

Unannounced behaviour inspections

Guidance for inspectors

This briefing sets out the types of activities that inspectors will undertake when they conduct unannounced inspections with a focus on behaviour under no formal designation procedures. It should be read alongside the guidance on *Monitoring inspections of schools with no formal designation*.

These inspections are carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Age group: All

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Introduction

1. Schools may be selected for inspection because Ofsted has a cause for concern about behaviour, for example, arising from previous inspection reports, parents' views, complaints, information from the local authority, and data about exclusions or attendance.
2. The inspection will focus sharply on evaluating:
 - pupils' attitudes to learning and their conduct around the school and in lessons, both during the inspection and over time
 - how well, and how consistently, pupils' behaviour is managed on a day-to-day basis
 - the extent to which the school's culture promotes and supports good behaviour.
3. The inspection will make a judgement on the effectiveness of the actions taken by leaders and managers, including governors, since the previous inspection to improve behaviour, including securing consistently positive attitudes to learning, or to maintain previously high standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning.
4. If the evidence gathered and scrutinised during the inspection indicates that behaviour or safety, or any other aspects of the school, may be inadequate the inspector should inform the school that it is likely to require a full inspection.
5. In making the judgement inspectors will evaluate pupils' behaviour, the management of behaviour, and the culture of the school, taking account of the following evidence:
 - observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons (including where relevant, with new, temporary or less experienced teachers). A particular focus will be placed on low-level disruption such as: calling out without permission; being late to lessons, or slow to start work or follow instructions; showing a lack of respect for each other and staff; not bringing the right equipment; pupils chatting when they are supposed to be working or listening to the teacher; using mobile devices inappropriately in lessons; time wasted through teachers having to deal with inappropriate uniform; packing up well before the end of the lesson
 - observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including informal discussion with pupils
 - observation of any system of 'internal exclusion' the school uses to manage behaviour

- at least one formal discussion with a group of pupils whose behaviour the school has helped to improve over time
- scrutiny of documentary evidence¹
- discussions with leaders and staff.

6. Inspectors must take account of the following:

- pupils' attitudes to learning and their conduct in lessons
- pupils' conduct around the school, including the way in which they speak to each other and to staff
- how well leaders and staff model good behaviour to pupils
- how well leaders and managers model good behaviour management techniques to staff
- the effectiveness of the management of pupils' behaviour, including how well leaders and managers analyse and use documentary evidence to improve the way behaviour is managed
- if the school uses exclusion, the impact of this on improving behaviour
- if fixed term exclusion overall or for any group is above the national average, the extent to which its use is reducing over time, and how well the school is developing the use of alternative strategies to exclusion
- pupils' views about behaviour and bullying (these views must be gathered from a range of pupils at informal times, not just from a formal discussion)
- any specific issues raised in the previous inspection report about pupils' behaviour and whether these have been tackled effectively and are showing clear signs of improvement.

Before the inspection

7. Prior to the inspection the lead inspector must:

- read and note any comments about behaviour and attendance in the school's latest section 5 inspection report and any section 8 inspection reports, for example, from survey visits
- read and evaluate the school's behaviour policy, which should be available on its website
- identify, from the previous section 5 report, if the school has any pupils who attend alternative provision, and note any comments about how well these pupils are progressing and behaving

¹ To include records of bullying incidents, pupils being removed from lessons and the use of rewards and sanctions, and information about exclusion and 'internal exclusion'.

- analyse the most up to date information about permanent and fixed term exclusions available in RAISEonline, paying particular attention to the repeated use of fixed term exclusions and to any groups that are excluded disproportionately²
- analyse the most up to date information about overall and persistent absence available in RAISEonline, again paying particular attention to groups of pupils³
- check Ofsted's provider information portal for information about any complaints about the school.

Arranging the inspection

8. Inspections will usually be conducted by one inspector for one day.
9. The inspector should contact the school 10 minutes before arriving to announce the inspection to the headteacher or other senior member of staff. If no-one from the school answers the telephone, inspectors should arrive at the school and announce the inspection on arrival.
10. Inspections should begin at around 8.15am. The inspector should begin their observation of the start of the day as soon as possible after they arrive, keeping the initial meeting with the headteacher very brief.

During the inspection

11. The majority of the inspection must be spent observing short parts of lessons and observing informal times of the school day in order to evaluate pupils' behaviour and attitudes during these times. The Annex to this briefing sets out in more detail the types of activities that inspectors will typically conduct.
12. One meeting with senior staff should be planned in order to discuss emerging findings and follow up any issues that have arisen. This meeting should not overlap with the time pupils leave the school, as this time should be observed. It may also be useful for a senior member of staff to be present during the scrutiny of documentation in order to answer questions as they arise.
13. No joint observations should take place with the headteacher, senior leaders or staff, as it is important that the inspector sees pupils' typical behaviour throughout the day.

² NOTE: for different groups of pupils, such as disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, inspectors must compare the figure for that group to the figure for **all pupils**, not the comparator for the group.

³ As above.

14. Feedback should be offered at the end of the day⁴ to the headteacher, a member of the senior leadership team (or more than one with the agreement of the lead inspector), and as many governors that can be present. If concerns have arisen during the inspection a representative of the local authority or the academy sponsor should also be invited.

After the inspection

15. The findings of the monitoring inspection will be reported in a short letter which will be published on the Ofsted website.

Judgement

16. The inspection will make a judgement on the effectiveness of the actions taken by leaders and managers, including governors, since the previous inspection to improve behaviour, including securing consistently positive attitudes to learning, or to maintain previously high standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning.

17. The monitoring letter should state one of the following:

(1) For schools where behaviour was judged to require improvement at their previous section 5 inspection:

“Leaders and managers have / have not taken effective action to improve behaviour and secure consistently positive attitudes to learning”

(2) For schools where behaviour was judged to be good or outstanding at their previous section 5 inspection:

“Leaders and managers have / have not taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school’s previous inspection.”

18. The monitoring letter should cover the following, with specific examples:

- pupils’ conduct around the school during the inspection, including the way in which they move around the school, speak to each other and to staff, conform with the school’s dress code; and pupils’ typical conduct around the school, evidenced by pupils’ views, staff’s views, and the school’s documentary evidence
- pupils’ attitudes to learning during the lessons observed during the inspection, and pupils’ typical attitudes to learning, evidenced by pupils’ views, staff’s views, and the school’s documentary evidence

⁴ The time should be arranged according to when pupils leave the school – this aspect of the school day should be observed so inspectors need to plan accordingly.

- how well pupils' behaviour is managed by leaders and staff on a day-to-day basis
- the extent to which the school's culture promotes and supports good behaviour, including: the way in which staff speak to pupils and to parents and carers; how consistently staff reinforce the school's expectations of pupils' behaviour; the way in which the headteacher and other leaders model the behaviour that is expected of all staff; the way in which the headteacher and other leaders support staff to promote good behaviour.

19. The monitoring letter will set out recommendations setting out what the school needs to do to improve the way it manages pupils' behaviour. How well the school has addressed these recommendations will be followed up during the school's next inspection.

20. If the evidence gathered and scrutinised during the inspection indicates that behaviour or safety, or any other aspects of the school, may be inadequate, inspectors should inform the school that it is likely to require a full inspection (under section 5). The inspector will inform the relevant Regional Director of the outcome of the visit and a full inspection (section 8 deemed section 5) should take place as soon as possible. A monitoring letter should be written unless the Regional Director decides that the full inspection will take place before the letter would be published. . If the concerns raised are extremely serious, the Regional Director should, in consultation with the lead inspector, consider whether the visit should be extended and deemed a section 5 inspection.

Annex: inspection activities

Observations of behaviour and informal discussions with pupils

21. Inspector(s) must observe behaviour at the following times: pupils' arrival at school; in lessons; in between lessons; break time; lunchtime; and as pupils leave the school. During these times inspectors should talk to pupils about behaviour and safety.

Pupils' arrival at school

22. Inspectors will:

- observe interactions between pupils, for example whether they are pleasant and relaxed or aggressive – consider whether different groups of pupils look comfortable together and whether there are any tensions
- ask different pupils about their trip to school – for example how safe they feel; whether they encounter any bullying during that time; what they would do to seek help from the school if they did
- evaluate whether there are sufficient staff on duty – consider where staff are situated and whether they are actively supervising
- observe any interactions between staff and parents and staff and pupils, for example how staff greet them and speak to them and whether this provides a good role model
- consider pupils' vulnerability in the playground, for example whether pupils have to wait for a long time before entering the school, whether they are in full sight of school or if there are hidden corners
- in special schools and pupil referral units, observe pupils as they get off taxis and minibuses and ask them about the trip – consider aspects of safety, such as supervision and bullying
- if parents and carers are available, ask them their views about behaviour and safety
- consider how well staff uphold the school's expectations, for example by reminding pupils about how they should treat each other in the playground, move around the school and make sure their uniform is correct
- consider whether pupils are dressed according to the school's uniform or dress code.

Pupils' behaviour between lessons and on arrival at lessons

23. Inspectors will:

- consider what interactions are like between pupils, and between staff and pupils as pupils move from one lesson to the next, for example whether

staff remind pupils of expectations, convey a sense of urgency in getting to the next lesson promptly and greet them as they arrive

- evaluate the extent to which pupils are aware of and respect each other's physical space
- consider how well staff model the behaviour expected from pupils
- consider how promptly and calmly pupils enter classrooms and how quickly they respond to staff's instructions.

Pupils' behaviour at break time

24. Inspectors will:

- consider how pupils are grouped and observe whether there are any tensions or if certain pupils are excluded
- seek pupils' views about bullying, for example whether they experience bullying, what they do to seek help, how they feel about break times, whether there are any 'no go areas' for different year groups – include any pupils who are by themselves
- evaluate the structure of break times and how well the structure supports good behaviour; in primary and special schools consider how well pupils are being systematically taught to play and interact well together – in secondary schools, consider whether the outdoor space allows all groups to be safe
- go to the far reaches of the playground and field to consider how well supervised these are and whether there are any spaces where bullying could easily occur
- evaluate the appropriateness of the language pupils use to each other, for example whether it is respectful or includes derogatory language⁵ – evaluate how well staff challenge such language if they hear it
- consider behaviour in and around the toilets, especially in secondary schools, and how well supervised they are.

Pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes

25. Inspectors will:

- observe the same aspects as for break times, such as interactions, supervision, safety and organisation and check that pupils have an appropriate place to eat their lunch if they bring their own

⁵ For example racist, sexist, homophobic, or sexual language, or language that is derogatory about disabled people or any other group, aggressive personal comments about physical appearance or ability.

- evaluate how well pupils conduct themselves in the dining room and how well staff model desired behaviours to the pupils
- ask pupils about dinner money, for example whether it gets stolen
- establish whether pupils who are eligible for free school meals have a different payment system to others and whether this marks them out as different
- ask the lunchtime staff about bullying, for example what they see and how they help to prevent it
- ask the lunchtime staff about behaviour in general – what they see and how pupils respond to them, for example when lunchtime staff ask pupils to pick up litter or clear their table.

Observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons

26. Inspectors should carry out short visits to a range of lessons. Observations should include some starts and ends of lessons in order to evaluate how well teachers manage transition between lessons and how quickly pupils settle, and how well pupils stay focused to the end of lessons. Evaluations should include consideration the following:

- whether pupils arrive promptly at lessons and with the equipment they need for the lesson
- how promptly pupils respond to staff's instructions
- how clear the school's expectations of behaviour are, for example through classroom displays
- how well the teacher uses the school's behaviour management system, including issuing rewards as well as sanctions if these are part of the procedures, and how effective this system is in supporting staff to manage behaviour and helping pupils to behave well
- how well pupils respond to teaching assistants and other support staff
- how well pupils interact with each other – whether they work cooperatively in groups or pairs as required
- whether pupils are supportive of each other's learning, for example not making derogatory comments about other pupils' answers to questions
- how well staff help pupils to interact positively with each other, for example whether they model appropriate ways to talk to other people, tolerate or ignore put-downs or tackle them, are explicit about the need to respect others

27. Inspectors should ask pupils questions about typical behaviour in lessons if it is possible to do so without disturbing learning.

Observation of 'internal exclusion' room, 'remove room' or equivalent

28. If the school uses this type of provision then inspectors should visit this during lesson time to evaluate:

- pupils' behaviour while in the room
- the use of the room, for example how many pupils are present and whether this is typical (through scrutiny of records)
- how well it is used to improve behaviour, for example whether there is any follow up action after the pupil has attended the centre
- whether the school informs and involves parents and carers when their child has been placed in the room
- whether any patterns shown by its use are used to provide appropriate support and challenge to staff.

Formal discussions with pupils

29. Inspectors should hold at least one discussion about behaviour and safety with a group of pupils the school has worked with to improve their behaviour. These pupils might include those who:

- have previously been excluded more than once
- attend some alternative provision
- have moved from another school on a managed move
- were previously involved in bullying other pupils
- were previously disruptive in lessons but are now 'back on track'.

30. During the discussions inspectors should explore pupils' views about:

- what behaviour is typically like in school and in their lessons
- variations in behaviour from lesson to lesson
- behaviour outside lessons
- the school's reward and sanction system, including what difference this has made to their behaviour
- if they, or any of their friends, attend an alternative provision for part of the week, why they were selected and how it has helped them
- their understanding of the school's stance on bullying, including what happens if someone bullies or is bullied
- how the school has helped them to improve their behaviour
- how the school is helping them to maintain the improvements

- how well the school has worked with their parents or carers to lead to these improvements
- how often and where they hear derogatory language – including homophobic, racist, sexist or discriminatory language– and the schools’ response to this.

Scrutiny of documentary evidence

31. Inspectors should scrutinise the school’s records of behaviour and the school’s analysis of behaviour in order to evaluate how well leaders and managers analyse documentary evidence and then use it to improve the way in which behaviour is managed. Documents should include:

- records of bullying incidents
- records of pupils being removed from lessons
- information about exclusion and ‘internal exclusion’
- records of rewards and sanctions, including how senior leaders check that rewards are given by all staff
- any patterns shown by such records, for example pupils being removed more from certain lessons or at a particular time of day, disabled pupils or those with special educational needs, or from a particular year group or ethnic group receiving more sanctions than others.

32. Inspectors should use the school’s documentation and its analysis to inform their judgements about typical behaviour around the school and in lessons.

Discussion with staff and leaders

33. Inspectors should talk briefly to staff when appropriate, for example when they are on duty in the playground or in the corridors, to ascertain their views on behaviour. Inspectors should hold a discussion with senior leaders towards the end of the day in order to follow up any issues that have arisen and to discuss their analysis of behaviour. This discussion should include a focus on how new staff and inexperienced staff are informed of the school’s expectations and how they are supported in the management of behaviour.