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Corporate report

Statistical work plan April 2019 to March 2020

Updated 30 August 2019

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Foreword

Good data and analysis sit at the heart of operational delivery and policy development in Ofsted. They underpin Ofsted's inspection and regulation activity, helping to determine the timing and nature of the operations. In addition, data and analysis give context to provider conversations that are in line with Ofsted's published inspection frameworks and statutory responsibilities.

Across Ofsted, most data collection and analysis take place between the Research and Evaluation and the Data and Insight divisions. This statistical work plan focuses on the work of the Data and Insight division. It outlines the quantitative analysis that describes current patterns and trends across those remits that Ofsted inspect and regulate. This includes schools, further education, early years and social care.

This is the sixth annual publication of our statistical work plan. It highlights both recent developments and our aspirations for the ongoing effective use of data. Previous statistical work plans have already set out our desire to:

- improve our use of existing data stored within Ofsted's administrative and statistical systems
- improve the communication and dissemination of our statistics to increase the transparency and impact of our work
- develop investigation and analytical skills, including data science across our analytical, professional and technical communities

These aspirations continue, along with our commitment to the principles of trustworthiness, quality and value as set out in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). While there are many aspects of our work plan that we can predict, such as supporting the new [education inspection framework](#), we carry out much of our work according to emerging user need. We maintain a [release calendar for our official statistics and management information releases](#). We also publish important ad hoc analysis and narratives as blogs, in response to Freedom of Information requests and as analysis within the Ofsted Annual Report.

In line with our priorities for 2019 to 2020, we will focus on:

- delivering the data and necessary analytical support for the new education inspection framework
- designing, testing and delivering the new inspection data summary report (IDSR)
- designing and delivering a new further education and skills data management service
- collaborating with analysts across the education and academic research community so that we can develop new knowledge and understanding
- providing insights that help target our regulatory activity in the most effective way

Across all that we do, we will continue to draw on user feedback with a desire to maintain high quality and relevance across our statistical publications and analysis. Although we will primarily draw on our own administrative data, we will continue to use data available through the Department for Education (DfE), the Education and Skills Funding Agency and other external sources.

Jason Bradbury, Head of Profession for Statistics

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About us

The head of profession for statistics leads the Data and Insight division within Ofsted, working with the director of digital and information. On professional statistical matters, the head of profession for statistics is accountable to the national statistician. We use data, statistics and quantitative research to inform Ofsted's work. We work closely with the organisation's Research and Evaluation

division. Together, we aim to support inspection and regulation through the transparent, intelligent and responsible use of data.

The Data and Insight division:

- maintains and develops the databases and other technology needed to produce statistical publications
- investigates and analyses Ofsted's data. We combine it with other sources to inform decision-making and to support Ofsted's strategic aims
- supports inspection and improvement. This includes developing and using statistical models to prioritise providers for inspection
- supports regulation by providing models and insights that help prioritise visits and interventions
- supports the wider organisation and external customers by preparing and publishing helpful data
- produces national and official statistics that meet the responsibilities laid out in the Code of Practice for Statistics
- produces regular management information about inspection outcomes

We have developed this work plan to meet users' needs for our statistics.

Users include:

- inspectors
- policy colleagues
- other government departments
- parliament
- the media
- the public

Our work

We provide analysis and insight into the remits that Ofsted inspects and regulates. This ensures that Ofsted continues to use its resources efficiently and provides value for money. We aim to help Ofsted be intelligent, responsible and focused.

Supporting inspection and regulation

We run and review statistical models to help Ofsted prioritise which providers to inspect. This ensures that we focus our resources where they are most needed and where they can make the most difference. We also model future inspection volumes to help with financial planning. We provide tools and pre-inspection

briefings to support inspectors before and during inspections and regulatory visits.

We also carry out investigations to collect and analyse evidence to understand aspects of Ofsted's work or national education and care issues. Ofsted uses this evidence to support internal decision-making and develop policy thinking. We also share this more widely to inform discussion and debate.

Within regions, we use insight from high-quality and comprehensive analysis to target interventions and other inspection and regulation activity.

Social care

Social care analysts use internal and external data and other intelligence to provide pre-inspection briefings on local authorities and adoption and fostering agencies. Here, we inspect local authorities under the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework and we also inspect fostering and adoption agencies under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF). For local authorities, the data includes, but is not limited to, information about its geography and infrastructure, population, health, political composition, employment, social care and multi-agency services to children and families. When available, it also covers local authority performance data.

Further education and skills

Further education and skills analysts provide pre-inspection briefings to inspectors. They produce detailed performance data for school sixth forms and sixth form colleges, general further education colleges and independent learning providers. The team works with a range of performance data, including Education and Skills Funding Agency achievement rates, DfE-derived performance measures, funding data and within-year data. Analysts provide tailored briefings for inspectors leading the most complex inspections to assist them in navigating through the data.

State-funded schools

State-funded schools analysts produce inspection dashboards for inspectors and for schools. These summarise contextual information and attainment and progress measures. The team works with a range of performance data, particularly from the DfE. Here we use the DfE's analyse school performance service to prepare IDSRs. We also provide more detailed analyst briefings and support while on inspection. These are not made available to the public due to the pupil information they may contain.

Early years

Early years analysts provide information to support the management of inspections and also for briefings for policy colleagues to inform the development of future inspection frameworks. They summarise and explain changes in the population of providers and the number of inspections and their inspection outcomes. The team works with a range of administrative data collected as part of

Ofsted's role as a regulator for this remit and from inspections themselves. We use this information to produce official statistics, management information and analyst briefings. The team also deal with a variety of early years freedom of information requests and parliamentary questions.

Development work

Data and Insight is part of the Government Statistical Service. We work with other government departments and external providers to share best practice, improve quality and develop new data measures and insight. We work most closely with DfE data and are looking to others, such as the Office for National Statistics and academic institutions, to further develop our thinking and analysis.

We also ensure that the systems and processes used to manage Ofsted's data are accurate. For example, internally developed exception reports seek to automatically identify errors in administrative data. When possible, we also combine our data with other sources to identify inconsistencies. We work with data owners to ensure that data issues are corrected at source, therefore improving the long-term quality of administrative data.

During 2019 to 2020, we will develop our national and official statistics by:

- maintaining and improving our high-quality statistical and data products and services
- exploring our data and linking to broader data sources, such as university and college admissions data
- making it easier for users to analyse and interpret our data, particularly by improving our presentation and dissemination of data both internally and externally
- making greater use of blogs and enhanced metadata on our charts and graphics
- consulting on the content and timing of our early years official statistics

To develop knowledge and capability within our division, we will continue to improve our analytical research skills. We will do this by carrying out new analyses on relevant, topical areas that will bring together data from alternative research and big data sources. To aid the process of linking multiple data sources in a safe environment, we will continue exploring the use of the Office for National Statistics' Secure Research Service. This should allow us to securely load relevant Ofsted data and for accredited approved researchers to carry out analyses.

We will also continue to improve the way we communicate the statistics around inspection judgements and share information in appropriate, accessible formats for our different users. In line with the Code of Practice for Statistics, we will continue to carry out user research on the use and value of our existing products, ensuring that these are still fit for purpose.

We have already started to use programming languages such as R to make efficiencies in analytical production. We will continue to develop skills in the use of data science techniques, such as reproducible analytical pipelines. These techniques will help Ofsted to continue making the best use of its data and intelligence to achieve its strategic objectives.

Ofsted's Annual Report

We provide the quantitative analysis and evidence that informs the Chief Inspector's Annual Report. Specifically, we provide commentary and analysis at national and regional level by remit. We provide support to those colleagues compiling the report and advise on data presentation.

National and official statistics and published management information

Ofsted statistics provide policy makers, parliament and other users with reliable information that helps with policy development, policy monitoring and operational decision-making. National and official statistics help Ofsted operate transparently and give the public access to our data. Our statistics cover:

- children's social care
- early years and childcare
- further education and skills inspections and outcomes
- non-association independent schools inspections and outcomes
- initial teacher education inspections and outcomes
- state-funded schools inspections and outcomes
- unregistered schools

We publish our statistics at different intervals. We publish some termly and others biannually or annually.

For some areas, we also publish management information about inspection outcomes. We publish this information about state-funded schools and further education and skills every month to give users a timely and up-to-date picture of inspection findings. We also publish management information for non-association independent schools 3 times a year. The methodology we use to compile management information and to ensure timely publication introduces a small positive bias to the overall view of in-year inspection outcomes. We correct this bias within our official statistics by using a different methodology.

Our work in 2019 to 2020

Externally, we will:

- produce analysis and commentary for the Annual Report 2019/20
- produce statistical publications on time and to a high quality
- design and deliver a further education and skills data management service
- adapt our official statistics and management information to reflect changes resulting from the introduction of the education inspection framework
- continue to provide analysis for external blogs, bringing our insight to the forefront of debate
- work with external research bodies on agreed subjects, for example building a risk-assessment model for independent fostering agencies with the Alan Turing Institute

We will directly support and target inspection and our regulatory activity by:

- continuing our research into 'gaming' and providers who may not be acting in the best interests of the child or learner
- improving our pre-inspection analysis and support during inspections with appropriate data and insight
- forecasting and monitoring inspection volumes for Ofsted's operational plan 2020 and beyond
- designing, testing and delivering the new IDSR
- adapting or redesigning risk-assessment methods around the education inspection framework
- continuing to feed in new and emerging evidence to help support and target inspection and regulatory activity

We will improve our data impact by:

- supporting the introduction of the education inspection framework by delivering the necessary data and analytical underpinnings
- collaborating with other government departments and academia to improve our quantitative research capabilities
- developing Ofsted's capacity to deliver data-driven insight
- developing new data science skills and tools
- consulting on the content and timing of our early years official statistics

Our work in 2018 to 2019

In 2018 to 2019, we:

- provided the statistical underpinnings for the Ofsted Annual Report, presenting evidence from inspections and visits to schools, colleges and providers of social care, early years and further education and skills
- continuously improved our support for targeted inspection of providers in the education and social care remits by including new and emerging evidence
- improved how we publish our statistics, with a focus on making our publications more accessible and transparent
- changed our statistical methodology for reporting on inspection outcomes for state-funded schools
- improved our analysis and reporting of Ofsted's work on unregistered schools, publishing relevant management information for the first time
- identified opportunities to link data and improve understanding and context
- reviewed the technology we used to store and analyse our data
- restructured the use of early years data following migration to a common data system
- responded to significant changes in the further education and skills sector, particularly by supporting new apprenticeship provider monitoring visits
- developed a model of exceptional pupil movements in schools to help identify instances of 'off-rolling' and led work to help Ofsted address the issue on inspection
- provided analysis to support policy development and operational decision-making, particularly within the regions
- developed a new analyst support service to provide more tailored pre-inspection briefing materials and on-inspection support for our inspectors
- analysed the outcomes of inspections to exempt schools to see if we need to review our approach to inspection of these providers

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