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Official Statistics

State-funded schools inspections and outcomes as at 31 March 2021

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This is the main findings report for the state-funded schools and inspections and outcomes as at 31 March 2021 release. The following are also available:

- underlying data
- methodology
- pre-release access list

Summary

This release includes:

- schools' most recent inspections and outcomes as at 31 March 2021
- provisional data for inspections completed between 1 September 2020 and 31 March 2021
- revised data for inspections completed between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020

Impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) on this release

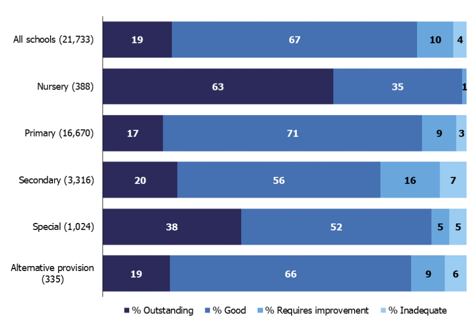
Since 17 March 2020, section 5(1) of the Education Act 2005 has been disapplied under the Coronavirus Act 2020. As a result, routine inspections of schools were suspended. We did, however, carry out some non-routine inspections of schools under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. These included additional monitoring visits to schools judged less than good in the spring term 2021.

Schools at their most recent inspection

The percentage of schools judged good or outstanding is unchanged, at 86%.

Eighty-six per cent of all schools are good or outstanding. The percentage of schools judged good or outstanding is unchanged since August 2020. This is to be expected as routine inspections were suspended in March 2020. Schools can only gain or change their grade at a full section 5 inspection, and we did not carry out any of these inspections between September 2020 and March 2021. The percentage of secondary schools judged inadequate has reduced from 8% to 7%. This is due to schools that have closed since August 2020. Since then, 43 schools have closed with no direct successor, the majority of these being schools which merged with another. Around half of schools that closed were judged to be inadequate or to require improvement.

Figure 1: Overall effectiveness of state-funded schools at their most recent inspection, by phase



1. Alternative provision includes academy alternative provision, free school alternative provision and pupil referral units.

View data in an accessible table format.

Inspections between 1 September 2020 and 31 March 2021

In this academic year, we have carried out:

- 503 section 8 monitoring inspections
- 13 section 8 no formal designation inspections

Section 8 monitoring inspections

Monitoring inspections were carried out during the spring term to determine whether schools were taking effective action to provide education during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included evaluating remote education provided by the school, and whether on-site provision was available for vulnerable children and/or children of key workers.

Since January 2021, we have carried out additional monitoring inspections of schools previously judged to require improvement or be inadequate. Sixty-five per cent of these monitoring inspections were of schools previously judged to require improvement and 35% were of inadequate schools. These were not part of our normal programme of monitoring in these schools. They were additional inspections to ensure that leaders and managers were taking effective action to provide education during the pandemic.

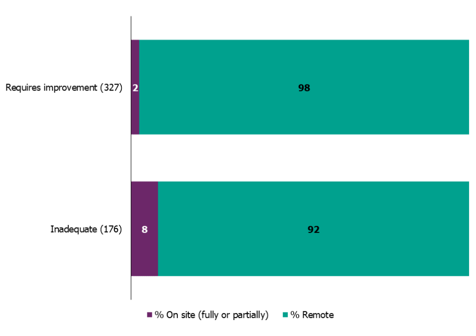
Between 27 January and 31 March 2021, we carried out 503 monitoring inspections. In over 99% of these monitoring inspections, we judged that the leaders, and those responsible for governance, were taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.

Table 1: Effectiveness outcomes of monitoring inspections, by the overall effectiveness of state-funded schools at their most recent inspection (number of inspections)

Previous overall effectiveness grade	Actions of leaders and those responsible for governance were not effective	Actions of leaders and those responsible for governance were effective
Requires improvement (327)	2	325
Inadequate (176)	1	175

We carried out most monitoring inspections remotely, with only 4% of visits being either fully or partially on site. We visited schools on site when safeguarding or other serious concerns had been raised. Schools that were previously judged to be inadequate were slightly more likely to receive an on-site visit, with 8% of inspections of inadequate schools being fully or partially on site, compared with 2% of visits to schools judged to require improvement.

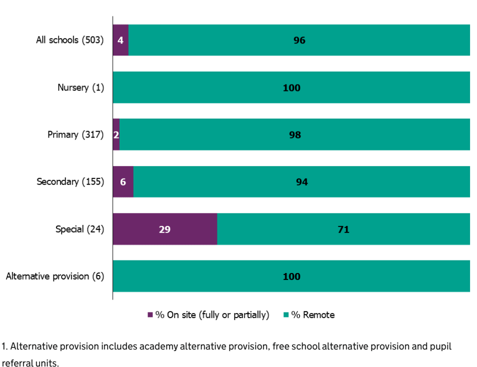
Figure 2: Location of monitoring inspections in 2020/21, by most recent overall effectiveness grade



View data in an accessible table format.

Special schools were the most likely type of school to have an on-site monitoring inspection, with 29% of inspections being at least partially on site. There were no on-site inspections carried out at nurseries or alternative provision. However, there were only 7 monitoring inspections in these types of schools. The number of visits reflect the number of schools of these types, and the proportion of these that were judged at their most recent inspection to require improvement or to be inadequate.

Figure 3: Location of monitoring inspections in 2020/21, by phase



1. Alternative provision includes academy alternative provision, free school alternative provision and pupil referral units.

View data in an accessible table format.

Section 8 no formal designation inspections

We carried out 13 section 8 no formal designation inspections between September 2020 and March 2021. This type of inspection can be carried out at any time in certain circumstances, such as when there are potential safeguarding issues, we have received a qualifying complaint about the school or concerns have been raised about the school's performance. Safeguarding was judged to be not effective in 7 (54%) of these inspections. When we judge that safeguarding is not effective during a section 8 inspection, under normal circumstances, we would convert it to a section 5 inspection. However, we did not do so in these cases, as our section 5 powers were suspended. Instead, we ensured that any risks were fully covered in our inspection report, and that the school was flagged for an urgent inspection as soon as possible.

Table 2: Safeguarding outcomes of section 8 no formal designation inspections (number of inspections)

Previous overall effectiveness grade	Safeguarding effective	Safeguarding not effective
Outstanding (3)	1	2
Good (9)	5	4
Requires improvement (1)	0	1

We carried out 69% of no formal designation inspections at schools that were previously judged to be good.

Revisions to previous release

There have been no revisions to the previous release, relating to inspections that took place between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020, as no additional inspections have been published since 31 August 2020.

Notes

The purpose of these official statistics is to disseminate the data on school standards collected through Ofsted's role as an inspectorate. They provide information about how the judgements of schools have changed over time. They vary across different phases of education and different parts of the country.

This official statistics release reports on the outcomes of state-funded school inspections carried out under sections 5 or 8 of the Education Act 2005. We carried out these inspections between 1 September 2020 and 31 March 2021. This release includes all inspections published by 30 April 2021. This release also includes the most recent inspections and outcomes for all schools that we have inspected, as at 31 March 2021.

Throughout this release, we use the term 'schools' to cover all local authority maintained schools, state-funded academies and non-maintained special schools in England that section 5 of the Education Act 2005 requires us to inspect.

We carried out inspections between September 2015 and August 2019 under the common inspection framework.

From September 2019, we carry out inspections under the education inspection framework (EIF).

You can find an explanation of the main uses of this data, further contextual information and the arrangements for quality assurance in the methodology report. This report provides information about strengths and limitations of the statistics.

Where we have quoted percentages in this report, figures have been rounded and may not add to 100.

Section 5 and section 8

Ofsted carries out inspections under sections 5 and 8 of the Education Act 2005.

In normal circumstances, we are required to inspect at prescribed intervals all schools to which section 5 applies. The regulations set the interval for section 5 inspections 'within 5 school years from the end of the school year in which the last inspection took place'. However, this regulation has not applied during the pandemic, when routine inspections were suspended.

Section 8 enables Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) to carry out inspections for a range of purposes. This includes monitoring visits by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) to schools that are in a category of concern following a section 5 inspection. HMI may also visit schools to aid HMCI in keeping the Secretary of State informed or to contribute to reports on, for example, the teaching in a curriculum subject or a particular aspect of the work of schools.

Inspections carried out under section 8 include:

- section 8 inspections of schools judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent section 5 inspection
- monitoring inspections of schools judged as requires improvement, having serious weaknesses or requiring special measures
- any inspection carried out in other circumstances if the inspection has no specific designation
- unannounced behaviour inspections

Section 8 inspections of schools judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent section 5 inspection

These section 8 inspections are usually a 2-day inspection, except for some small primary schools that may receive a 1-day inspection. These take place approximately every 4 years. The section 8 inspection determines whether the school continues to provide the same good or outstanding standard of education for pupils. The inspection does not result in individual graded judgements. It also does not change the overall effectiveness grade of the school. If there are serious concerns, we convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection, when inspectors will make the full set of graded judgements.

From November 2017, some previously good schools are subject to a section 5 inspection instead of a section 8 inspection if our risk assessment tells us that a section 8 inspection would be highly likely to convert. For example, this applies if a school underwent significant change, such as changing its age range, or if the quality of provision may have deteriorated significantly.

From January 2018, section 8 inspections are only converted to a section 5 inspection if there are serious concerns. If a section 8 inspection does not convert, there are additional outcomes if the school remains either good or outstanding, but the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

Between May 2012 and November 2020, outstanding primary and secondary schools were exempt from routine inspection. In November 2020, Parliament lifted its exemption. However, due to the pandemic, no outstanding schools have received routine inspections in the period covered by this release. The school inspection handbook provides further details around inspection of formerly exempt outstanding schools.

Glossary

Definitions of terms are within the statistical glossary.

Further information

Contacts

If you are a member of the public and have any comments or feedback on this publication, contact Louise Butler on 03000 131 457 or the schools data and analysis team on inspectioninsight@ofsted.gov.uk.

Press enquiries should be sent to our press team on pressenquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following for their contribution to this statistical release: Clair Simpson, Matthew Spencer, Danielle Fothergill and James Jordan.

Annex: data tables for figures

This section contains the underlying data in an accessible table format for all figures.

Data for Figure 1: Overall effectiveness of state-funded schools at their most recent inspection, by phase

Ofsted phase	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
Alternative provision (335)	19	66	9	6
Special (1,024)	38	52	5	5
Secondary (3,316)	20	56	16	7
Primary (16,670)	17	71	9	3
Nursery (388)	63	35	1	0
All schools (21,733)	19	67	10	4

See Figure 1.

Data for Figure 2: Location of monitoring inspections in 2020/21, by most recent overall effectiveness grade

Overall effectiveness	% On site (fully or partially)	% Remote
Requires improvement (327)	2	98
Inadequate (176)	8	92

See Figure 2.

Data for Figure 3: Location of monitoring inspections in 2020/21, by phase

Ofsted phase	% On site (fully or partially)	% Remote
All schools (503)	4	96
Nursery (1)	0	100
Primary (317)	2	98
Secondary (155)	6	94
Special (24)	29	71
Alternative provision (6)	0	100

See Figure 3.

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