

Risk assessment of maintained schools and academies

This document sets out the process by which Ofsted conducts risk assessments of maintained schools and academies where overall effectiveness was judged to be good or outstanding at the last full section 5 inspection.

Only outstanding and good primary and secondary schools, including infant, middle and all through schools, are risk assessed under the current arrangements. The current arrangements do not apply to outstanding stand-alone nursery schools, special schools or pupil referral units.

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Introduction

Since 1 September 2009, Ofsted has varied how often they inspect depending on a school's previous inspection outcome and, if the school was judged to be good or outstanding, an annual risk assessment.

The Education Act 2011 states that, from January 2012, most schools that were judged to be outstanding at their last full section 5 inspection (including academy convertors) will be exempt from routine inspection, unless concerns are raised about their performance.

Most schools judged to be good at their last full section 5 inspection will be inspected within five rather than three years, depending on the results of the risk assessment process.

This document sets out the process by which Ofsted conducts the risk assessment. Only outstanding and good primary and secondary schools, including infant, middle and all through schools, are risk assessed under the current arrangements. The current arrangements do not apply to outstanding stand-alone nursery schools, special schools or pupil referral units.

Timing of annual risk assessments

Schools previously judged to be outstanding

The annual risk assessment takes place in December and/or January for schools judged to be outstanding at their last inspection, starting in the third year after the end of the academic year in which the school's previous inspection took place, and then annually after that. Where a school has converted to academy status, the date of the risk assessment will depend on the date of the last inspection of the predecessor school.

If the annual risk assessment raises concerns about the performance of a school, it may be inspected at any time after the completion of the risk assessment.

If no concerns are raised from the annual risk assessment, schools will not be informed. This is summarised in the diagram below.

Diagram 1. Schools judged to be outstanding

	Academic year of inspection					
	I	I+1	I+2	I+3	I+4	I+5
				RA*	RA	RA
Scenario 1				Inspection		
Scenario 2					Inspection	
Scenario 3						etc

Concerns
 No concerns

Schools previously judged to be good

Most schools judged to be good at their last inspection will be inspected at five-year intervals.

Schools judged as good at their last inspection are, initially, risk assessed as they approach the third year after the end of the academic year in which they were last inspected. If this risk assessment identifies that the performance of the school warrants an inspection, these schools are scheduled for inspection at some point during the third academic year after the end of the academic year in which they were last inspected.

For any schools not identified for inspection at that stage, a further risk assessment is undertaken in the third academic year after the end of the academic year in which the school was last inspected, when the latest performance data are available. If this analysis does not identify concerns, the school will receive, in the spring term, a letter explaining that the school will not be inspected within the next year unless Ofsted receives information that indicates the need for inspection. The governing body/appropriate authority must send a copy of the letter to all registered parents and carers of pupils at the school within five working days of receiving it.

Schools that do not receive such a letter will be inspected before the end of the academic year.

The risk assessment process

Any previously outstanding or good school (**including** schools that have converted to academy status) whose performance falls below the government's expected level of performance (floor standards) at the time of the risk assessment will be inspected.

For any school where performance is **above** floor standards, the risk assessment will analyse:

- pupils' attainment, including the attainment of significant groups of pupils with a focus on pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupils' attainment in core subjects
- pupils' progress, including the progress made by different groups of pupils
- pupils' attendance
- any inspection visits carried out by Ofsted since the last routine inspection
- qualifying complaints¹ about the school referred to Ofsted by parents or carers
- results from Parent View

¹ Ofsted has specific powers (under section 11a–c of the Education Act 2005, as amended) to investigate certain complaints, known as qualifying complaints.

- any other significant issues brought to Ofsted's attention, including from the relevant local authority.

On the basis of this analysis, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) will make a decision about whether or not the evidence suggests a significant decline in outcomes, or concerns about leadership, behaviour and the quality of provision that should lead to inspection.

Nursery schools

Nursery schools that were judged to be good or outstanding at their last full section 5 inspection will be inspected within three years from the end of the academic year in which they were last inspected. This is because currently there is no available performance data on which to conduct a robust risk assessment.

Pupil referral units

Pupil referral units that were judged to be good or outstanding at their last full section 5 inspection will be inspected within three years from the end of the academic year in which they were last inspected, due to the vulnerable nature of the pupils in the unit.

Special schools

Currently, any special schools that have had two consecutive outstanding judgments, and no change of headteacher since the last inspection, will be inspected at five-year intervals. These schools will be informed of the deferral in writing.

All other special schools will be inspected within three years of their last full section 5 inspection. This is because currently there is no available performance data on which to conduct a robust risk assessment, in addition to the vulnerable nature of the pupils.