personal development (adult safeguarded funded learning).
22. For adult and community learning, family learning and community development are inspected as subject areas under the category of learning for social and personal development. This is in addition to the Ofqual classified 15 subject areas.
23. Subject areas for inspection and grading will be chosen according to the following criteria:
 - previous inspection grades (where available)
 - self-assessment grades
 - outcomes for learners
 - vulnerability of learners
 - a fair coverage across the provider
 - coverage of subject areas across all inspections.

In addition, for adult and community learning:

- When a subject area is selected for inspection, only the largest category of learning in the subject area will be inspected and graded.
 - If one subject area has two substantial categories of learning as second tiers, both may be inspected and separately graded and reported on.
 - Where a number of subjects are too small to look at as a single subject area but share the same type of learning, they may be grouped together.
 - Where a subject area is not being inspected and graded, the lead inspector may select some teaching or training sessions for observation. The evidence from this is included when considering the overall Common Inspection Framework aspect grades.
24. The number of days allocated to inspections of providers, such as colleges or local authorities, that are contracted to provide more than one type of provision takes account of the need to ensure coverage of all types of its provision. If a provider with a number of funding types has fewer than 50 learners on its apprenticeship provision, the lead inspector may choose to allocate one or more

inspectors to look at this type of provision as a whole, rather than at each individual subject area.

25. In addition to inspecting and grading selected subject areas, inspectors will normally collect evidence from the provider's other subject areas to contribute to the final judgements on the key aspects of the Common Inspection Framework.

How are inspection teams selected?

26. All inspections will be led by an HMI, assisted by HMIs and/or additional inspectors. The nominee will receive additional inspectors' professional profiles and should contact the inspection service provider should there be any concerns about possible conflicts of interest between the provider and any member of the inspection team.

What information do inspectors use before the inspection?

27. Inspectors need to gain an understanding of the provider and the emphases and themes for the inspection before they begin their work on site. This is in order to make the best use of their time with the provider, and to make sure the inspection contributes to provider improvement.
28. The pre-inspection briefing clearly identifies the themes for the inspection and gives clear direction to all inspection team members. It will be sent to the provider at least three days before the start of the inspection. The lead inspector prepares the pre-inspection briefing for the provider and other members of the inspection team using the following pre-inspection evidence:
 - the provider's most recent self-assessment report
 - the provider's development plan
 - where available, learner recruitment data and success rates for the last three years from the college/provider performance report
 - where relevant, Framework for Excellence performance indicators
 - feedback from learners or employers
 - the report from the previous inspection or re-inspection
 - the reports from any subject or aspect surveys carried out by Ofsted
 - the reports from any monitoring visits carried out by Ofsted
 - any additional information the provider wishes to bring to the attention of the inspection team.
29. Inspectors will take full account of the provider's analysis and evaluation of its own performance. This should feature strongly when the issues for inspection and plans for the deployment of the team are discussed with the provider. The purpose of the pre-inspection briefing is to provide an evaluative but concise

briefing for the provider and the inspection team that identifies the key themes and areas for exploration on the inspection. The pre-inspection briefing should be kept brief, so that it provides a concise analysis of the provider against the Common Inspection Framework aspects, identifying the themes for the inspection. The pre-inspection briefing should also identify aspects that do not appear to require detailed investigation.

30. The provider will receive a copy of the pre-inspection briefing from the inspection service provider before the start of the inspection.
31. The inspection team will use the identified themes as the basis for their inspection activities. Subject area inspectors may need to add additional themes that are pertinent to the subject area they are inspecting.

How does the lead inspector plan the inspection?

32. The lead inspector will plan the inspection to ensure that the maximum amount of first-hand evidence possible is collected from learners and the activities they are engaged in. Observations of teaching, training and assessment are key sources of this evidence.
33. Inspectors will select the sessions, learners and employers to be seen during the inspection. The choice of learners and employers depends on a number of factors:
 - number of sites
 - geographical spread of learners
 - mode of delivery and attendance
 - demographics of the learner group.
34. To assist inspectors with their planning, the nominee will provide a timetable of group and individual learning sessions that take place at the provider's premises during the inspection period. Inspectors will not normally indicate which sessions they plan to see.
35. Inspectors will normally select learners they intend to visit at their place of work or at external venues to observe activities such as coaching, assessment, feedback or review, where possible. They may make arrangements to identify any learners they wish to use as case studies for additional learning support. To assist this process, the nominee will supply information about planned activities to be carried out by the provider's staff for the week of inspection, along with the list of learners who are not normally based at the provider's main sites, and those in receipt of additional learning support. The nominee should identify learners who may not be available or if there are significant issues that may affect the choice of a particular learner or employer. The lead inspector will inform the nominee of the planned visits to learners at work the week before the inspection and ask them to inform those employers involved. However, the

inspection team reserves the right to visit any learner or employer, and may cancel a planned visit or add additional ones to ensure that appropriate evidence is collected.

36. Where possible the visits will be planned to observe a member of the provider's staff (or subcontractor) carrying out activities with learners, as well as providing the opportunity for the inspector to interview the learner(s) and the employer. However, inspectors may visit learners and employers where such activity is not taking place. They may also carry out telephone interviews.

How do providers prepare for their inspection?

37. The lead inspector will confirm the range of documents that will be required for the inspection. The evidence should consist of working documents, not information prepared specifically for the inspection. As inspection is based on collecting first-hand evidence, documentation is kept to a minimum. The lead inspector will use the planning meeting to agree how the following documents will be available to inspectors:

- strategic and operational business plans
- development plan, operating statements, subject area plans, staff development plans and action plans arising from inspection, programme review or self-assessment
- details of staff qualifications and experience and of staff development activity over the last two years
- evidence of compliance with the relevant safeguarding requirements, for example an up-to-date list of Criminal Records Bureau checks
- reports from internal and external verifiers
- records of observations of teaching, learning and assessment or information and advice sessions
- timetables and schedules of activity involving learners (showing locations and staff)
- complete and up-to-date data on learner numbers and learners' achievements
- minutes from key meetings
- evidence of the effectiveness of learner support activities.

38. The provider will inform all staff, current learners, employers and other users about the forthcoming inspection, emphasising that inspectors may visit any sessions involving learners either on the provider's premises or at other locations, including learners' workplaces. Inspectors will have previously identified a number of off-site learners and employers to observe and/or interview and the nominee should ensure they are notified of this. Inspectors

may also have identified other users and partners of the provider they wish to meet.

39. The provider should inform inspectors if any learner, employer, member of staff or partner has any communication support needs or of any sensitivities or issues affecting individual learners or staff.
40. Learners' work should be made available. Inspectors will normally need to see completed work as well as work in progress. The lead inspector will agree with the nominee the most appropriate method for ensuring the availability of learners' work. This should include:
 - inspectors identifying the work of specific learners
 - asking all learners to have their current work with them during inspection
 - requesting samples of work from a particular programme or group of learners.

What is the role of the nominee in the inspection?

41. Inspection has the strongest impact on improvement when the provider understands the findings that have led to the judgements. Each provider is invited to nominate a senior member of staff to act as the provider's main link with the inspection team. The nominee attends all meetings of the inspection team. By taking part in the discussions about evidence collected during the inspection, a nominee can ensure that all appropriate evidence is taken into account, and report back to the provider's staff on the progress of the inspection. The nominee does not contribute to the decisions on grades for the inspection.
42. The nominee should:
 - have a detailed understanding of the provider's programmes and operations
 - be sufficiently senior to ensure the cooperation of staff at all levels before, during and after the inspection
 - have authority to carry out the role with autonomy.
43. The lead inspector will ensure that the nominee has the opportunity to hear the evidence on which inspectors have based their judgements. The nominee should raise any concerns about the evidence base with the lead inspector as soon as those concerns become apparent. The lead inspector will keep both the nominee and the chief executive or principal informed of emerging findings as the inspection proceeds. The nominee should respect the same conventions of confidentiality as all team members. The nominee's responsibilities include:
 - providing information to the lead inspector to enable them to plan the inspection
 - briefing the provider's staff about inspection arrangements

- informing all learners and employers about the inspection
- attending all team meetings, including the final meetings to moderate judgements. However, nominees may not participate in discussions that are directly related to grading decisions
- coordinating feedback arrangements, both during and after the inspection
- liaising with the lead inspector about the team's use of the provider's facilities, for example, photocopiers and base room
- ensuring that staff are available for meetings as scheduled and that the necessary documents are available for inspectors.

What contact should lead inspectors make with the provider?

44. The inspection service provider will telephone the provider to give the required notice of their forthcoming inspection. The lead inspector will normally contact the provider within two working days. Pre-inspection activities and contact with the provider should make sure that:
- good communications and effective working relationships are established
 - demands on the provider are kept to a minimum; the provider should not be required to produce additional documents for the inspection
 - pre-inspection evidence has been thoroughly analysed and used in the pre-inspection briefing
 - the themes for the inspection are established and identified at the planning meeting
 - arrangements for the inspection are agreed.
45. To ensure that the lead inspector has a clear understanding of the scope and range of provision, the nominee will send the following information:
- current numbers of learners in the following age groups: 14–16 (colleges only), 16–18, and 19+; and in subject areas and by funding stream
 - for adult and community learning providers only, the category(s) of learning by each subject area that is offered
 - lists of programmes at each level
 - geographical spread of training premises and learners, particularly work-based learners
 - where applicable, the range and location of subcontractors and what they provide.

Planning meeting

46. To ensure the provider understands the inspection process, the lead inspector will hold a pre-arranged planning meeting with the nominee/most senior

member of staff. Other senior managers may take part. A separate meeting will be held with learner representatives, where possible. These meetings will normally be held by telephone, but may be face to face, particularly for very complex inspections or for providers new to inspection. The agenda for the meeting should include:

- introductions
- update on recent developments at the provider
- inspection team members and their responsibilities, including the nominee
- scope of the inspection, including the key issues/themes
- in providers with identifiable learner representatives, arrangements for the lead HMI to have a discussion with them before the inspection about the inspection process
- arrangements to inform all learners and employers about the inspection through:
 - posters and letters/emails available from the inspection service provider
 - systems already established through the provider’s learner involvement strategy
- arrangements to collect the views of learners, customers, employers, external partners and, where relevant, parents and carers during the inspection and to feed back findings, including:
 - open meetings for learners or learner representatives
 - emails sent to a designated inspection service provider email address
 - visits/phone calls to learners and employers at work
 - informal meetings or individual interviews arranged by inspectors during the inspection
 - information on learner views presented in the self-assessment report
 - the inclusion of learner and employer views in the published report
 - the requirements for the provider to ensure the availability of the summary report for users that forms the front part of the published report
- arrangements for the lead inspector to have information on:
 - numbers participating at the time of the inspection and their geographical distribution, by subject area or subcontractor, where appropriate
 - lists of learners, for example, on apprenticeships and Train to Gain, with details of place of work and employers’ phone numbers

- schedules/timetables of learning or information and advice sessions, training and assessments (through timetables of activity for each assessor or adviser) in each subject area or subcontractor during the week of inspection, including subject areas not being graded separately
 - arrangements for observing teaching, learning and assessments (see guidance and protocols – paragraphs 70–73)
 - arrangements to review learners’ work
 - pre-arranged meetings with key members of staff/management for subject area inspectors and Common Inspection Framework aspects
 - arrangements to confirm the location of inspectors (where applicable)
 - confirmation of data table on success or outcome rates to support judgements on outcomes for learners
 - documents to be made available during the inspection (see paragraph 37)
 - team meetings and feedback meetings – times and venues
 - domestic arrangements, such as base rooms, refreshments and car parking
 - health and safety of inspectors
 - final feedback, evaluation and reporting arrangements.
47. Pre-arranged meetings with learners and key staff and visits to learners at work or external sites should be agreed as quickly as possible. However, the lead inspector will not tell the provider which sessions will be visited in any part of the inspection.
48. Where appropriate, the lead inspector will also arrange to talk to learner representatives before the inspection to explain the purpose of the inspection, identify any key issues from their perspective and the most appropriate ways of collecting learners’ views (see the relevant item in the planning meeting agenda).

How do inspectors seek the views of learners, employers and other partners about the provider’s work before and during inspection?

49. The views of learners are central to inspection. Inspectors will not have the opportunity to speak to all learners in one inspection. It is important that all learners, regardless of their mode or place of attendance, have the opportunity to express their views on the provider to inspectors. This also applies to employers and any other key users. A template will be provided for the provider to distribute, electronically if possible, to all learners and employers inviting them to respond to the inspection team, using email where possible. This enables learners and employers to provide timely and up-to-date views of the provider directly to inspectors. The template may be adapted by providers to meet learners’ specific needs.

50. Providers will notify all current learners and employers of the inspection, and include details of how they may inform the inspectors of their views. For this purpose, the nominee will be provided with an electronic poster to display on their intranet or premises, or to distribute in any appropriate way. The nominee may adapt this to meet learners' specific needs.
51. Responses to the inspection team should be returned, in confidence, to the email address provided, within the identified timescale (usually the week before the start of the inspection). Respondents will only be asked to identify the subject or type of provision they are engaged with.
52. The inspection service provider will analyse the email returns and make these available to the lead inspector in the week before inspection. Where appropriate, responses will be grouped in subject areas and the numbers of responses noted. Any additional themes identified from these responses will be added to the pre-inspection briefing or shared with the team and the nominee at the start of the inspection.
53. Surveys of learners' views carried out by the provider, funding bodies or other organisations provide additional evidence for the inspection, and may indicate themes for further exploration. They do not take the place of dialogue with learners during the inspection or of views collected electronically. Inspectors will talk with learners from different groups, including those from minority groups, and, for example, with group representatives, the provider learner governor, and the National Union of Students or other learners' forum.
54. Inspectors will take account of views expressed to them by learners, employers, parents, governors, the nominee and staff. Staff and learners must be able to speak with inspectors in private to ensure that their responses are not influenced by the presence of the nominee or senior staff. A number of meetings will be arranged during the inspection to enable learners to meet inspectors. These will include meetings with samples of learners selected by inspectors and open invitation meetings.
55. The provider should be encouraged to seek the views of any significant partners in the provider's work and to reflect these in its self-assessment.
56. The lead inspector will take account of any external views on the performance of the provider against its targets; for example, in briefings from commissioning and funding bodies.

What happens during the inspection?

How many days does an inspection take?

57. A full inspection will normally last between three and five days on site, although the number of inspectors involved in the inspection will vary according to the size and nature of the provider.

58. Focused monitoring and re-inspection monitoring visits will last between one and three days, depending on the scope of the visit and size of the provider.
59. Five-day inspections will normally start at around 11.30am on the Monday. Inspections starting on any other day of the week may start earlier – for example 9am.

Who will be on the inspection team?

60. The inspection team will consist of inspectors who will focus on the key aspects of the Common Inspection Framework (aspect inspectors) – namely outcomes for learners, quality of provision and leadership and management – and subject area inspectors who will focus on the sample of subject areas or type of provision selected for inspection and grading.

How do inspectors use their time during the inspection?

(See the sample outline schedule at Table 1.)

61. Where relevant, subject area inspectors will focus on and grade provision for learners funded through either learner, employer responsive or adult safeguarded funding. Depending on the numbers of learners in each subject area, the lead inspector will decide whether a single grade or separate grades will be given.
62. Subject area inspectors will normally join the inspection team on day one. Depending on the type and size of the provider, they will spend between two and four days inspecting the quality of provision and outcomes for their subject area.
63. Judgements on subject areas will usually be moderated on the penultimate day of inspection at a moderation meeting, attended by the lead inspector and one or two aspect inspectors, the nominee and the subject area inspector, or at a team meeting. On four-day inspections of small providers with only one or two inspectors in addition to the lead inspector, grading of the subject area(s) will normally take place on the final day.
64. Before leaving the provider, subject area inspectors will give the lead HMI their evidence forms and a record of inspection findings with extended bullet points for the key findings and recommendations for the inspection report.
65. Aspect inspectors will be allocated to one or more aspects of the Common Inspection Framework at the discretion of the lead inspector. They will collect evidence on which to base their judgements from a range of sources including:
 - sampling of the subject areas not being inspected and graded separately
 - evidence for the aspect concerned collected from subject area inspectors
 - discussion and examination of evidence from learners and staff

- other relevant documents.
66. The lead inspector will ensure that the grades and judgements for the aspects are based on evidence from across the provision, including subject areas, types of provision and different learner groups.
67. The time allocated to inspection will be used mainly for collecting first-hand evidence. The lead inspector will ensure that:
- sufficient evidence is gathered so that judgements about the provider are secure and reliable
 - all inspectors record evidence on evidence forms
 - the main judgements about the provider are agreed by the inspection team
 - the conduct of inspectors is to a high standard so that professional relationships are strong and inspectors' work is respected
 - members of staff receive well-informed, helpful feedback on any teaching, training and assessments observed by inspectors
 - the nominee, together with other relevant individuals, including learner representatives where appropriate, receives well-informed and helpful feedback about the overall effectiveness of the provider and the main findings of the inspection.

Table 1: Sample outline inspection plan for five-day inspection. This is only a guide. Plans for each inspection will differ according to circumstances. Shorter inspections follow a similar pattern within their timescale.

Schedules should allow time for a lunch break and comprise reasonable working hours and reflect the providers' operation. The lead inspector will need to plan for briefing meetings with the nominee and the chief executive officer.

Monday	Activity
11.30am	Initial meetings/briefings – inspectors and nominee, learner representatives Meetings with key member of senior management team for each aspect inspector and with relevant link/manager for subject inspectors
5pm	Inspection activity Meeting to identify emerging judgements
Tuesday	
9am	Inspection activity
5pm	Inspection activity Meeting to identify emerging judgements
Wednesday	
9am	Subject inspectors meet with link/manager for interim feedback. Aspect inspectors hold further meetings with key senior managers. Feedback to learner representatives

	Inspection activity
5pm	Inspection activity Meeting to identify emerging judgements
Thursday	
9am–11am	Final inspection activity by subject inspectors Prepare for moderation and feedback of subject areas Moderation meetings – subject area inspectors, lead inspector, assistant lead inspector and nominee Subject inspectors finish record of inspection findings/evidence forms Feedback to subject link/manager, then depart
5pm	Aspect inspectors review subject area judgements then continue inspection activities Meeting to feed back on aspects
Friday	
9am	Final aspect inspector inspection activity if needed
11am	Agree final judgements for grading
2pm	Grading meeting Formal feedback to the provider’s staff and learner representatives

Collecting and using evidence

68. Most of the time on site is spent collecting first-hand evidence, particularly through observations of teaching, training and assessment. Observations will take place, as appropriate, wherever learners are receiving teaching, training or assessment. Inspectors may monitor case studies of learners, including potentially vulnerable learners, such as those with learning difficulties and those with disabilities, and young people in care. They may ask the provider to arrange meetings with members of staff who work with one learner who is in receipt of additional learning support in each of the subject areas being inspected. This may then be used as case study for additional learning support. Inspectors should ensure that observations include specific attention to the quality of learning for individuals and different groups of learners, either in individual or in group sessions. The specific groups should be identified in the pre-inspection briefing and/or through subsequent discussion with the provider and in response to any emerging issues; for example, from discussions with learners.
69. Other first-hand evidence includes: discussions with learners and analysis of their work; analysis of provider records, documents and learner and employer

questionnaires; and meetings with learners, employers, staff, governors and the provider's partners where appropriate. Information held by the provider must be made freely available for inspectors, and the provider should cooperate in the task of collecting evidence.

Observation of teaching, training and assessment

70. Inspection of the quality of teaching, training and assessment, and the impact it has on the quality of learning, provides direct evidence. It informs inspectors' judgements about the outcomes for learners, the effectiveness of provision, leadership and management and the provider's capacity for improvement. Although some interviews with staff are important to provide context, the main activity of inspectors should be direct observation of the provider's work.
71. Inspectors will observe as many sessions as is possible in a number of ways. However, no minimum or maximum requirement is set. The number of observations should be proportionate to the type and size of the provider and the type of activities taking place, and be based on the themes for inspection identified in the pre-inspection briefing.
72. Judgements on the quality of teaching, training and assessment will be based on the Lifelong Learning UK professional standards for teachers, tutors and trainers in the lifelong learning sectors.
73. Inspectors will normally use some or all of the following methods to collect evidence on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment:
 - Formal observations of teaching, training or assessment activities. These should be of sufficient length to ensure the inspector has enough evidence to form clear judgements and give a grade. The inspector will usually provide clear feedback to the person observed. This will normally include the grade awarded, with a summary of the strengths and areas for development. Observations of training, assessments and progress reviews of learners at work will follow the same procedures as outlined above. The provider will receive overall feedback on the quality of teaching, training and assessment; however, the lead inspector will not produce a profile of the grades awarded.
 - Short, focused observations of activities. These will usually last approximately 15 minutes and have a specific focus; for example, learner support, use of information learning technology, attendance and personalised learning. Feedback will not normally be given to the person observed following these sessions.
 - Joint observations of learning activities:
 - the lead inspector will, in discussion with the team, select one or more learning sessions or assessments for observation by inspectors, and then invite a member of the providers' own observation team to accompany

an inspector on a joint observation; joint observations may be carried out by HMIs or by additional inspectors

- at the end of the joint observation, the inspector will discuss the judgements and grade from the observer and record both the observer's and their own grade and judgements. It is the responsibility of the provider's observer to provide feedback to the person observed; the inspector does not feed back to the person observed.

How are data used on inspection?

74. Inspection involves the use of a range of data about the provider's performance. The source and type of data used vary with different types of provision and provider, but are generally provided via the funding body and – where appropriate – the data service. Success rates, value-added measures, minimum levels of performance and progression to employment are examples of the data used.
75. Inspectors will analyse the performance of the provider using the most recent appropriate validated data before and during an inspection. Analysis may be at overall provider level and/or for individual subjects or types of provision. For the inspection of learning for social and personal development on adult and community learning inspections, RARPA data held by the provider will continue to be included on inspection and evaluated but not compared to a national average.
76. While data alone will not lead directly to judgements, the primary data source, which is the relevant measure of success for each type of provision, will provide key evidence for outcomes for learners.

How does the Framework for Excellence relate to inspection?

77. Inspectors will use Framework for Excellence performance indicators, when available, as a source of evidence to support inspection judgements. Where performance indicator outcomes relate directly to an evaluation statement in the Common Inspection Framework, they will be used as a source of evidence; for example, learner responsiveness or value for money.

How is the self-assessment report used during inspection?

78. A provider's annual self-assessment report will continue to provide Ofsted inspectors with crucial evidence to support judgements about the Common Inspection Framework's main aspects, the contributory grades for equality and diversity, safeguarding and the provider's capacity to improve. Inspectors will use the report to assess risk, monitor standards and plan for inspection. Where subject areas are to be inspected, the report will help the lead inspector select the areas to inspect. During the inspection, findings will be compared with

those in the provider's self-assessment report, and a conclusion reached on the accuracy of those judgements.

79. Ofsted does not require a provider to produce a self-assessment report in any prescribed format. However, thorough self-assessment and effective action planning is essential to tackle identified areas for improvement, including provision that is satisfactory but not improving, and should be an integral part of an organisation's quality improvement arrangements.

How is evidence recorded?

80. During inspection, inspectors will collect, analyse and record evidence and their judgements on evidence forms. The overall judgements made about the provider will be recorded by the lead inspector on the record of main findings.
81. The evidence forms, together with any briefings, plans or instructions prepared by the lead inspector and responses from learners and employers, either in hard copy or in an email, contribute to the evidence base for the inspection. The lead inspector is responsible for compiling and assuring the quality of the evidence base.

How are judgements agreed?

82. The lead inspector will ensure that judgements about the provider are corporately agreed by the inspection team, with reference to the grade descriptors in the Common Inspection Framework. Judgements will be supported convincingly by the evidence base and will identify the key findings and what the provider should do to improve. Emerging findings will be discussed with the nominee and, where appropriate, senior staff at regular intervals. The nominee will be given the opportunity during the evidence-collection stages of the inspection to provide further evidence should the provider wish to do so.
83. The overall judgements will reflect all the evidence considered by the inspection team. Final judgements will be made when all first-hand evidence has been collected and considered, and will represent the corporate view of the inspection team.

What meetings are held during inspection?

84. To secure the judgements, the inspection team hold a number of team meetings. The nominee is a full participant at all of these meetings except those awarding grades for the inspection. The meetings will include:
- Initial team meeting to brief the aspect team on the shape of the inspection, clarify any issues relating to their roles and receive a brief update from the provider.
 - Where possible an initial meeting with learner representatives, if not held before the inspection. Where appropriate, interim feedback to the learner

representatives should also be given midway in the inspection and at the final feedback meeting.

- Initial briefing from the provider's managers with responsibility for aspects of the Common Inspection Framework and subject areas to the relevant individual inspectors.
- Daily team meetings, usually at the end of each inspection day, to allow inspectors to feed back their findings and emerging judgements to the team. Aspect inspectors use these meetings to collect evidence from each of the subject area inspectors to contribute to the evidence on each aspect of the Common Inspection Framework and identify issues to follow up in subject areas that are graded. The meetings enable the nominee to hear the emerging judgements and identify any additional evidence opportunities.
- Moderation meetings to determine the outcomes of the inspection of each subject area. These will usually be held on the penultimate day of the inspection. The aims are to:
 - agree the key findings for the subject area
 - agree recommendations for the subject area
 - propose a grade for the subject area.
- Final grading meeting on the last day of inspection. The purpose of the grading meeting is to arrive at accurate and secure judgements about the provider. The main business of the meeting is to:
 - confirm the grades for the subject areas
 - using the guidance in Part 2 of the Handbook, award overall grades for outcomes for learners, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, including the limiting contributory grades for equality and diversity and safeguarding
 - award a grade for the provider's capacity to improve
 - grade the overall effectiveness of the provider and the adequacy of the provider
 - complete the inspection grades for all aspects of the Common Inspection Framework and types of learners and record them on the Record of Main Findings
 - agree the main findings
 - agree the recommendations that should: be tailored specifically to the needs and context of the provider; refer to the weakest areas of performance that are hindering the provider's improvement; include satisfactory areas that could be further improved; help outstanding providers maintain and develop their performance; and provide precise, specific areas for improvement.

- Feedback meeting to give a wider audience of the provider's staff, governors or trustees, learner representatives and, where possible, a representative of the funding body the opportunity to hear the key messages from the inspection, before publication of the report.

How is the quality of inspections assured?

85. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector must ensure that inspections are carried out in accordance with the principles of inspection and the code of conduct. In addition, Ofsted monitors the quality of inspections through a range of formal processes. Some providers are visited by an HMI, whose purpose is to assure the quality of the inspection. In other cases the inspection evidence base is evaluated.
86. Inspection service providers monitor the work of inspectors as part of their quality assurance procedures. Assessments are confidential to the inspectors and contractors concerned.
87. All providers are invited to take part in a post-inspection evaluation so that their views about the inspection can contribute to the development of inspection.

What happens after the inspection?

What feedback is provided to the provider?

88. Before leaving the provider, the lead inspector should ensure that the provider is clear:
- about the grades awarded for each judgement required under the Common Inspection Framework
 - that the grades awarded are provisional and, although unlikely, may be subject to change through moderation
 - that the main points provided in the feedback will be referred to in the text of the report
 - about the recommendations for improvement
 - about the procedures leading to the publication of the report
 - about the complaints procedure
 - where relevant, about the implications of the provider being deemed to be inadequate overall, or in one or more subject area or aspect of the Common Inspection Framework
 - that the provider has the opportunity to feedback on the inspection through the post-inspection evaluation form.
89. After the inspection team has reached its conclusions, these should be explained to representatives of the provider in a formal feedback meeting. The

feedback meeting can be with other members of the provider's staff and, where relevant, governors or other supervisory bodies.

What are the written outcomes of the inspection?

90. Following the inspection, the lead inspector will write a report summarising the findings of the inspection. The text, balance and tone of the report must reflect the judgements made about the provision. Reports should be well argued and based convincingly on the evidence. They should be written in clear English, be free of jargon and be accessible to learners.
91. The lead inspector will ensure that the feedback given at the end of the inspection is reflected in the written report. The report will contain judgements that have been explained to the provider. Any aspects that have been judged inadequate or outstanding should be clearly explained in the feedback.
92. A summary report is provided at the front of the report. This is addressed to learners, employers and other users of the provider. The summary includes the grades awarded at inspection, the main findings and recommendations for improvement and the views of learners and employers about the provider. HMCI expects providers to ensure that all learners are made aware of the findings of the inspection.
93. The report is divided into the following sections:
 - introduction and information about the provider
 - summary report for users, including:
 - main findings of the inspection
 - what the provider needs to do to improve further
 - views of learners and employers
 - main inspection findings, including:
 - capacity to improve
 - outcomes for learners
 - quality of provision
 - leadership and management (including safeguarding, and equality and diversity)
 - subject area reports, including:
 - key findings
 - what the provider needs to do to improve further

- Record of Main Findings
 - all main and contributory grades against the Common Inspection Framework according to types of provision, where applicable.
94. The report contains all the judgements and includes a commentary on:
- the provider's main strengths, including any areas of outstanding practice, and the main areas for improvement
 - the provider's capacity to improve
 - how well groups of learners achieve and enjoy their learning
 - outcomes for different groups of learners
 - the effectiveness with which leaders and managers, including governors:
 - communicate ambition and drive improvement
 - promote equality and tackle discrimination
 - ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective.
95. The lead inspector provides a first draft of the report to the inspection service provider after the inspection. The report should be factually correct. Following an editing process, the inspection service provider forwards the report to the provider for a factual check to which the lead inspector responds. Two working days are allocated to the provider to comment on the draft. Judgements in the report cannot be changed unless factual errors or omissions have a significant bearing on them. Any such changes are the responsibility of the lead inspector, who will consult the quality assurance team. Where learning and skills inspection reports judge a provider to be outstanding or inadequate for overall effectiveness, they will be subject to further scrutiny by a member of the Ofsted quality assurance team. This will include: a review of the evidence base to ensure judgements are secure; the checking of data in the report to ensure they are accurate and reflected in the grades awarded; and detailed reading of the text to ensure that all grades awarded are representative of the findings in the report.

When is the report issued?

96. The report is normally published on the Ofsted website (www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports) within 25 working days of the end of the inspection. The inspection service provider sends a copy of the inspection report, on behalf of Ofsted, to the appropriate authority for the provider and the nominee. The relevant funding body is notified when the reports are published. In exceptional circumstances Ofsted may decide that the normal period for completion of the inspection report should be extended.

How do monitoring visits differ from full inspections?

97. Any provider may be selected for a focused monitoring visit under the following criteria:
- within two years of the last inspection for providers with a satisfactory grade for overall effectiveness and a satisfactory or lower grade for capacity to improve
 - based on the outcomes of the annual process for selecting providers; for example, areas of provision that are new or that give some cause for concern
 - where more than 15% of a college's long course provision falls below agreed minimum level of performance thresholds as defined by the funding agencies. Similar thresholds exist for work-based learning.
98. The purpose of a monitoring visit is to:
- assess the provider's performance in relation to concerns raised by the annual selection of providers
 - assess the provider's progress in improving aspects of performance identified at the last inspection or visit as an area for improvement
 - assess progress on any new provision; for example, apprenticeships
 - assess the provider's progress in improving learners' outcomes, irrespective of whether this was a specific area for improvement identified at the previous inspection
 - take a view on whether judgements in the provider's self-assessment report are broadly consistent with the evidence examined before and during the visit.
99. The number of inspector days for monitoring visits will be based on the size of the provider, and normally be subject to an allocation of one or more inspectors. The monitoring visit will take place over one to three days.

Before the monitoring visit

100. As with full inspections, providers will normally be given two to three working weeks' notice before a planned monitoring visit. The planning meeting, information needs and preparation, by both the HMI and the provider, follow the same procedures described in this handbook for inspection.
101. Providers will be expected to inform learners and employers of the visit in the same way as for a full inspection. The inspection service provider will analyse views sent through the email address in the same way and pass them to the lead HMI the week before the visit.

102. In addition to the mandatory themes on outcomes for learners and self-assessment, up to five other themes, based on areas for improvement identified at the last inspection report or visit, will be selected. On all monitoring visits, themes will be expressed as questions to be answered that will prompt a progress judgement. For example, 'what progress has been made since the last inspection to develop a more effective lesson observation scheme that can be used to improve the quality and consistency of teaching?'
103. Key documents to be used in developing the themes will be the last inspection report, reports from previous monitoring visits, the self-assessment report and action plan, and data on learners' outcomes, including performance reports or any other data. Any pre-arranged meetings with learners and key staff should be agreed as quickly as possible.

During the monitoring visit

104. Evidence collection will follow the same principles for any inspection and:
- will be primarily first hand from learners, employers and staff
 - may include observation of teaching, training and assessment.
105. An initial team meeting, including the nominee, will take place at the start of the visit. A short feedback meeting at the end of day one will give the nominee the opportunity to hear the emerging findings from the first day, and to present further evidence as required.
106. The following progress judgements will be used:
- **Insufficient progress:** given the amount of time since the last inspection or monitoring visit, it is judged that progress has been either slow or insubstantial or both, and the demonstrable impact on learners has been negligible.
 - **Reasonable progress:** evidence of progress that is already having a beneficial impact on learners, is sustainable and is based on a provider's sound quality assurance procedures that lead to improvement.
 - **Significant progress:** progress has been rapid and is already having considerable beneficial impact on learners. Evidence, including the rigour of the provider's quality assurance procedures, shows that the progress made has been sustained.
107. The lead HMI will give verbal feedback at the end of the visit to the nominee and other senior managers.

After the monitoring visit

108. A common report structure will be used for the written report. This will include a brief section which will describe the provider's context, summarise the findings of the last inspection, and give the opportunity to describe any

significant developments in the provider's work since the last inspection or monitoring visit. The rest of the report will cover each of the themes, providing brief evidence to justify the progress judgement made. Before publication, providers will be entitled to conduct a factual accuracy check of the draft report. The report will be published within 25 working days of the visit.

109. If the monitoring visit raises concerns because the provider shows no sign of improvement, the lead inspector will recommend that the inadequate progress since the last inspection should be a trigger for an early further inspection.

How do providers complain about their inspection?

110. Any concerns the provider has about the inspection should be raised with the lead inspector during the inspection and resolved where possible. Concerns may also be raised with a quality assurance inspector, should one have been allocated to the inspection. If the concerns are not resolved by these means, or the person expressing the concern does not feel that due weight is being given to the concerns, or an independent view is sought, then the person raising the concern, or someone acting on his or her behalf, should contact the Ofsted helpline on 0300 123 4666. The call will be answered by a member of the National Business Unit at Ofsted and passed to an appropriate person with the required knowledge of further education and skills inspections, who will try to help to resolve the issues.
111. If it has not been possible to resolve concerns in the manner described, then individuals or providers may decide to lodge a formal complaint. The procedures are available on Ofsted's website.⁴
112. Ofsted investigates and sends the complainant a response which is informative and aims to answer all of the points of concern within 20 working days. Ofsted also includes details of how to ask for further internal and independent review if the complainant is not satisfied with the complaint resolution.

⁴<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/complaints-procedure-raising-concerns-and-making-complaints-about-ofsted>.

Part 2: The Common inspection framework for further education and skills 2009

113. The *Common inspection framework for further education and skills 2009* – the Common Inspection Framework – was devised by HMCI in line with the Education and Inspection Act 2006. It is based on the common evaluation schedule which informs all of Ofsted’s inspections. It sets out the judgements inspectors will make during inspection.
114. The Common Inspection Framework sets out the principles that apply to the inspections of FE and skills under Part 8 of the Act. The Common Inspection Framework comprises:
- Ofsted’s principles of inspection
 - the common evaluation schedule.
115. The common evaluation schedule is at the heart of the inspection and regulation processes. It sets out the structure of the inspection and identifies the key aspects against which judgements will be made.
116. The framework for inspection and regulation is built around the evaluation schedule. It sets out how the inspection will be conducted and details how judgements will be made.
117. The common evaluation schedule:
- provides inspectors with a structure for gathering evidence and reporting which is common to all Ofsted’s inspection and regulation activity, thereby promoting greater coherence and opportunity for collaboration across inspection remits
 - enables users to become familiar with Ofsted’s work across all remits
 - allows greater integration between and across inspection events
 - ensures that inspection and regulation judgements from across all of Ofsted’s inspections can be brought together to provide a coherent view of an area.

Provision inspected under the Common Inspection Framework

118. The Common Inspection Framework lists questions that inspectors must ask of every provider of education, training and development. The Common Inspection Framework applies to the inspection of provision funded by the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency.

This provision is provided by:

- further education colleges, sixth-form colleges and independent specialist colleges
- independent learning providers
- local authorities, including provision delivered in their role as a lead accountable body and provision commissioned to providers who hold no additional direct contracts
- special designated institutions⁵
- external institutes that hold direct contracts in addition to provision commissioned by the lead accountable body
- employers
- not-for-profit organisations
- higher education institutions providing further education.

Inspection of sixth forms in maintained schools is covered by the school inspection framework.

The different types of provision inspected under the Common Inspection Framework include:

- education and training for learners aged 16–18 and 19+
- work-based learning
- adult safeguarded provision
- Next Step
- learning provision in the judicial services
- employability training.

The common grading scale for all inspection judgements

119. A common grading scale will be used in making judgements for organisational inspections:

- Grade 1 outstanding
- Grade 2 good
- Grade 3 satisfactory
- Grade 4 inadequate.

⁵ Institutions that have specially designated educational status under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, clause 28.

Limiting grades

120. Any limiting grades are considered before the overall effectiveness judgement is made. Limiting grades relate to safeguarding, and equality and diversity, as these are considered to be essential in assuring the quality of the development and well-being of young people and adults. The grades for these two aspects may therefore limit the grade for overall effectiveness.

The Common Inspection Framework

Overall effectiveness

How effective and efficient is the provider in meeting the needs of learners and users, and why?

Evaluative statements

The judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence from inspection. Inspectors will take into account judgements on:

- the provider's capacity to make and sustain improvements
- outcomes for learners
- the quality of provision
- leadership and management.

Illustrative grade characteristics

Outstanding	Overall effectiveness is likely to be outstanding when the quality of provision and leadership and management are at least good and outcomes for learners are outstanding. There has been exceptional improvement, or previously outstanding performance has been securely maintained, as a result of highly effective leadership and management and provision, which enable learners to meet ambitious targets. Equality and diversity and safeguarding are likely to be at least good.
Good	Overall effectiveness is likely to be good when either the quality of provision or the leadership and management are at least good, and outcomes for learners are at least good. Overall performance has improved greatly or has consolidated and improved on previously good performance. Leadership and management and provision enable learners to achieve realistic but challenging targets.
Satisfactory	Overall effectiveness is likely to be satisfactory when the quality of provision, leadership and management and outcomes for learners are all at least satisfactory. There is a trend of improvement in the overall performance, despite a few remaining weaknesses. Leadership and management and provision enable learners to meet targets which lead to satisfactory progress. Systems are embedded sufficiently to enable further improvement.

Inadequate	<p>Overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate where one or more of the following are judged to be inadequate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ capacity to improve ■ outcomes for learners ■ the quality of provision ■ leadership and management ■ safeguarding ■ equality and diversity.
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Capacity to improve

What is the provider's capacity to make and sustain improvements?

The capacity to make further improvements is a judgement about the ability of a provider to continue improving standards and progress based on what it has accomplished so far or to maintain exceptionally high standards.

All judgements on leadership and management, quality of provision and outcomes for learners contribute to the judgement on capacity to improve. Additionally, the judgement is based on evidence of the impact of improvements implemented by the provider as shown in its track record and performance since the last visit by inspectors, where appropriate.

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- the provider has a sound track record of sustained improvement
- the provider sets and meets ambitious targets to improve outcomes for all learners
- the provider has a clear vision and appropriate priorities that will sustain improvement and raise expectations for all users
- the provider's processes for self-assessment and quality improvement include appropriate use of the views of users and lead to demonstrable impact
- the provider has an appropriate management structure and sufficient staff and other resources to carry through its plans for improvement
- staff at all levels contribute to securing sustained improvements
- governors or the appropriate supervisory body fulfil their duties and ask challenging questions to raise or maintain high standards and secure positive learner experiences and outcomes.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- how well the provider continues to make and sustain improvements in outcomes for learners and the quality of provision
- the extent to which the provider’s development plan and internal policies provide a well-researched and realistic framework for improvement
- the provider’s use of self-assessment processes, including the views of learners, employers and other stakeholders, to bring about demonstrable improvements to all aspects of the provision
- the extent to which governors and supervisory bodies have the appropriate expertise to fulfil their duties
- the provider’s use of robust strategic and business planning to respond to local and national priorities
- the clarity of management arrangements to enable the provider to move forward with its mission and key priorities
- the appropriateness of staff and other resources to carry through the provider’s plans for improvement
- whether the extent to which the provider has suitable resources to support learning and financial management is sufficiently robust to enable planned development and improvements to take place
- the commitment of staff at all levels to secure real improvements, their support for provider plans and their confidence in managers’ ability to provide effective leadership.

Illustrative grade characteristics for capacity to improve

Capacity to improve is a main grade in FE and skills inspections. It is linked to the judgement on overall effectiveness but may not always be the same grade.

Outstanding	In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory and good, consistent trends in improvement are sustained at much higher rates than those nationally, or very high levels of performance are maintained. The self-assessment report is highly accurate. The process of self-assessment is comprehensive and inclusive. It is used very effectively to secure sustained improvements in all aspects of the provider’s work. Leaders and managers successfully inspire staff and learners to exceed challenging targets. Governors, or the appropriate body, use their expertise very effectively to challenge senior managers and raise standards. The user engagement strategy is highly effective, with the views of learners and employers systematically
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	collected and acted upon to bring about improvement, and subsequent actions clearly communicated to these users.
Good	In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory, consistent trends in improvement are sustained at high rates, or high levels of performance are maintained. The self-assessment report is largely accurate. The process is thorough and it is used well to secure improvements in most aspects of the provider's work. Leaders and managers motivate staff and learners and have a good record of setting and meeting demanding targets. Governors, or the appropriate body, use their expertise appropriately to challenge senior managers and raise standards. The user engagement strategy is effective, with the views of learners and employers acted upon to secure improvements.
Satisfactory	There is a trend of steady improvement in overall performance which is at least close to national levels and there is no significant and sustained fall in success rates in subject areas or types of provision. Self-assessment is used well to identify most of the provider's strengths and weaknesses and bring about improvements. Leaders and managers enjoy the support of staff and learners and have a generally good record of setting and meeting targets, although these targets are not always sufficiently ambitious. Governors and supervisory bodies appraise the provider's performance effectively and receive appropriate reports on learners' success. Staff and other resources are sufficient to secure satisfactory value for money. The provider makes effective use of its learner involvement strategy to gather and use the views of learners to improve the quality of provision. Procedures for gathering and using employers' views are not fully effective.
Inadequate	Capacity to improve is likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ overall performance is poor, with little evidence of any sustained improvement ■ self-assessment and quality improvement do not lead to demonstrable improvements ■ leaders and managers do not set or achieve appropriate targets for improvement ■ the provider does not have a clear vision or appropriate priorities to sustain improvement and raise expectations for all users.

A. Outcomes for learners

The judgements for each of the five questions based on a range of outcomes will contribute to the overall grade for outcomes for learners. Inspectors will consider the main purpose of each type of provision when prioritising the impact each of these questions should have on the overall grade.

A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?

Inspectors will take into account:

- A1. a) learners' attainment of learning goals
- A1. b) how well learners progress.

A1. a) Evaluative statements for learners' attainment of learning goals

To make their judgements on learners' attainment, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- learners attain their learning goals, including qualifications and challenging targets
- there are any significant variations in the attainment of different groups of learners
- learners' work meets or exceeds the requirements of the qualifications, learning goals or employment
- learners attend and participate as required.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- data on qualification success rates according to:
 - performance across the provider
 - different groups of learners
 - different levels of provision
- learners' quality of work and their ability to demonstrate knowledge, skills and understanding, with particular attention to the levels reached by different groups of learners
- the extent to which learners are involved in and contribute to their learning in learning sessions, group and project work, and enrichment activities such as voluntary work and sporting activities
- learners' attainment of their individual learning objectives in the context of their starting points as identified through qualifications on entry to the programme and initial assessment
- the extent to which learners' behaviour promotes learning and development.

In addition inspectors will consider the following points for:

Work-based learning

Attainment is measured by the completion of full apprenticeship frameworks and National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in overall and timely success rates. Retention is an expectation.

Learners' rates of progress in completing the following components of the framework: NVQs, key skills, technical certificates or, where applicable, on Train to Gain, an NVQ only or units of an NVQ.

Foundation learning

The key outcome on entry and Level 1 provision is learners' progression to a planned destination based on their long-term goals. This may include further education or training; supported, open employment or voluntary work; and supported or independent living or increased levels of independence.

The key outcome on Entry to Employment and successor programmes is learners' progression to an intended destination, such as employment, training or further education.

Outcomes are measured by achievement of agreed learning objectives linked to the intended destination or identified progression aim.

Adult and community learning

Outcomes that are appropriate for the category of learning.

Other data which demonstrate a benefit to the learner or community through learning.

A1. b) Evaluative statements for how well learners progress

To make their judgements on learners' progress, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- learners develop personal and social skills, including, as appropriate, spiritual, moral and cultural aspects
- learners enjoy learning and make progress relative to their prior attainment and potential
- learners develop the literacy, numeracy, language and key and functional skills required to complete their programmes and progress.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- learners' progress in learning sessions against planned targets
- the extent to which learners improve the quality of their work over time
- learners' progress during their programme compared to their starting points, with particular attention to progress by different groups of learners.

In addition inspectors will consider the following points for:

Foundation learning

Learners should make progress in developing vocational, personal and other appropriate skills, such as independence, to support their progression to an agreed destination.

Adult and community learning

The social impact of provision, particularly in learning for social and personal development.

A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- learners develop relevant knowledge, understanding and skills which contribute to their economic and social well-being
- learners increase their employability
- learners progress to further learning and employment or gain promotion
- learners understand their rights and responsibilities at work.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- learners' development of qualifications, skills and knowledge that will enable them to progress to their chosen career, employment and/or further education and training
- learners' development of additional, relevant employability skills which may include:
 - additional qualifications and experiences in the workplace
 - literacy and numeracy skills
 - broader skills relevant to learners' career aims, such as communications, teamwork, leadership, taking responsibilities, problem solving and commitment
- learners' development of an understanding of careers and progression opportunities and their ability to benefit from training and development opportunities
- learners' development of financial literacy/capabilities and competencies
- learners' understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens and consumers in the community and as learners at the provider and at work.

In addition inspectors will consider the following points for:

Work-based learning

The skills learners develop at work, and during on- and off-the-job training, should match those required by an employer.

Adult and community learning

The social impact of learning, inclusion and its impact on different communities.

The impact of learning, skills and knowledge derived from other cultures.

Other impact on learners such as health benefits which enable learners to better participate in their community.

A3. How safe do learners feel?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- learners use safe working practices in learning and at work
- learners say they feel safe.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- the extent to which learners feel that the learning environment is safe and welcoming, and that all individuals are respected equally
- the extent to which vulnerable learners are involved in individual risk assessments and understand the arrangements to help them stay safe
- the extent to which learners are aware of their own duties and responsibilities in creating a safe environment for everyone
- learners' implementation of safe working practices in work and at the provider
- learners' attitudes and behaviour
- learners' understanding and use of internet safety measures
- learners' understanding of abuse, discrimination, bullying (including prejudice-based and cyber bullying) and harassment, and what action to take if they occur
- the extent to which learners' complaints about safety-related matters have been rapidly and effectively tackled.

Illustrative grade characteristics for 'How safe do learners feel?'

The grade for 'How safe do learners feel?' may limit the grade for overall effectiveness. The grade for the promotion of safeguarding in leadership and management (C3 below) may also limit the grade for overall effectiveness.

Outstanding	In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory and good, learners' safe working practices are exemplary. They have no concerns about safety and are confident that any concerns will be dealt with quickly and very effectively. Learners make a very good contribution to reviewing and improving arrangements to ensure that they are safe.
Good	In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory, learners' safe working practices are good. They

	regard the safety of the learning environment as good. They feel that any concerns they have reported have been addressed. Learners are involved in discussing safety and safeguarding with the provider.
Satisfactory	Learners feel safe in the learning environment (whether on the provider's premises or elsewhere), including the most vulnerable learners. They use safe working practices in all settings. They know how to recognise unfair, unsafe or abusive treatment by others and what action to take to protect themselves and other learners. They understand and use internet safety measures.
Inadequate	'Feeling safe' is likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ learners do not feel safe in the learning environment ■ learners do not demonstrate good health and safety practices ■ there is bullying or learners report other unsafe, unfair or abusive practices which have not been addressed by the provider ■ learners do not know what action to take to combat this.

A4. Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- learners have the knowledge and understanding to enable them to make informed choices about their health and well-being.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- use of available learner health and well-being data to identify the health needs of all groups, including the most vulnerable
- use of learners' views on the range and quality of health-related services provided
- partnership work with external agencies to support delivery and facilitate referral to specialist services

- learners' awareness of the consequences of smoking, alcohol abuse and drugs, insufficient physical exercise and an unhealthy diet
- learners' participation in activities which tackle key aspects of learners' physical and mental health, well-being and emotional development
- learners' opportunities to access confidential support
- learners' involvement in developing a range of opportunities and activities which are inclusive and have high rates of participation, to increase their levels of physical activity and to improve the uptake of healthy food choices within the provider's setting.

In addition inspectors will consider the following points for:

Adult and community learning

The social impact of teaching and learning, initiatives or provision that promote health and well-being.

A5. How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- learners are involved in additional community-based development activities and projects
- learners develop skills, knowledge and understanding relevant to community cohesion and sustainable development.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- learners' understanding of their local and the wider community, which may include their workplace, learning community or neighbourhood
- learners' participation in events to support the community, such as voluntary work, charity events and fundraising
- learners' take-up of opportunities to participate and be involved in developing the provider's activities/policies for the benefit of themselves and other learners; for example, student union/council, social events and course representatives
- learners' understanding of their role in contributing to their communities
- learners' understanding of issues relating to sustainable development and how they can contribute to reducing global warming.

Adult and community learning

How capacity and capability are improved in the community.

How learning in the community contributes to community cohesion.

How learners contribute to community events, activities or local business.

Illustrative grade characteristics for outcomes for learners

Outstanding	In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory and good, learners' progress overall is exceptional. The provider has taken very effective steps to identify and significantly narrow gaps in the achievement of different groups of learners. Success rates and attendance are high. Learners' achievement of qualifications and learning goals within the agreed timescales is also very good. Learners develop excellent skills, knowledge and understanding that are relevant to improving their economic and social well-being. Learners thrive, feel safe and are highly supportive of each other. Learners contribute extensively to the provider and the wider community.
Good	In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory, most groups of learners make at least good progress and some may make exceptional progress. The provider makes good use of data to identify gaps in achievement and trends show that steps taken to narrow the achievement gap have been effective. Success rates and attendance are good, as are achievements within agreed timescales. Learners make good progress in developing skills, knowledge and understanding that are relevant to improving their economic and social well-being. Learners readily take responsibility for their own well-being and that of others. Learners make a strong positive contribution to the life of the institution and their wider communities.
Satisfactory	Success rates are broadly in line with national averages and overall trends show steady improvement. Learners make expected progress towards attaining their individual learning goals, given their starting points, and some, although not the majority, may make good progress. Learners' knowledge, understanding and practical vocational skills meet employers' requirements and/or levels required for their next step in learning, development or employment. Learners develop sensible and mature attitudes to their well-being and that of others. They use safe working practices, and feel safe in the learning environment and in the workplace. Learners regularly contribute to the community in their own institution

	and to wider communities.
Inadequate	<p>Outcomes for learners are likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a significant number of learners do not make the expected progress given their starting points and capabilities ■ success rates are unacceptably low ■ there are unacceptable variations in the attainment and progression of different groups of learners. Actions, if taken, have been ineffective. As a result, too many leavers are not in education, employment or training, or progress to employment without training ■ a significant number of learners have little regard for their own well-being and that of others.

B. Quality of provision

B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- learning and assessment activities are linked to initial and current assessments and related activities to make sure they build on and extend learning for all learners
- interesting and appropriate teaching and learning methods and resources inspire and challenge all learners and enable them to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding
- technology is used effectively to promote and support learning, where appropriate
- staff have appropriate skills and expertise to provide good-quality teaching, learning, assessment, and information and support services for each learner
- assessment of learners' performance and progress is timely, fair, consistent and reliable
- learners receive constructive feedback on their progress and how they might improve

- learners receive help to develop literacy, numeracy, language and key skills to support the attainment of their main learning goals
- learning, teaching, training and assessment advance equality and support diversity.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- the use of initial and diagnostic assessment to provide an accurate basis on which to plan an appropriate programme of work
- how well staff work with learners to develop individual learning plans that are informed by initial assessment, meet learners' identified learning goals and are reviewed and updated regularly
- the planning of individual learning sessions with clear objectives that are understood by learners and can be adapted to reflect the progress of learners
- the use of activities in sessions that motivate and engage all learners, whatever their age, ability and cultural background, and which are suitably demanding
- the progress made by learners during sessions and in the medium and long term
- how well teaching meets individual needs
- the quality and safety of learning materials and learning resources, including specialist and/or adapted resources and practical settings
- the role of work experience and employment in learning
- the adequacy and quality of e-learning
- procedures for initial assessment, further diagnostic assessment and additional learning support for learners from an early point in their programme
- the monitoring and review of learners' progress in literacy, numeracy, language and key skills, including that work is marked carefully, with correction of spelling, grammatical errors and inaccuracies
- that learners understand how well they are progressing towards their learning goals and what they need to do to improve
- that assessment is fair, accurate and carried out regularly
- how well achievements towards learning goals and qualifications are recorded and accredited
- how well assessment, verification and moderation procedures follow regulatory body requirements

- how well those with a legitimate interest, such as employers or parents, are clearly and regularly informed about learners' progress
- how effectively staff use materials and teaching methods that are sensitive to, and advance, diversity and equality of opportunity
- how well staff plan sessions to take account of fully meeting the needs of different groups of learners
- how staff maximise opportunities in sessions and within all learning contexts to advance equality of opportunity and awareness of diversity.

In addition inspectors will consider the following points for:

Learners 16–18 and 19+

Programme requirements should be translated into clear and comprehensive schemes of work that are understood by learners.

Work-based learning

Assessments should be planned and carried out to enable learners to achieve the framework within the agreed timescale.

Progress reviews for apprentices should take place at least to the minimum level specified in the providers' contract and more often as required, and should involve the employer in discussions about the learners' progress.

On- and off-the-job training should be coordinated effectively so that practical training complements training in theory and vice versa.

Training staff and assessors should have current competence in their specialist occupational areas.

Foundation learning

In Entry to Employment and successor programmes, the initial assessment period of between two and six weeks is part of the learning programme and should be used to help learners identify and work towards their progression aim or intended destination.

For learners with complex needs there should be multidisciplinary approaches to initial and ongoing assessment and to curriculum development.

The content of learning activities should be practical and relevant to learners' planned progression aim.

Communication devices should be used to support learning where relevant and to enable access to the curriculum.

Adult and community learning

Categories of adult and community learning provision with different and distinct learning objectives are evaluated contextually and with different emphases.

Recording and recognising progress and achievement (RARPA) is considered where appropriate to the learning.

B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- the range, content and context of provision provide learners with a choice of subjects, levels and qualifications that are relevant to their medium- and long-term personal, career and/or employment goals
- provision is planned to provide coherent progression routes
- the provider considers employers' views, identified training needs and information on performance, skills and labour demand
- arrangements for training and assessment are flexible to suit learners' and employers' needs
- enrichment activities and/or extended services, including work experience, contribute to learners' enjoyment and achievement, and their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- how well the provision enables learners to build on what they have already achieved and experienced before starting their programme
- whether learning programmes are accessible in terms of timing, location, mode of delivery and duration and are structured to provide a coherent course of study at different levels, with a variety of interesting and useful activities to meet learners' individual needs
- how well learning programmes develop learners' skills and knowledge, and are up to date, relevant and meet external requirements
- whether learners are consulted about the design, planning and delivery of programmes and progression opportunities
- how well learners are involved in the evaluation of the provision
- learning programmes' responsiveness to employers' education and training needs and how well local skills needs are met
- how employers are involved in the evaluation of the provision
- how well sustainable development is promoted in education and training.

B3. How effectively does the provider use partnerships to develop its provision to meet learners' needs?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- the provider develops partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others that lead to demonstrable benefits for learners
- provision is well coordinated, relevant to local communities and promotes social inclusion and sustainable development.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- how partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others enable learners to develop new skills, gain knowledge and qualifications, increase self-esteem and become better citizens
- the involvement of schools, community groups and employers in the design, review and evaluation of the provision
- the provider's response to government policies and initiatives for lifelong learning in order to meet the needs of its stakeholders
- the range and extent of access to education and training for all, including those under-represented in learning
- the development of learning programmes with schools, local authorities and others, to encourage participation by young people who are at risk of leaving, or who are not in, education, employment or training
- the extent to which the range and content of learning programmes/services are relevant to local communities, ensuring the provision is coherent and does not duplicate other provision but maintains minority subjects and courses through the sharing of human and physical resources.

In addition inspectors will consider the following points for meeting needs:

Learners 14–16

Programmes should motivate young learners and facilitate their progression to post-16 further education, training or employment with training (colleges only).

Learners 16–18 and 19+

Parents and carers should be kept informed of the progress and attendance of learners under 18 years old.

Work-based learning

The content of an apprenticeship programme, including the selection of QCF NVQ units and additional qualifications, should enhance learners' employability and meet the needs of employers.

Learners should be registered on the Apprenticeship or Advanced Apprenticeship that is current on their date of entry. If apprenticeship frameworks are subsequently updated, learners may have the option to move to the new framework or remain on the framework that was in place when they registered.

Employers should be fully informed of the apprenticeship programme so that they can provide relevant support and additional on-the-job training.

Employers are required to provide paid time off from work (where applicable) to all employees on Train to Gain as part of their contracts with providers.

The 'assess, train, assess' model of work-based learning delivery should be used wherever appropriate on Train to Gain.

Adult and community learning

The impact of partnerships and provision commissioned through lead accountable bodies on learning in the community.

Learning such as social and personal development provision should have clear links with sustainable communities and neighbourhood developments.

B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to attain their learning goals?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- learners receive appropriate and timely information, advice and guidance on their next step in training, education and employment
- learners receive individual care and support to promote their learning and development, and to help them achieve to their potential.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- how well the provider has developed effective links with other relevant agencies to supply appropriate pre-course information
- how guidance and induction quickly introduce learners to the structure and demands of their programme and their rights and responsibilities as a learner

- the effectiveness of procedures to monitor learners' participation and attendance and to take prompt action to address any identified problems appropriately and bring about changes and improvements based on realistic targets
- the availability and quality of support for learners on personal issues
- whether parents, carers and employers are kept informed of the progress and attendance of learners under 18
- the extent to which individual learners' additional support needs are accurately identified early in the programme and are met quickly through the provision of appropriate resources and support throughout a learner's programme
- how well learners are involved in the planning, reviewing and evaluation of provision to meet their support needs
- the extent to which support staff have relevant qualifications, training and experience
- the extent to which an individual's additional support is used as an enabling resource, so that, where appropriate, an individual gains greater autonomy and decreases dependence on others
- whether services are sensitive to and advance equality of opportunity and awareness of diversity.

In addition inspectors will consider the following points for:

Work-based learning

Some sector skills councils or bodies impose entry requirements onto specific apprenticeships.

Induction to the company and the job role will usually be provided by the employer.

Foundation learning

The planned leaving date should be agreed with each learner as early in the programme as possible, in accordance with the agreed progression aim or intended programme.

The provider must make sure that all learners are followed up and supported for at least eight weeks after leaving Entry to Employment.

Support for transition should be started from an early stage and involve outside agencies where appropriate. This might include support in visiting new settings.

Illustrative grade characteristics for quality of provision

<p>Outstanding</p>	<p>In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory and good, delivery is highly effective and sometimes inspirational. Activities are sharply and accurately focused on meeting individual learners' needs and promote very effective learning. Programmes and activities are highly effective and may be innovative in meeting learners' needs and those of the wider community. Arrangements for support, care and guidance are of the highest quality. As a consequence, the number of withdrawals from programmes is very low. An increasing proportion of learners in receipt of additional learning support have achieved greater levels of autonomy and support requirements are reduced.</p>
<p>Good</p>	<p>In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory, teaching, training and assessment are used very effectively to enable learners to learn well. Programmes and activities are well matched to learners' different needs. Support, guidance and care ensure learners are well prepared for learning and the challenges they will face after leaving the provider. This leads to good outcomes for learners. Additional learning support enables learners to become more independent as learners and to develop greater autonomy.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>Teaching and assessment have no major weaknesses and may be good in some subjects. Learning activities are planned well, inspire learners and meet their needs. Teaching staff have a sound knowledge of their subjects or are suitably skilled and experienced in their specialist areas. Appropriate use is made of technology to support and promote learning. Assessments and reviews of learners' progress are fair and well managed and learners receive constructive feedback on the quality of their work and what they need to do to improve. Appropriate arrangements are in place to support individual learners, ensuring that additional support and other needs are accurately identified. Provision for different groups is appropriate and at least satisfactory, with no groups disadvantaged. The provider uses partnerships effectively to develop learning programmes and enrichment activities that meet the needs of learners, employers and, where appropriate, local communities. Learning programmes and activities adequately match learners' personal, career or employment goals, taking into account the needs and views of employers. Information, advice and guidance are adequate and enable learners to make informed choices about their next step in training, education or employment. All activities promote equality and support diversity. Consequently, outcomes for students are</p>

	generally satisfactory and sometimes good.
Inadequate	<p>The quality of provision is likely to be inadequate where one or more of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ teaching, training and assessment do not adequately support learning and development ■ the programmes and activities do not adequately meet the needs and interests of learners ■ support, care and guidance do not adequately promote learners' progress and well-being.

C. Leadership and management

C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- leaders promote very high standards in a positive and supportive culture that aspires to excellence
- the provider raises expectations through a clear and realistic strategy for planning and developing learning programmes and services
- demanding targets are set and met throughout the organisation
- the provider promotes and implements national and local priorities and initiatives that are relevant to learners, employers and local communities
- the provider uses data and information on learners' and employers' needs, and local and national skills needs, to plan and review the provision or service
- resources, including staff, accommodation, facilities and technologies, are developed and used to support learning effectively.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- the extent to which staff contribute to strategic planning processes; in particular, whether the mission statement, vision, strategic objectives and operational plans are clear and closely aligned; and whether plans to achieve the mission statement and strategic objectives include appropriate targets, actions and rigorous arrangements for governors and managers to monitor progress
- strategic objectives and targets respond to local and national agendas, such as those for 14–19 education and for developing the skills of adults to be economically active, and the need to improve performance or maintain high standards
- whether benchmarking information is used to set challenging targets at organisational and departmental level to promote high standards and raise aspirations
- whether the provider's objectives are realistic and supported by responsible financial management

- the extent to which the effectiveness and quality of subcontracted provision is effectively monitored and managed.

C2. How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- governors and supervisory bodies set the mission and strategic direction of the provider
- governors and supervisory bodies establish effective structures to monitor all aspects of the provider's performance
- governors and supervisory bodies ensure that their statutory duties – where applicable – are fulfilled.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- how well governors and supervisory bodies monitor the quality of the experience provided for learners and their outcomes
- how effectively governors and supervisory bodies monitor financial management and health, including value for money
- procedures to ensure the accountability of the chief executive and senior post holders, or equivalent
- procedures for governors and supervisory bodies to assess and monitor risk
- how well governors and supervisory bodies ensure that legislative requirements are fulfilled, such as those for equality, safeguarding, and health and safety.

In addition inspectors will consider the following points for:

Adult and community learning

The leadership provided by council members who hold a portfolio for adult and community learning.

C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?

Two judgements on safeguarding will be made: under the leadership and management section and in the staying safe outcome section of all reports.

All remits will be judged on the effectiveness of providers and services in ensuring that children and learners are safe and feel safe. In particular, providers working with children under 18 must meet legal requirements for safeguarding children.

- Where a judgement of inadequate is awarded for either of the two safeguarding judgements, it is most unlikely that the overall effectiveness of the provider will be better than satisfactory.
- Where a judgement of satisfactory is awarded for either of the two safeguarding judgements, it is unlikely that the overall effectiveness of the provider will be better than good.
- Where safeguarding is judged inadequate, a partial re-inspection of this aspect will take place at the earliest opportunity, normally within eight months of the most recent full inspection. This is because of the high importance Ofsted attaches to assuring the safeguarding of learners.

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- learners are safeguarded and protected
- staff take action to identify and respond appropriately to users' welfare concerns
- safeguarding is prioritised
- providers work together with agencies and professionals effectively to safeguard learners.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- whether the provider has a policy for the protection of children under age 18 and vulnerable adults that is reviewed annually
- the provider's compliance with its statutory duty to assist local social services departments on child protection matters and, as appropriate, liaison with the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- whether, when a learner reports abuse, the provider has taken appropriate action
- how well the provider is fulfilling the duty of employers to inform the Independent Safeguarding Authority of any individual (paid employee, volunteer or other) who poses a threat to children or vulnerable adults
- how well the provider ensures that appropriate training on safeguarding has taken place for all staff, governors and volunteers, which is regularly updated

- whether all staff, governors and volunteers working regularly with children under age 18 and vulnerable adults have been trained to recognise signs of abuse, and how to respond to disclosures from learners
- whether there is a designated senior member of staff in charge of safeguarding arrangements who has been trained to the appropriate level
- the extent to which effective and thorough risk assessment across the provision provides the basis for a provider's safeguarding policy and plans
- whether there are sound arrangements for appropriate checks on provider staff, including Criminal Records Bureau checks on staff appointed after 2002 who have regular, unsupervised access to children and young people up to age 18, and where appropriate (based on risk assessment) on governors and volunteers
- whether in colleges there is a single, central record of all checks on staff and, where appropriate, governors and volunteers
- where the provider works with employers, how well staff liaise with the employer to ensure appropriate arrangements for safeguarding learners up to age 18 and vulnerable adults (as defined in the Vetting and Barring Scheme) on employers' premises
- whether the provider has contact details for a parent, carer or person acting in loco parentis for learners aged up to 18 (and up to age 25 for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities)
- whether policies on bullying and discrimination are effectively implemented
- the extent to which all learning and development sites provide a safe learning environment and safe working practices are promoted in training and at work
- whether the curriculum includes understanding of bullying, including prejudice-based bullying related to special educational needs or disability, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, or gender reassignment, abuse and internet safety.

Illustrative grade characteristics for safeguarding

Outstanding	In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory and good, the provider is exceptionally proactive in assessing risks and taking action to prevent them. It has a strong track record of bringing about improvements and listening to and acting upon learners' concerns. The provider has created a safe environment underpinned by outstanding safeguarding and safety practices, evidenced by the well-being of learners. These practices extend to those undertaking work-based learning. All provider staff who teach, train or work intensively and frequently with learners aged up to 18 or vulnerable adults understand safeguarding, including any recent changes to
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	legislation, and fulfil their responsibilities very well.
Good	In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory, the provider has a clear strategy for safeguarding its most vulnerable learners, the progress and implementation of which is frequently checked by managers. The provider has created a culture where staff and learners are strongly safety aware. The records of accidents, incidents and 'near misses' indicate that the learning environment, including the workplace, is a safe place. The provider has listened to learners' views on safety-related issues and taken effective action which has improved safety. The provider's staff make good use of training that reflects Local Safeguarding Children Board recommendations in safeguarding learners.
Satisfactory	<p>The provider is meeting government requirements with regard to the safeguarding of children and young people aged up to 18, and adopts good practice for the safeguarding of vulnerable adults in line with recommendations by NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) ⁶ aged up to 18, and vulnerable adults. It has risk assessed where the most vulnerable learners are and taken steps to safeguard them, as well as the general population of learners.</p> <p>Governors/supervisory bodies and senior managers take a close interest in arrangements for safeguarding and receive regular reports. Detailed records are kept confirming that appropriate checks have been carried out on all staff, as well as governors/trustees and volunteers. Where individuals have regular, unsupervised access to children and young people up to age 18, these include Criminal Records Bureau checks, or for those employed before 2002, List 99 checks. All staff who have regular contact with young people or vulnerable adults have received at least basic awareness training in safeguarding. Employees aged 16 and 17 are appropriately safeguarded while being trained by their employers. The provider cooperates effectively with other agencies to protect vulnerable learners, including those in public care and on the child protection register. Where abuse has occurred, the provider has taken appropriate action. There are effective arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of learners and staff. Learners receive information and/or training on health and safety, and are made aware of unfair, unsafe and abusive practices and how learners can access help and support. Learners' views on safety matters are sought and acted upon. Records of accidents, incidents and 'near misses' are kept and lead to</p>

⁶ Safer Practice, Safer Learning, NIACE/DfES, 2006

	effective action for improvement.
Inadequate	<p>Safeguarding is likely to be inadequate where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the provider is not meeting government requirements with regard to safeguarding. <p>Weaknesses are likely to include one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ low priority given to ensuring that learners are safe ■ inadequate action to follow up abuse reported by a learner ■ inadequate action to ensure that employees and others with regular, unsupervised access to learners aged up to 18 have Criminal Records Bureau checks, or List 99 checks for those employed before 2002 ■ inadequate arrangements to demonstrate that appropriate checks have been carried out on staff, governors/trustees and volunteers ■ insufficient training for all staff and governors/trustees or volunteers, or training is out of date ■ no systematic reporting to governors/trustees or senior managers on safeguarding and/or health and safety ■ insufficient liaison with employers offering work placements, or subcontractors, to ensure that learners are safeguarded ■ inadequate recording of accidents/incidents and 'near misses' and/or insufficient follow-up to effect improvements in safety.

C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?

The equality and diversity grade will contribute to and may limit the grade for overall effectiveness in the following ways:

- Where a judgement of inadequate is awarded for equality and diversity, it is most unlikely that the overall effectiveness of the provider will be better than satisfactory.
- Where a judgement of satisfactory is awarded for equality and diversity, it is most unlikely that the overall effectiveness of the provider will be better than good.

If a provider cannot demonstrate that it is working within the two operating principles, this should prompt a judgement of inadequate for equality and diversity. The two operating principles for the inspection of equality and diversity are:

- how effectively a provider is narrowing any achievement gap between groups of learners
- how effectively a provider actively advances equality of opportunity, fosters good relations and tackles discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which the provider:

- manages equality and diversity, particularly disability, gender and race, and actively advances equality and diversity among staff, learners, employers, parents and other partners of the provider
- assesses the impact of its work in relation to equality and diversity and has taken appropriate action in response to its findings
- makes sure training in equality and diversity is effective so that leaders, managers, governors or supervisory bodies, staff and learners understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity
- makes sure that all learners and staff are protected from harassment, bullying and discrimination, including those based with employers and at other external sites to the provider
- manages incidents and complaints specifically about persons with different protected characteristics
- sets challenging targets and uses data to monitor, analyse and improve engagement and performance by different groups of learners
- takes action to reduce any significant variation between different groups of learners in order to maximise their potential.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- how the provider fulfils the public sector equality duty and advances equality of opportunity, fosters good relations and tackles discrimination, harassment and victimisation among staff, learners, employers, parents and other partners
- how the provider meets the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010 publishing information, in a manner that is accessible to the public at least annually, and preparing and publishing one or more specific and measurable objectives that it thinks it needs to achieve to further any of the aims of the general equality duty

- how well the provider collects and uses equality information to inform its decision making
- how well equality and diversity aspects are built into the provider's strategic plans, policies and practices
- how well the impact of plans, policies and practices are monitored, and follow-up action taken to address areas for improvement
- how well the provider identifies challenging equality objectives and priorities and identifies progress towards meeting these
- how well achievement and progression data of different groups are collected, analysed and used to set targets to improve the performance of underachieving groups
- arrangements for reporting on the promotion of equality and diversity to governors or supervisory bodies
- training for learners, teaching and support staff and governors/supervisory bodies on all aspects of bullying, harassment and equality
- arrangements to protect learners from bullying, harassment and discrimination, including prejudice-based bullying related to special educational needs or disability, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, or gender reassignment
- arrangements to ensure all learners can participate and that they have opportunities to give their views on provision
- how well learners' knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity are reinforced through their programme, in tutorials and at reviews
- the extent to which the provider effectively manages incidents and complaints relating specifically to persons with different protected characteristics.

Illustrative grade characteristics for equality and diversity

The equality and diversity grade will contribute to and may limit the grade for overall effectiveness.

Outstanding	In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory and good, the provider strongly promotes equality and diversity and tackles unfair discrimination very effectively in all aspects of its work. The development or progress of all or nearly all its users (including those from vulnerable groups) in relation to their starting points is improving significantly and the achievement gaps have narrowed significantly. Work with employers and external contractors to promote equality and diversity for learners in their operations has had a strong impact.
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<p>Good</p>	<p>In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory, the provider effectively promotes equality and diversity and tackles unfair discrimination. The provider is improving outcomes for individuals, successfully closing identified achievement gaps. The advancement of equality and diversity is embedded well in all aspects of the provider's work. The work with employers and external contractors to promote equality and diversity for learners in their operations has a demonstrable impact on outcomes and opportunities for learners. There is positive celebration of diversity.</p>
<p>Satisfactory</p>	<p>The provider is actively promoting equality and diversity and tackling unfair discrimination. The profile of the provider's staff and governing/supervisory body reflects that of its learner population with regard to race, gender and disability, or strong efforts to achieve this have been made. The provider's staff and governors or supervisory body monitor the impact of equalities objectives and action plans and set relevant targets for improvement. The advancement of equality and diversity is embedded in most aspects of the provider's work, especially recruitment of learners, teaching, learning and assessment, content of lessons and range of programmes. The provider is improving outcomes for learners by identifying and taking suitable steps to close achievement gaps between different groups. The provider actively encourages employers and external contractors to advance equality and diversity in their operations for learners.</p>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<p>Equality and diversity are likely to be inadequate where the provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ is not actively promoting equality and diversity and/or ■ is not taking sufficient action to identify and narrow the achievement gap. <p>One or more of the following weaknesses are likely to be present.</p> <p>The provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ has not prevented or tackled unfair discrimination, harassment or bullying ■ has not taken steps to understand and implement legal requirements ■ has not analysed outcomes for learners to monitor the impact of equality and diversity policies ■ has not attempted to match the profile of staff and governors to that of the learner population

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ shows insufficient impact in relation to equality and diversity.
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For information:

The Equality Act explains that the second aim (advancing equality of opportunity) involves, in particular, having due regard to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- the provider implements and monitors an effective strategy to involve learners and employers in the decision-making of the organisation
- the views of different user groups are canvassed and their views acted upon to plan, manage and improve the provision
- external partnerships are promoted to ensure the needs of learners at all levels are met.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- the extent to which all groups of learners and individuals have the opportunity to give their views on the provision they are receiving
- arrangements to ensure that learners are represented on relevant decision-making groups
- the effectiveness of arrangements to gather the views of all learners regardless of their circumstances, including communication support, mode of attendance and geographical spread
- whether learners are confident of their contribution to the improvement of the provider

- whether employers have the opportunity to ensure their views are represented in decision making
- evidence of the impact of users' views.

C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- the provider has effective processes for monitoring and evaluating performance and tackling weaknesses
- the analysis of data on performance and progress is used to improve performance
- action plans have clear, ambitious and realistic targets that show how provision will be developed for learners and that are implemented and monitored effectively.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- the thoroughness and accuracy of the college's self-assessment process and report
- the use of self-assessment as part of a continuous cycle of review and evaluation of the provider's performance against challenging targets that lead to sustained quality improvement
- the involvement of staff at all levels and from across the organisation, including franchised and subcontracted provision
- the involvement and use of the views of learners, employers and other users
- the use of, analysis and evaluation of evidence drawn from arrangements for quality assurance
- how outcomes from self-assessment are used to produce realistic action plans.

C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?

Evaluative statements

To make their judgements, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- learners progress, develop skills and knowledge and attain their learning goals, taking account of their starting points

- the provider considers the views of users in relation to the suitability and availability of resources
- resources are managed and used for the different activities to meet the needs of all learners
- the quality and availability of resources support all users
- the provider is committed to managing its resources in a sustainable way.

Further guidance

Inspectors should take into account, where relevant:

- the progress and attainment of learners, taking account of their starting points
- the views of learners and employers in relation to the suitability and availability of resources
- how effectively resources are managed and used for different activities to achieve the desired outcomes
- the range and quality of equipment and how well it is used to promote effective learning. Specialist equipment and materials should reflect, as far as possible, the standards required by industry
- access to learning resources that is appropriate for effective study in lessons and for independent study, available to all
- resources that allow all learners to participate fully regardless of: ethnic group; gender; age; disability; religion or belief; sexual orientation; whether they have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment; or whether they are affected by pregnancy or maternity
- work-based learners have access to good learning materials, equipment and facilities
- learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have appropriate specialist staff and specially adapted learning resources
- all learners work in a healthy, safe and welcoming environment
- the quality and availability of support for learners
- the number of learners and how this affects outcomes
- the quality of the provider's environment
- how efficiently the provider uses its accommodation
- the provider's commitment to sustainability
- the provider's overall level of funding and its costs, where this information is available

- the average size of groups and how the organisation of these affects outcomes
- the attendance of learners
- how efficiently the provider uses its staff
- financial planning, and controls and mechanisms to ensure accountability and financial stability.

Illustrative grade characteristics for leadership and management

Outstanding	In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory and good, leaders and managers are ambitious yet realistic in their drive to secure improvement. Quality assurance and self-assessment structures secure the rigorous evaluation of all aspects of operations and honestly identify the improvements to be made. Outcomes for learners are at least good. Any unevenness between outcomes for different groups is minimal or reducing rapidly. There is very effective practice in equality and diversity, and safeguarding ensures that learners achieve their potential free of barriers to their progress. The provider delivers outstanding value for money through highly effective management of resources, focused at all times on maximising the benefit for learners.
Good	In addition to the characteristics outlined below as satisfactory, leaders and managers are effective in sharing ambitious plans with staff and providing clear direction. Quality assurance and self-assessment are effective in securing improvements in the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. Learners' achievements are above the national average in most areas and any gaps in outcomes between different groups of learners are closing rapidly. Equality and diversity are promoted well and safeguarding arrangements are robust. Staffing, specialist resources and accommodation are generally good and well managed and value for money is good. Engagement with learners and other users makes a strong contribution to the learners' improving outcomes.
Satisfactory	Leaders and managers, including governors and supervisory bodies, secure modest improvements in performance across the provision. They focus on areas of underperformance to raise standards. They raise expectations and set appropriate targets but many of these are not ambitious enough to drive improvement as quickly as they might. Staff know the provider's major strengths and weaknesses through self-assessment and action plans focus well on securing improvement, but not in all subject areas. Managers have accurate data and use it effectively to manage and improve their provision. Management

	<p>of resources contributes to the generally satisfactory outcomes for learners and satisfactory value for money. Safeguarding is prioritised and there are no major lapses in applying safety procedures. Learners feel secure and operate safe working practices. Equality and diversity are promoted and data is analysed to assess the impact of policies and review the performance of different groups of learners. Managers make appropriate use of learners' and employers' views to evaluate the provision and to bring about improvements.</p>
<p>Inadequate</p>	<p>Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate where one or more of the following apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ monitoring, evaluating and planning are weak and do not lead to improved learner outcomes ■ equality and diversity are not promoted and unlawful discrimination is not tackled ■ the provider is failing to reduce any achievement gaps between particular groups and their peers in the provider and/or national averages ■ safeguarding procedures are inadequate ■ resources are poorly managed and do not provide value for money ■ links with learners, employers and other partners are poorly developed and do not promote improvement.

Glossary of terms used in the Common Inspection Framework, inspection and the handbook

Activity	One of the range of activities that a learner may take part in, including taught sessions, training, assessments, reviews of progress, coaching and job search, both on and off the provider's premises.
Adult safeguarded funded learning	Referred to as informal adult learning. Where the focus of the learning is for social and personal development, learners may or may not take a qualification. On inspection this is referred to as learning for social and personal development.
Aspect	Term used to describe one of the main areas of the Common Inspection Framework. These are: capacity to improve; outcomes for learners; quality of provision; and leadership and management.
Employer-responsive provision	Employer-responsive provision includes apprenticeships, Train to Gain and NVQs delivered wholly or partially in the workplace. Apprenticeships include all ages of apprenticeships, including young apprenticeships for learners aged 14–16, advanced apprenticeships, higher-level apprenticeships and apprenticeships for adults. This also includes apprentices who are non-employed learners following a full apprenticeship framework. On adult and community learning this is referred to as learning for qualifications in employment.
Foundation Learning	Programmes (including Entry to Employment) that support achievement and progression through entry level and level 1 towards level 2 or, as appropriate, towards other destinations such as open, supported or voluntary employment, further education or training and increased levels of independence.
Inspection service provider	Inspection service providers are external organisations contracted by Ofsted to provide additional inspectors, administrative support on inspection, the collation of pre-inspection information for inspectors via a portal, quality assurance and production of reports, post-inspection data analysis and post-inspection evaluation by providers.
Learner	A person seeking information or advice on learning opportunities or employment, taking part in education, training, and development programmes or activities, including student, apprentice, participant, client and customer.
Learner-responsive provision	learner-responsive provision covers further education programmes in school sixth forms, colleges and other providers for learners above the compulsory school-leaving age who have not yet passed 19 years of age at the start of an academic year. The provision also includes the new diplomas, programme-led apprenticeships where the learner has not been enrolled on a full apprenticeship framework, NVQs for 16–18-year-olds, Entry

	<p>to Employment and progression pathways within the Foundation Learning Tier.</p> <p>Adult learner-responsive provision, previously known as further education adult provision, applies to all funded provision undertaken by learners over 19 years of age not included in employer-responsive provision. On adult and community learning inspection this is also referred to as learning for qualifications.</p>
Learning	Attainment of learning goals, including qualifications; development of skills; and gaining of knowledge and understanding, including information and advice on learning, development and employment.
Nominee	The nominee is a senior member of staff from the provider, who is the key link between the provider and the inspection team.
Provider	Any organisation, including consortium or partnership, involved in providing information and advice services, education, training or development programmes or activities, including colleges, independent training providers, local authorities, voluntary organisations and employers.
Provision	The range and type of learning available.
RARPA	A process for recognising and recording progress and achievement.
Record of main findings	A template for recording grades awarded for the main and contributory aspects of the Common Inspection Framework awarded for the provision as a whole and for the different types of provision. The Record of Main Findings is published as part of the inspection report.
Tariff for inspection	The tariff for inspection refers to the number of inspector days allocated to that inspection. It consists of preparation days for HMIs, on-site days for HMIs and additional inspectors and post-inspection days for report writing.
User	Young people, adult learners and employers, parents and carers.