

Monitoring inspections of schools that have serious weaknesses

Guidance for inspecting schools that require significant improvement and have serious weaknesses under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

This guidance sets out the judgements that inspectors make and report on during monitoring inspections of schools that have serious weaknesses. It indicates the main activities that need to be undertaken from the time the school is notified of the monitoring inspection until publication of the monitoring inspection letter.

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Introduction

1. Schools are deemed to have serious weaknesses under section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005, where the Chief Inspector is of the opinion that:

‘the school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.’¹
2. A school with serious weaknesses is ‘inadequate’ (grade 4) in one or more of the key areas, and/or there are important weaknesses in the overall provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, leaders, managers and governors are judged to be capable of securing improvement (this means that leadership and management are judged at grade 3 or above). These schools are schools causing concern.
3. Monitoring inspections of schools with serious weaknesses are carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, but Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector (HMCI) may elect to treat them as section 5 inspections using his powers under section 9 of the Act. These monitoring arrangements do not prejudice the Chief Inspector’s discretionary power under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 to ‘inspect any school in England in circumstances where [s]he is not required to do so by section 5...’ of the Act.
4. This guidance sets out the judgements that Her Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) make and report on during monitoring inspections of schools that have serious weaknesses. Further general guidance, briefing papers on school inspections and other materials are available on Ofsted’s website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.
5. All monitoring inspections are carried out in accordance with the principles and code of conduct for inspectors set out in *The framework for school inspection*.² In conducting the monitoring inspection, HMI will follow the methodology and protocols set out in the *School inspection handbook*.³
6. Schools judged to have serious weaknesses are not required to prepare a separate action plan but are expected to amend their existing plans to address the areas for improvement identified by the section 5 inspection. The local authority⁴, proprietor or sponsor⁵ must submit a statement and a plan of action to HMCI within 10 working days of the school receiving the inspection report.

¹ Education Act 2005, s44; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents>.

² *The framework for school inspection*, Ofsted, 2014; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120100.

³ *School inspection handbook (120101)*, Ofsted, 2014; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120101

⁴ Ss.15(2)(d) and 15(2)(e) Education Act 2005: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/section/15

⁵ Ss. 17(1A)(d) and 17(3)(a) Education Act 2005:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/section/17>

7. HMI will usually conduct the first monitoring inspection within four to six weeks of the publication of the section 5 inspection report. During this one day inspection, HMI will meet with the headteacher, the chair of governing body and an appropriate representative of the local authority, academy proprietor or academy sponsor. HMI will discuss the implementation of the statement of action and the school's improvement plan and determine whether these are fit for purpose. Where any change of staffing has taken place since the previous inspection, a review of the single central register will take place. The inspector will also outline the likely pattern of future monitoring.
8. Following the first monitoring inspection, a school may receive up to two further monitoring inspections over the period of around 18 months following the section 5 inspection that identified serious weaknesses.
9. A school with serious weaknesses will be monitored under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. It may also have access to intervention/support strategies to assist the school's improvement. These may include:
 - an invitation to a good practice dissemination conference covering a range of key common weaknesses identified through inspection evidence (governance and performance management, achievement and use of data, best practice in assessment, improving teaching and pupils' progress, and self-evaluation)
 - an invitation to a workshop
 - an invitation for the headteacher to accompany HMI on a visit to a 'high performing' school or a re-inspection of a school that has made good progress in addressing areas for improvement.
10. In addition, HMI may broker links between the school and stronger schools, either locally or in another area.
11. If, during the period of monitoring, the HMI is of the opinion that the school is making sufficient progress for the serious weaknesses designation to be removed they may recommend bringing the section 5 reinspection forward. In such cases the section 5 reinspection will take place at the earliest opportunity.
12. If a monitoring inspection identifies serious concerns about aspects of the school's performance that were not identified in the previous section 5 inspection or in an earlier monitoring inspection these must be considered by HMI and reported to the school. Such serious concerns could have a bearing on the timing of the next section 5 inspection.
13. If, after a programme of monitoring lasting around 18 months, the school is still in the serious weaknesses category of concern it must be reinspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Staffing inspections

14. HMI who leads the first monitoring inspection of a school judged to have serious weaknesses will perform this role throughout the period that the school is monitored. If following reinspection, the school is judged to still have serious weaknesses or require special measures a new lead inspector will manage a further programme of monitoring activity.
15. Each school is allocated up to four inspector days for monitoring and support, in addition to the first monitoring inspection day. HMI will decide how to use these days flexibly to best support the school and meet the priorities for each monitoring inspection (see also paragraph 8).
16. Where a school judged to have serious weaknesses has residential or boarding provision, a social care inspector will be allocated as a team member to the monitoring inspection and, if necessary, to subsequent monitoring inspections, which will include the inspection of any national minimum standards that have not been met. The inclusion of a social care team inspector would only occur where boarding or residential provision was identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection⁶.

Before the inspection

Notification

17. Prior to the **first** monitoring inspection, HMI will normally inform the school up to two days in advance of the inspection. This is to allow the relevant strategic partners (local authority, proprietor or sponsor) to be present for discussion about support for the school and the likely pattern of monitoring. It will also enable as many members of the governing body as possible to attend the inspection feedback.
18. If the headteacher is unavailable, HMI should ask to speak to the most senior member of staff available. Once the inspection has been confirmed HMI will inform the Inspection Service Provider (ISP), who will send formal notification to the school by email.
19. **Requests for a deferral** will be handled in accordance with Ofsted's policy about the deferral of inspections⁷. HMI must immediately contact the helpdesk. The deferral policy makes clear that the absence of the headteacher is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.
20. The purpose of the telephone call announcing the inspection is for HMI to:

⁶ Further guidance for education and social care inspectors on conducting integrated monitoring inspections is available in *Conducting additional inspections of independent schools* (090060) Ofsted, 2013; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090060.

⁷ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/deferral-of-inspections-information-for-schools>.

- confirm the date of the monitoring inspection and remind the school that the monitoring letter will be published on Ofsted's website
 - explain that the monitoring inspection is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005
 - confirm that the school is able to inform the governing body that the monitoring inspection is taking place
 - make sure that the headteacher understands the purpose and focus of the inspection and the judgements that will be made
 - indicate the likely format of the first monitoring inspection
 - ensure the school is aware that it is a specific requirement of the first monitoring inspection that HMI meet with representatives of the governing body and local authority, proprietor or sponsor; as many governors as possible are asked to attend the feedback meeting at the end of the inspection.
21. For the **second or subsequent inspections**, HMI will normally inform the school, that it is to be inspected, from noon on the working day before each monitoring inspection is due to start. HMI should be aware that they may not get through to the school immediately. They should reserve sufficient time to ensure that they make direct contact during the afternoon.
22. In outlining the specific inspection arrangements HMI should:
- explain that the principles for engagement with senior staff set out in the *School inspection handbook* will be applied where possible, but that HMI has the discretion to manage this in the way s/he feels is most appropriate
 - agree with the headteacher the approach to feedback on lesson observations
 - ascertain whether there are particular reasons why any teachers should not be observed, for example if they are subject to informal or formal capability procedures where the use of observations by Ofsted may compromise those procedures
 - ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from lesson observations, whether joint or otherwise, should not be used as evidence in capability/disciplinary proceedings, or for the purposes of performance management.
23. At the second or subsequent monitoring inspections, HMI should also request, during the phone call, that the following information is made available at the start of the inspection:
- school timetable information, staff list and times for the school day
 - information about any pre-planned interruption to the school's normal routines

- the single central register, which summarises the checks and vetting of all staff working with pupils
 - all logs that record exclusions, pupils taken off roll, incidents of poor behaviour, racist incidents and incidents of bullying
 - information about pupils placed in alternative provision
 - up-to-date attendance information
 - records of any routine monitoring of the quality of teaching
 - information about the findings and use made of performance management arrangements including information about the most recent performance management outcomes - all documentation should be in an anonymised format
 - the current school improvement plan and any evaluation of the impact of actions taken to date
 - recent data on attainment and progress
 - evidence of the work of governors⁸ and their impact
 - reports of any external evaluation of the school.
24. The telephone call should also provide the headteacher with an opportunity to highlight the progress that the school has made since the previous section 5 inspection or previous monitoring inspection, and to provide any new contextual information. Key points arising from the telephone call should be noted on an evidence form. HMI should be mindful that the headteacher will need to accommodate the inspection at short notice while still managing the day-to-day operation of the school.

During the inspection

25. Monitoring activities and inspections should focus on the most important areas for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection that judged the school to have serious weaknesses. They will reflect the issues raised by the telephone discussion with the headteacher. The focus may shift as new evidence becomes available or other issues emerge.

The first monitoring inspection

26. The first monitoring inspection will last up to one day and will be conducted by HMI. There will be no preparation requirement and a brief letter will be drafted at the end of the monitoring inspection. HMI should plan to arrive at the school no earlier than 09.00 on the day of the inspection, following the arrangements agreed with the school during the telephone conversation in which the

⁸ 'Governors' refers to those responsible for governance in the school. They may be part of the school's local board, committee or governing body

inspection was announced. HMI must show his/her identity badge on arrival and ensure that the headteacher has been informed of his/her arrival.

27. The purpose of the first monitoring inspection is to:

- gauge the school's initial response to being judged as having serious weaknesses and how well placed it is to secure rapid improvement
- evaluate the extent to which the school's actions are rigorously focused on tackling the key areas for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection
- evaluate how effectively the school is adapting its existing school development or improvement plans to meet the challenge of moving out of the serious weaknesses category
- evaluate the statement of action
- evaluate the impact that governors at the school are having on bringing about the necessary improvements - HMI will take account of the *Subsidiary guidance*⁹ on assessing and reporting on the effectiveness of governance at the school
- offer guidance to the school and the local authority, academy proprietor or academy sponsor to sharpen, if necessary, the effectiveness of their planning
- check the single central register if staffing has changed since a previous inspection and/or weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements were identified at the section 5 inspection that judged the school to have serious weaknesses.

28. The structure of the day will usually be as follows.

- Meeting with the headteacher/deputy headteacher or other senior leaders, the chair of the governing body and representatives from the local authority, academy proprietor or academy sponsor. This meeting should focus on actions taken so far to tackle the reasons the school is causing concern.
- Evaluation of the local authority's, proprietor's or sponsor's statement of action and any changes to the school's improvement/development plan.
- Separate meetings with representatives of the local authority, proprietor or sponsor; the chair of the governing body and the headteacher, deputy headteacher or other senior leaders.
- Time to allow HMI to reflect and draft the monitoring letter and points for feedback.
- Final meeting with key stakeholders including as many governors as possible.

⁹ *Subsidiary guidance supporting the inspection of maintained schools and academies*, Ofsted, 2014; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110166>

29. If the statement of action or the school's improvement plan are judged to be not fit for purpose, the local authority, proprietor or sponsor will be informed, asked to address the weaknesses urgently, and present the revised version(s) at the next monitoring inspection. In this case, HMI will re-evaluate and report on the revised statement of action and/or the school's improvement plan during the second monitoring inspection.

The second and third monitoring inspections

30. Second and third monitoring inspections of schools that have serious weaknesses will be scheduled and structured according to the school's need and rate of progress. **Not all schools will receive a second or third monitoring inspection.** This will depend on HMI's evaluation of the quality of leadership and management and the school's rate of improvement towards becoming a good school.
31. Monitoring inspections cover aspects of the evaluation schedule, but are selective and focused sharply on the **areas for improvement** identified by the section 5 inspection that judged the school to have serious weaknesses.

Planning the inspection

32. Inspection activities during the second and third monitoring inspections will be shaped by HMI's judgements about the progress made by the school. The activities carried out during monitoring inspections are similar to those in section 5 inspections (see paragraph 33) although the emphasis will depend on the circumstances of the school and the priorities for improvement identified at the time of its most recent inspection. When conducting inspection activities, such as lesson observations, work scrutiny, providing feedback, and recording evidence, inspectors will follow the principles set out in the *School inspection handbook*.
33. Inspection activities may involve: lesson observations; analysis of pupils' work; scrutiny of school records and documentation; discussions with staff, pupils, governors and, where appropriate, representatives of external strategic partners, such as the local authority, proprietor or sponsor.
34. The main focus of the inspection and the key issues the team will explore must always be shared with the headteacher during the initial meeting at the start of the inspection. The school should have opportunities to substantiate its views about the progress it has made since the previous section 5 inspection or monitoring inspection.

At the start of the monitoring inspection

35. Inspectors must show their identity badges on arrival and ensure that the headteacher has been informed of their arrival. HMI should meet briefly with the headteacher and/or senior leadership team at the beginning of the inspection to:

- introduce any team inspectors
 - make arrangements for a longer meeting at a convenient time with the headteacher to discuss the school's self-evaluation and other relevant matters
 - confirm arrangements for meetings with representatives of those responsible for the governance of the school and key staff
 - confirm arrangements for providing feedback after lesson observations
 - request information about staff absence and other practical issues
 - ascertain whether there are particular reasons why any teachers should not be observed, for example if they are subject to capability procedures
 - ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from lesson observations, whether joint or otherwise, should not be used as evidence in capability/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management
 - ensure that the inspection activity starts promptly.
36. HMI should take account of the following during the monitoring period but not necessarily at every monitoring inspection.
- **Contextual matters** including any significant changes to staffing, the pupil population and the school's status, for example if the school becomes part of a hard federation.
 - **Achievement of pupils at the school** taking account of attainment and the quality of learning and progress for all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in line with the *School inspection handbook*, and the *Subsidiary guidance*, and how well the school is narrowing the attainment gap.
 - Inspectors should consider first-hand evidence, **which must include a sample of lesson observations** and school data for different groups of pupils and, where appropriate, recent test and examination results. Reference should be made to the challenge and impact of the school's targets.
 - Inspectors will need to place particular emphasis on current attainment and progress indicators, particularly when no new national data have been published since the previous monitoring inspection. However, it is important to avoid speculation on likely future test and examination results.
 - The school's success or otherwise in overcoming the causes of serious weaknesses, such as improving the quality of teaching, behaviour and safety and pupils' progress and attainment in lessons, will make a significant contribution to the judgement about whether achievement is improving and to what degree.

- For schools where attainment falls below the government’s current floor standard, inspectors should consider the appropriateness of specific strategies being used by the school to meet such targets, including the impact of any external support.
- Inspectors should judge the accuracy and reliability of the school’s own data and analyses, for example, assessments of pupils’ attainment and progress, which should be considered alongside other evidence such as that gathered by talking to pupils and sampling their work.
- **The quality of teaching** with particular emphasis on: how this promotes better learning and improved progress; the use of assessment; and the impact of teaching on pupils’ social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.
- **The behaviour and safety of pupils** with particular reference to: improvement in pupils’ attitudes, conduct and behaviour; improved management of behaviour; how well pupils adopt safe practices; and pupils’ attendance and punctuality.
- **The quality of leadership in and management of the school** with reference to the growing impact of leaders and managers at all levels, including that of the governing body, on school improvement and the school’s capacity for sustained improvement.
 - Inspectors should assess the rigour and accuracy of the school’s self-evaluation, including its assessment about the quality of teaching and learning.
 - The work of the governing body or interim executive board should be evaluated with respect to the improving contribution that it makes to leadership and management, and its impact on the school’s performance.
 - If governance was not identified as an area for improvement at the section 5 inspection but the monitoring inspection raises concerns about weak governance, **inspectors must include a recommendation in the monitoring letter that the school should commission an external review of governance. Where inspectors have concerns about the school’s use of the Pupil Premium they must recommend that the external review of governance should have an additional focus on this aspect.**
 - Inspectors should consider whether the school’s leaders continue to demonstrate convincingly that the school’s capacity to improve is strengthening. It is important that the school’s leaders are having a significant impact on all of its areas of weakness and are capable of securing further improvement.
 - There should be clear evidence that leaders and managers are having an impact on accelerating learners’ progress and thereby raising attainment, particularly in schools where attainment is low.

- **External support:** the quality and impact of the external support provided to the school, with particular reference to the local authority's, proprietor's or sponsor's statement of action (see paragraphs 26 and 27), and as appropriate, the impact of support and challenge provided by other external partners .
 - **Specialist status:** this only needs to be referred to when it is having a significant impact on the overall effectiveness of the school in either a positive or negative way.

- 37. Inspectors must check the single central register during monitoring inspections, if there have been changes to staffing since the previous inspection and/or if weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements were identified at the time of the section 5 inspection which judged the school to require special measures. If it becomes clear that there are inadequacies in care, child protection or health and safety, they **must** be reported and may influence the timing of the next monitoring inspection or the reinspection of the school, and have an impact on the judgement about the overall progress made by the school.

- 38. When the monitoring inspection indicates that safeguarding arrangements do not meet statutory requirements, inspectors must call the SCC QA helpdesk to log their concern and email the relevant Senior HMI. Inspectors need to take account of the following.
 - If safeguarding **was** identified as an area for improvement in the previous inspection, then it is very likely that the school will be judged to not be making enough progress towards the removal of special measures.
 - If safeguarding was **not** previously an area for improvement, this may nonetheless affect the judgement about the overall progress made by the school. For example, inadequate safeguarding arrangements may be indicative of more general weaknesses in leadership and governance. In these circumstances inspectors will need to exercise professional judgement in reaching a view about the overall progress made by the school.
 - The Senior HMI may opt for one of the following:
 - an early unannounced monitoring inspection to check safeguarding requirements
 - bringing forward the next planned monitoring inspection of the school
 - scheduling an immediate inspection of the school under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
 - In making this decision, the Senior HMI will liaise with the relevant Regional Director and take account of:
 - whether or not safeguarding has previously been judged to be inadequate
 - the nature and seriousness of the weaknesses in safeguarding

- the wider performance of the school in terms of the progress it has made in dealing with areas for improvement and building a capacity for sustained improvement
 - the likely impact of any further inspection.
- Whenever safeguarding arrangements are found to not meet statutory requirements on **two or more occasions** the relevant Regional Director will, with the agreement of HMCI, seek an urgent discussion with the local authority or the DfE, as appropriate, to clarify the actions necessary to ensure that pupils are safe. It is, however, for the school, its governing body and the local authority or the Department for Education (DfE) to take such actions.
39. Where a monitoring inspection identifies significant concerns about aspects of the school's performance that were not identified in the previous section 5 inspection or any earlier monitoring inspections, these must be considered by inspectors and will affect the judgement about the progress made by the school.
40. HMI are expected to be flexible about how the inspection proceeds depending on the school's circumstances. Inspectors may wish to consider the following.
- In a small school (where the headteacher may have a teaching commitment), inspectors may start the inspection with a brief discussion with the headteacher, followed by lesson observations and further discussions with the headteacher at a convenient time.
 - Discussions with the headteacher may also take place during a brief tour of the school, which will also enable inspectors to gain a better understanding of its context and ethos.
 - Where necessary, inspectors may conduct telephone interviews with governors, a representative of the local authority, the proprietor or sponsor, and parents if face-to-face meetings are not feasible.
 - Depending on the focus of the inspection, inspectors may wish to examine additional documentation, including, for example:
 - recent data on attainment and progress that the school may have gathered but had been unable to send electronically
 - reports or action plans from the local authority
 - reports from significant external partners
 - governing body minutes – particularly when, for example, a separate committee has been established to oversee progress on the areas for improvement
 - analysis of aspects of pupils' work that are closely related to the areas for improvement, for example, evaluations of improvements in writing or the use of targets for pupils

- behaviour records and policies that relate to these, including data on exclusions.
41. During the second and third monitoring inspections, inspectors are required to evaluate the school's overall progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation. An overarching judgement will be made stating whether:
- *the school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation; or*
 - *the school is not making enough progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.*
42. While, generally, the judgement will be informed by the school's progress in dealing with each of the areas for improvement identified by the section 5 inspection, other factors that arise during the monitoring period must not be ignored. From the second monitoring inspection, HMI should consider whether the school is making sufficient progress for the serious weaknesses designation to be removed before the end of the monitoring period (see also paragraph 10).
43. HMI should make the key judgement about the school's overall progress towards the removal of serious weaknesses by considering the full range of evidence s/he has gathered and using their professional judgement. The crucial factor is the anticipated timescale for the removal of serious weaknesses given the current rate of improvement. A school which is making continued reasonable progress is on course to have the serious weaknesses designation removed within 18 months. A school which is not making enough progress will be likely to continue to have serious weaknesses, or may require special measures, when the section 5 reinspection takes place.

Evaluating external support

44. The judgement made by HMI about the quality of the statement of action and the school's improvement plan (see paragraph 6) and an evaluation of the impact of these must be reported in the first monitoring inspection letter. On subsequent inspections, HMI also judge the impact of the local authority's, proprietor's or sponsor's support for the school.
45. If the statement of action or the school's improvement plan are judged to be not fit for purpose, the local authority, proprietor or sponsor will be informed, asked to address the weaknesses urgently, and have the revised version(s) ready for the second monitoring inspection. In this case, HMI will re-evaluate and report on the revised statement of action and/or the school's improvement plan at the second monitoring inspection.

Registered provision for birth to three-year-olds

46. Ofsted inspects and reports on any registered provision managed by the governing body separately from the section 5 inspection, although in some cases the inspections may take place at the same time. If the registered provision is judged to be inadequate, it will be monitored and reinspected in line with the requirements for inspections of registered early years provision.

The views of pupils, parents and other stakeholders

47. Inspectors may talk with pupils during lessons and during break and lunchtimes and, where appropriate, meet with pupils to discuss issues relating to the school's areas for improvement.
48. There is no requirement for schools to inform parents about monitoring inspections. However, headteachers should be encouraged to let parents know about these inspections and their outcomes. Monitoring letters and reports will be published on Ofsted's website. It is the duty of the governing body, proprietor or sponsor to keep parents informed about the progress the school is making.
49. Parents' comments received by Ofsted and/or their views received through Parent View will be made available to inspectors. At an appropriate point during the monitoring inspection HMI may consult parents on their views about the school by, for example, meeting a representative group of parents. Inspectors may also take account of the views of parents gathered by the school as part of its own evaluation of its work, and refer to those views in the monitoring letter.

Removal of the serious weaknesses designation

50. Where HMI is satisfied that the school is making enough progress for the likely removal of the serious weaknesses designation, s/he will make a recommendation in the inspection report that the next inspection be a full section 5 reinspection.
51. When at the section 5 reinspection the serious weaknesses designation is removed, HMI **must on the final day of the inspection notify the schools causing concern duty HMI at the helpdesk** on the last day of the inspection to log the necessary details. Calls should be made to the helpline on 0300 123 4234 and HMI should ask to be transferred to the schools causing concern duty HMI.
52. Where the section 5 inspection team has reached the judgement that the school no longer has serious weaknesses, the oral feedback and written report should include the formal statement that:

'In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.'

53. The introduction to the report should explain why the school was inspected. For example:

‘When XXXX school was inspected in XX 201X, it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Subsequently, the school was inspected on xxx occasions. At the last monitoring inspection the school was judged to be making reasonable/to not be making enough progress.’

After the inspection

Feedback at the end of the monitoring inspection

54. The school will receive verbal feedback at the end of each monitoring inspection. At the end of the first monitoring inspection, the inspector will provide verbal feedback on the fitness for purpose of the statement of action and the school’s improvement plan. Feedback at the end of any subsequent monitoring inspections must:
- report the range of evidence gathered
 - include the judgement made about progress towards the removal of serious weaknesses, describing the progress made against the areas for improvement identified during the section 5 inspection which deemed the school to have serious weaknesses
 - comment on the impact of external support on school improvement
 - cover any specific issues identified by HMI in the pre-inspection preparation
 - make clear that the text of the letter or report may differ slightly from the verbal feedback, but that the judgements will not change.
55. HMI should identify additional priorities **only where they are essential** to the school’s further development. Progress against these priorities has to be evaluated at the next monitoring inspection and reported in the monitoring letter. They are not to be added to the list of judgements to be made as set out in the annex to the covering letter. The priorities should help the school focus on what needs to be done next to improve the quality of education.
56. The feedback should normally be attended by:
- the headteacher
 - the chair of the governing body or equivalent (and all governors for the first monitoring inspection)
 - a representative of the local authority, or representative of the academy proprietor or sponsor
 - a representative of the diocese, for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
 - key external partners.

57. The lead inspector and headteacher should discuss which other members of staff, if any, will attend the feedback, especially if the feedback is challenging or raises sensitive issues.

The monitoring inspection letter and report

58. For the first monitoring inspection, the school will receive a brief letter, which will be published on the Ofsted website containing the judgements relating to the fitness for purpose of the statement of action and of the school's improvement plan.
59. For the second and subsequent inspections, the school will receive a brief covering letter with the judgements included and a monitoring report, both of which will be published on the Ofsted website.
60. Before writing the letter and report HMI should note the guidance below and also take account of the specific guidance provided in the template and the Ofsted style guide.
61. In the monitoring letter, HMI should make professional judgements about the extent of the detail needed to explain clearly the progress made by the school, depending on the complexity of circumstances. The content must be clear, concise and securely based on evidence. Judgements should be written to provide sufficient detail to enable the school to understand clearly what should be done next.
62. When a monitoring inspection focuses on only one or two aspects of provision, this should be clearly explained in the evidence section.
63. The monitoring letter for the first monitoring inspection must include a judgement on the fitness for purpose of the statement of action and of the school's improvement planning.
64. The monitoring letter for the subsequent inspections must include:
- a summary of the evidence gathered by inspectors
 - a brief summary of any significant changes to the context of the school
 - a judgement about progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation
 - a judgement about the effectiveness of leadership and management with specific reference to the impact that governors' actions are having on improvements
 - brief bullet points evaluating the progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement, and brief bullet points setting out:
 - strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement

- weaknesses in the school’s approaches to securing improvement
 - reference to the impact that governors are having in helping the school to improve
 - reference to the quality and impact of external support including specific reference to the quality of the statement of action if it was judged not fit for purpose at the first monitoring inspection.
65. It is quite likely that areas for improvement from the section 5 inspection will consist of a main stem followed by one or more subsidiary bullet points. HMI should write about each main area for improvement and illustrate or exemplify how progress has or has not been achieved by reference to the relevant subsidiary bullet points.
66. Progress made on additional priorities for further improvement identified in previous monitoring inspections should be reported in the text of the subsequent monitoring letter. They should not be added as bullet points in the annex alongside the original areas for improvement.
67. Completed letters and reports should be sent as one document and given the following file name: D school name, visit number (1 = first visit, 2= second...) SW: (that is, D Schoolname 2 SW) and emailed to the ISP within three working days of the end of the inspection.
68. The arrangements for publication are as follows.
- HMI will complete the letter and report towards the end of the monitoring inspection day. This will be sent to the appropriate inspection service provider within three working days of the end of the monitoring inspection.
 - The ISP will edit and send the letter to the school normally within five working days of the end of the inspection.
 - The school has 24 hours to check and report any factual inaccuracies to the inspection service provider.
 - The ISP will prepare a final version of the letter which will be sent to the:
 - headteacher
 - Secretary of State for Education
 - chair of the governing body, interim executive board or proprietor as appropriate
 - local authority, and academy proprietor or sponsor
 - diocese, for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
 - Education Funding Agency (EFA), for secondary schools with a sixth form
 - Department for Education Academies Advisers Unit, for academies

- person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- lead inspector.

Record of the inspection: the evidence base

69. The record of evidence does not include the joining instructions.
70. HMI may retain copies of inspection evidence until the school no longer has serious weaknesses, but must do so in line with Ofsted's information assurance policy and procedures. Evidence forms should be sent to the ISP as soon as possible after the end of each monitoring inspection. ISPs will retain and/or destroy evidence in accordance with Ofsted's policy.