



Department  
for Education

# Free schools: Ofsted inspection grades

Statistical release

September 2014

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## Free School Ofsted data

On 19 June 2014, the Department for Education put out a press release<sup>1</sup> announcing the approval of 38 new free schools. Within this announcement it was stated that free schools are twice as likely to be 'outstanding', with 21% of open free schools rated 'outstanding' compared to 10% of all schools inspected under the same framework.

The proportion of free schools rated outstanding is based on all open free schools which had a published Ofsted report at the time of the press release. At this time, 62 open free schools had published inspections reports, 13 of which were rated outstanding.

See [Annex A](#) for a list of these free schools along with their inspection grade.

The comparison group is all schools inspected under the new Ofsted framework which came into effect in September 2012. It has been taken from published Ofsted sources<sup>2</sup> and relates to the position as at 31 March 2014. As of this date, 43 free schools had been inspected, with seven (16%) rated outstanding.

For the press statement, the most up to date figure on free schools was used because an additional 19 free schools had inspection reports published between 1 April and 19 June 2014, an increase of more than 40% increase on the number of free schools inspected between September 2012 and 31 March 2014. When dealing with such small numbers of schools, including these additional reports is likely to make the statistic more robust. Although this means the time periods for the comparison are inconsistent, the proportion of all schools rated outstanding is unlikely to change in this period due to the large sample size.

Ofsted published figures on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2014 for inspections up to June 2014. These figures show 24% of free schools to be rated outstanding compared to 10% of all schools inspected under the new framework<sup>3 4</sup>.

It should be noted that two free schools, City Gateway and the London Academy of Excellence (LAE), have been inspected under Ofsted's common inspection framework for further education and skills<sup>5</sup>. LAE is a 16-19 free school and City Gateway is a 14-19 free school. All other free schools, including another 14-19 free school (the rural enterprise academy), have been inspected under the framework for school inspection<sup>6</sup> as have all

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-schools-bring-total-number-of-free-school-places-to-175000>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/latest-official-statistics-maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/latest-official-statistics-maintained-schools-and-academies-inspections-and-outcomes>

<sup>4</sup> Ofsted official statistics for maintained schools and academies includes those subject to the framework for school inspection. A very small number of 16-19 schools are inspected under the CIF and counted in our official statistics about Further Education and Skills inspection outcomes.

<sup>5</sup> [Common inspection framework for further education and skills](#)

<sup>6</sup> [The framework for school inspection](#)

schools in the comparator group. If we exclude the two free schools inspected under the learning and skills framework, 23% of free schools are rated outstanding compared to 10% of all schools.

## **New Ofsted framework from September 2012**

Ofsted introduced a new framework for inspection in September 2012. Comparing the outcomes of free school inspections with other schools therefore presents some difficulties. All free schools have been inspected under this new framework whereas this is not the case for all other schools. The comparison given in the press statement uses only schools inspected under the new framework to address this issue.

It should be noted that Ofsted operates a policy of proportionate inspection, with inspection carried out where it is likely to have most impact. For example, a school judged outstanding at its last inspection is exempt from further inspection unless risk assessment indicates a serious risk of decline. Therefore, within any one year, the sample of schools inspected by Ofsted is not representative of all schools: outstanding and good schools are under-represented, whilst those requiring improvement or inadequate are over-represented. The findings cannot be interpreted as a balanced view of the quality of education nationally. In addition, the sample selected for inspection varies over time, so it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons between the inspections conducted during different periods of time.

## **A small number of free schools have been inspected**

There are the differences in the sizes of groups when comparing free schools to all schools. At the time of the press release, Ofsted had inspected and published reports for 62 free schools, but overall around 20,000 schools are subject to Ofsted inspection. These different group sizes should be taken into account when making comparisons. Additionally, given the small number of free schools inspected to date, the percentage of free schools rated outstanding may be subject to some volatility. Just a few additional inspection grades could have a substantial impact either way on the proportion rated outstanding.

Finally, only a minority of open free schools has been inspected to date. At the time of the press statement, 36% of all open free schools had been inspected. Added to this, only free schools which opened in 2011 and 2012 have been subject to inspection so far. Caution should therefore be taken when drawing conclusions about the performance of all open free schools and when comparing free schools to other schools. However Ofsted inspection grades provide a valuable source of information, in the absence of attainment data, to begin to judge the performance of free schools.

## **Many free schools have empty year groups**

There is evidence that some free schools are not populating all year groups straight away, but starting with one or two cohorts which will then move through the school. This is not unusual for new schools. An inspection can only judge the provision on offer at the time of that inspection. This does not detract from the judgement made because the judgement is not conditional on the school being 'full'. However, the judgement applies at the point in time when the judgement was made and relates to the provision that was on offer at that point in time. It is a judgement and not a status.

## Annex A

The table below sets out all open free schools which had been inspected and had a Ofsted report published at the time of the 19 June 2014 press statement. This excludes Discovery New School, which closed down in April 2014. It also excludes university technical colleges and studio schools.

Free school name	Ofsted Judgement	Year opened
All Saints Junior School	Outstanding	2011
ARK Atwood Primary Academy	Outstanding	2011
ARK Conway Primary Academy	Outstanding	2011
Canary Wharf College	Outstanding	2011
Becket Keys Church of England School	Outstanding	2012
City Gateway 14-19 Provision	Outstanding	2012
Corby Technical School	Outstanding	2012
Derby Pride Academy	Outstanding	2012
Dixons Trinity Academy	Outstanding	2012
Harris Primary Free School Peckham	Outstanding	2012
Reach Academy Feltham	Outstanding	2012
Stone Soup Academy	Outstanding	2012
Tauheedul Islam Boys' High School	Outstanding	2012
Aldborough E-ACT Free School	Good	2011
Barnfield Moorlands Free School	Good	2011
Bristol Free School	Good	2011
Eden Primary School	Good	2011
Etz Chaim Jewish Primary School	Good	2011
Krishna-Avanti Primary School	Good	2011
Langley Hall Primary Academy	Good	2011
Maharishi School	Good	2011
Rainbow Primary School	Good	2011
St Luke's Church of England School	Good	2011

<b>Free school name</b>	<b>Ofsted Judgement</b>	<b>Year opened</b>
Stour Valley Community School	Good	2011
The Free School Norwich	Good	2011
West London Free School	Good	2011
Woodpecker Hall Primary Academy	Good	2011
Alban City School	Good	2012
Beccles Free School	Good	2012
Bolingbroke Academy	Good	2012
Cobham Free School	Good	2012
EBN Free School	Good	2012
Everton Free School	Good	2012
Kings Leadership Academy	Good	2012
Lighthouse School Leeds	Good	2012
London Academy of Excellence	Good	2012
Rimon Jewish School	Good	2012
Sandymoor	Good	2012
Southwark Free School	Good	2012
Steiner Academy Frome	Good	2012
The City of Peterborough Academy, Special School	Good	2012
The Gateway Primary Free School	Good	2012
The Rural Enterprise Academy	Good	2012
Batley Grammar School	Requires Improvement	2011
Kings Science Academy	Requires Improvement	2011
Nishkam Free School	Requires Improvement	2011
Sandbach School	Requires Improvement	2011
The Priors School	Requires Improvement	2011
Bedford Free School	Requires Improvement	2012
CET Primary School, Tower Hamlets	Requires Improvement	2012

<b>Free school name</b>	<b>Ofsted Judgement</b>	<b>Year opened</b>
CET Primary School, Westminster	Requires Improvement	2012
Enfield Heights Academy	Requires Improvement	2012
Greenwich Free School	Requires Improvement	2012
Grindon Hall Free School	Requires Improvement	2012
Harpenden Free School	Requires Improvement	2012
St Michael's Catholic Secondary School	Requires Improvement	2012
The Tiger School	Requires Improvement	2012
Wapping High School	Requires Improvement	2012
Al Madinah School	Inadequate	2012
Hartsbrook E-ACT Free School	Inadequate	2012
IES Breckland	Inadequate	2012
The Hawthorne's Free School	Inadequate	2012



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email [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk)

About this publication:

enquiries Amanda Craxton [Amanda.Craxton@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Amanda.Craxton@education.gsi.gov.uk)

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