

Monitoring inspections of schools that are subject to special measures

Guidance for inspecting schools that are subject to special measures under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

This guidance sets out the judgements that inspectors make and report on during monitoring inspections of schools that are subject to special measures. It indicates the main activities that need to be undertaken from the time the school is notified of the monitoring inspection until publication of the letter to the school. Schools can use the guidance to see how inspections will be conducted and judgements made. They may find it helpful when evaluating their own performance.

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Background

Introduction

1. Schools are made subject to special measures under the provision of section 13 of the Education Act 2005, where the Chief Inspector is of the opinion that:

‘...the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.’¹
2. Monitoring inspections of schools placed in special measures are carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, but Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector (HMCI) may elect to treat them as section 5 inspections using her powers under section 9 of the Act.
3. This guidance sets out the judgements that inspectors make and report on during monitoring inspections of schools that are subject to special measures. It indicates the main activities that need to be undertaken from the time the school is notified of the monitoring inspection until publication of the letter to the school. Schools can use the guidance to see how inspections will be conducted and judgements made. They may find it helpful when evaluating their own performance.
4. Further general guidance, briefing papers on school inspections and other materials are available on Ofsted’s website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.
5. All monitoring inspections are carried out in accordance with the principles and code of conduct for inspectors set out in *The framework for school inspection*.²
6. The headteacher, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority or proprietor will have been invited to attend a school improvement seminar soon after the school was made subject to special measures. These seminars provide information about the arrangements for monitoring inspections and guidance on planning for school improvement. Most schools choose to attend the seminars, but this is not a requirement.
7. Schools placed in special measures are not required to prepare a separate action plan but are expected to amend their existing plans to address the areas for improvement identified by the section 5 inspection. The local authority or proprietor must submit a statement and a plan of action to HMCI within 10 working days of the school receiving the inspection report. Her Majesty’s

¹ Education Act 2005, s44; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents>.

² *The framework for school inspection* (090019), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-inspection-of-maintained-schools-england-september-2009.

Inspectors (HMI) in Ofsted's Quality Assurance Schools Causing Concern (QA SCC) team will evaluate the statement and plan of action and determine whether or not it is fit for purpose.

8. The first monitoring inspection usually takes place between four and six months after the date of the inspection that made the school subject to special measures. However, where a school's safeguarding arrangements have been judged to be inadequate, it is likely to take place at the earliest opportunity. A school may receive up to five monitoring inspections over the two years following the section 5 inspection that placed it in special measures.
9. Inspectors may judge, during any monitoring inspection, that the school has made sufficient progress and special measures are no longer required. In this case, the inspection will be deemed to be a section 5 inspection.
10. If, after two years, special measures have not been removed, the school will be reinspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
11. If the progress of a school towards removal of special measures is judged inadequate after a year, the Department for Education (DfE) will require the local authority to examine carefully the options available to it. It is therefore essential that, when a school has been in special measures for a year, Ofsted is able to report substantively on all issues for improvement as well as the school's overall progress since being made subject to special measures.
12. When special measures have been removed, the school will be subject to Ofsted's annual risk assessment procedures.

Staffing and scheduling inspections

13. The lead inspector for the first monitoring inspection of a school made subject to special measures will normally perform this role throughout the period that the school is monitored. This will be no longer than two years.
14. If, when the school is reinspected, inspectors judge that special measures are still required, the school will normally be allocated a new lead inspector.
15. Each school is allocated an overall number of inspector days related to the size of the school. The lead inspector may use the tariff flexibly to meet the priorities for each monitoring inspection. Conversely, if the areas for improvement and/or the school context are very complex, the appropriate Managing Inspector for Schools Causing Concern (SCC) may consider an increase in the tariff. Should lead inspectors decide to use the tariff flexibly, they must first discuss this with the relevant Managing Inspector.
16. While schools placed in special measures are usually inspected termly, the interval between monitoring inspections may be extended (or in exceptional circumstances shortened) in the light of the progress being made. A monitoring

inspection may be brought forward if concerns arise about the school's safeguarding arrangements.

17. Where a school that is subject to special measures has residential boarding provision, a social care inspector will be allocated as a team member to the first monitoring inspection.
18. **The school is given no more than two working days' notice for each of its first three monitoring inspections. The school is notified of subsequent monitoring inspections the day beforehand.** The lead inspector may arrange to arrive at the school during the afternoon before these subsequent monitoring inspections to meet with senior leaders and complete preparation and planning for the inspection. Paragraphs 90 to 104 set out the arrangements for conducting monitoring inspections with on-site preparation. Arrangements for inspections without on-site preparation are described in paragraphs 105 to 113.

Evaluating the school's progress

Introduction

19. Inspectors are required to evaluate the school's progress, both overall and in dealing with each of the areas for improvement identified by the last section 5 inspection. Judgements are made on a four-point scale: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate. On all monitoring inspections, inspectors should consider whether the school has made sufficient progress for special measures to be removed.
20. Inspectors are also required to evaluate the external support provided to the school and make a judgement about whether the school should be permitted to employ newly qualified teachers. This judgement will be made at the first monitoring inspection. If a school wishes to appoint newly qualified teachers before the initial monitoring inspection it must first seek approval, and provide supporting reasons, from the Managing Inspectors who are the operational leads for schools causing concern (see also paragraphs 33–35).
21. On the first monitoring inspection all the judgements about progress relate to progress made since the section 5 inspection that placed the school in special measures.
22. On subsequent monitoring inspections the judgements relate to progress since the previous monitoring inspection, but there is also an overarching judgement made about the school's progress since it was placed in special measures.
23. Inspectors should make the key judgement about the school's overall progress since it was placed in special measures by considering the full range of evidence they have gathered and using their professional judgement. The

crucial factor is the anticipated timescale for the removal of special measures given the current rate of improvement.

24. The outline guidance is not exhaustive but is intended to guide inspectors to the range and type of evidence they might collect.

Outline guidance

25. The inspection covers aspects of *The framework for school inspection*, but is selective and focused sharply on the **areas for improvement** identified by the section 5 inspection that placed the school in special measures.
26. Inspectors should take account of the factors set out in paragraph 28 when evaluating the school's progress. However, in deciding where to place the emphasis for each monitoring inspection and how much of the evaluation schedule to report on, lead inspectors should use their judgement in the light of the particular circumstances of the school, the improvement priorities identified by the last section 5 inspection and the progress already made.
27. Inspectors should take account of the following.
 - **Contextual matters** including any significant changes to staffing, the pupil population and the school's status, for example if the school is an academy.
 - **Pupils' achievement:** taking account of their attainment and the quality of learning and progress for all pupils including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in line with *The evaluation schedule for schools*³ and the supplementary guidance on attainment.
 - Inspectors should consider first-hand evidence, **which must include a sample of lesson observations**, and school data for different groups of pupils and, where appropriate, recent test and examination results. Reference should be made to the challenge and impact of the school's targets.
 - Inspectors will need to place particular emphasis on current attainment and progress indicators, particularly when no new national data have been published since the previous monitoring inspection. However, it is important to avoid speculation on likely future test and examination results.
 - The school's success or otherwise in overcoming the causes of special measures, such as improving the quality of teaching, learning, behaviour and pupils' achievement and attainment in lessons, will make a significant contribution to judgements about attainment and the quality of pupils' learning and their progress.

³ *The evaluation schedule for schools* (090098), Ofsted, 2011;
www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/evaluation-schedule-of-judgements-for-schools-inspected-under-section-five-of-education-act-2005-sep.

- For schools where attainment falls below significant national targets, inspectors should consider the appropriateness of specific strategies being used by the school to meet such targets, including the impact of any external support.
- Inspectors should judge the accuracy and reliability of the school's own data, for example, assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, which should be considered alongside other evidence such as that gathered by talking to pupils and sampling their work.
- **Other pupil outcomes** with particular emphasis on behaviour and attendance and, where appropriate, the Every Child Matters outcomes.
- **The quality of provision:** teaching and learning, and the use of assessment are likely to be key issues, although inspectors should also consider the curriculum and the care, guidance and support provided for pupils if there are any concerns about these aspects of the school's work.
- **The effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels,** including the school's capacity for sustained improvement.
 - Inspectors should assess the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation, including its judgements about the quality of teaching and learning.
 - The work of the governing body or interim executive board should be evaluated with respect to the contribution that it makes to leadership and management, and its impact on the school's performance.
 - Inspectors should consider whether the school's leaders can demonstrate convincingly that the school's capacity to improve is strengthening. It is important that the school's leaders are having a significant impact on all of its areas of weakness and are able to sustain this improvement without an over-reliance on external support.
 - Particularly in schools with low attainment, there should also be clear evidence that leaders and managers are having an impact in accelerating learners' progress and thereby raising attainment.
- **External support:** the quality and impact of the external support provided to the school, referring to the local authority/proprietor statement of action (see paragraphs 31 and 32), and as appropriate, other partners who have provided support and challenge.
- **Specialist status:** this only needs to be referred to when it is having a significant impact on the overall effectiveness of the schools in either a positive or negative way.
- **Safeguarding arrangements:** inspectors must check the single central register on the first monitoring inspection. On subsequent monitoring visits they must check that it has been updated to reflect any staff changes that have occurred. When the school is to be removed from special measures, inspectors may need to review other procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

28. When the monitoring inspection indicates that safeguarding arrangements are **inadequate**, inspectors must call the SCC helpdesk to log their concern and email the appropriate Managing Inspector for SCC. Inspectors need to take account of the following.
- If safeguarding **was** identified as an area for improvement in the last inspection, then it is very likely that the overall progress made by the school will be judged to be inadequate.
 - If safeguarding was **not** previously an area for improvement, this may still affect the judgement about the overall progress made by the school. For example, inadequate safeguarding arrangements may be indicative of more general weaknesses in leadership and governance. In these circumstances inspectors will need to exercise professional judgement in reaching a view about the overall progress made by the school.
 - The Managing Inspector may recommend one of the following options:
 - an early unannounced monitoring inspection to check safeguarding requirements
 - bringing forward the next planned monitoring inspection of the school
 - scheduling an immediate inspection of the school under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
 - In making this decision, the Managing Inspector for SCC will liaise with the Regional Director and take account of:
 - whether or not safeguarding has previously been judged to be inadequate
 - the nature and seriousness of the weaknesses in safeguarding
 - the wider performance of the school in terms of the progress it has made in dealing with areas for improvement and building a capacity for sustained improvement
 - the likely impact of any further inspection.
 - Whenever safeguarding arrangements are found to be inadequate on **two or more occasions** the National Director will, with the agreement of HMCI, seek an urgent discussion with the local authority or the DfE, as appropriate, to clarify the actions necessary to ensure that pupils are safe. It is, however, for the school, its governing body and the local authority or the DfE to take such actions.
29. Where a monitoring inspection identifies significant concerns about aspects of the school's performance that were not identified in the previous section 5 inspection or any earlier monitoring inspections, these must be considered by inspectors and may affect the judgement about the progress made by the school.

Evaluating external support

30. The judgement made by HMI in the QA SCC team about the quality of the local authority/proprietor statement of action (see paragraph 8) must be reported on the first monitoring inspection and its impact must be evaluated. On subsequent inspections, inspectors also judge the impact of the local authority support for the school.
31. If the statement of action is judged to be not fit for purpose, the local authority/proprietor will be informed and will be asked to address the weaknesses urgently and have the revised version ready for the first monitoring inspection. In this case, the lead inspector will evaluate and report on the revised statement of action during the first monitoring inspection.

Newly qualified teachers

32. Normally, on the first monitoring inspection, the lead inspector will determine whether the school should be permitted to appoint newly qualified teachers and this decision should be reported in the monitoring letter. On subsequent monitoring inspections, the lead inspector should review the judgement made on the first inspection in the light of the progress made by the school, and confirm the permission or revise it.
33. If a school has been permitted to appoint newly qualified teachers prior to the first monitoring inspection (see paragraph 21), the lead inspector should evaluate the quality and impact of support for the teacher(s) concerned during the first monitoring inspection. This will influence the judgement about whether the school should continue to be permitted to appoint newly qualified teachers.
34. Ofsted inspectors are not empowered to make judgements about whether schools should or should not appoint trainee teachers on employment-based training programmes.

Removal of special measures

35. At each monitoring inspection the lead inspector should consider whether the school continues to require special measures. The judgement that special measures are no longer required may involve reference to evidence from previous monitoring inspections as well as the current inspection.
36. In deciding whether special measures are no longer required, inspectors need to consider several factors. The factors influencing these decisions vary significantly between schools and the final decision is determined by the lead inspector's professional judgement about what is best for the pupils attending the school. These factors include:
 - the best interests of the pupils – this is paramount

- the school's ability to demonstrate that it meets the needs of all pupils and has the capacity for sustained improvement – this determines the timing of removal of special measures
- the extent to which capacity for sustained improvement has been demonstrated by leadership and management at all levels, **rather than through an over-reliance on external support**
- the extent to which progress has been embedded – even where a school has been judged to make good progress, this does not necessarily mean it has built sufficient capacity for sustained improvement for special measures to be removed
- the overall level of improvement – some schools may not improve sufficiently for the removal of special measures before the reinspection
- whether the school is now judged to be satisfactory or better overall.

Conducting the first three monitoring inspections of schools requiring special measures

Before the inspection

Notification

37. Most schools placed in special measures will receive a monitoring inspection about four to six months after their section 5 inspection. The inspection service provider will inform the school that it is to be inspected, giving no more than two working days' notice. Lead inspectors make contact with the school as soon as possible after notification.
38. **Requests for a deferral should be referred to the appropriate Regional Director.** Decisions will be made in accordance with Ofsted's policy on the *Deferral of inspections*.⁴ This makes clear that the absence of the headteacher is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.
39. Once the school has been notified of the inspection, the inspection service provider will send formal confirmation to the school by email. The email will also include contact details for the inspection service provider, an outline of the arrangements for publication of the monitoring letter after the inspection, and a list of requested documentation.

⁴ *Deferral of inspections information for schools*, Ofsted, 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/deferral-of-inspections-information-for-schools.

Preparation

40. All monitoring inspections of schools requiring special measures will last for one or two days. The composition of the team will depend on the size of the school and the progress it has demonstrated in any earlier monitoring inspections.
41. **Inspectors should consider all the relevant guidance before planning their inspection or contacting the school.** This includes *The evaluation schedule for schools*, *Conducting school inspections*⁵ and *The framework for school inspection*.
42. Inspectors will use their allocated preparation time to begin to plan the inspection. Planning for the first monitoring inspection should be informed by:
 - the previous section 5 inspection report
 - the local authority statement of action (see above) and any evaluation of it
 - up to date self-evaluation, where this is available
 - the most recent RAISEonline report and, where relevant, the sixth form performance and assessment report (PANDA)
 - letters from any survey inspections
 - any qualifying complaints about the school that have been retained by Ofsted.
43. Planning for subsequent monitoring inspections will follow a similar pattern, but will also take account of the judgements made in earlier monitoring inspections about the school's progress.

Contacting the school

44. Subject to the availability of the headteacher, or in the headteacher's absence the most senior member of staff, the lead inspector should make initial contact as soon as possible after the inspection service provider has notified the school of the monitoring inspection. It is important that planning for the inspection is not held up by waiting for a headteacher who might be delayed or not due to be at school. If the school is using a telephone answering machine, the lead inspector should leave a message and state the time at which the message was left. Where the telephone remains unanswered, the lead inspector should persevere, keeping a note of the times at which s/he tried to make contact with the school.
45. The purpose of the telephone call is for the lead inspector to:

⁵ *Conducting school inspections* (090097), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/conducting-school-inspections-guidance-for-inspectors-of-schools-september-2009.

- confirm the date of the inspection and remind the school that the monitoring letter will be published on Ofsted's website
- explain that the inspection is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005
- confirm that the school is able to inform the governing body that the monitoring inspection is taking place
- make sure that the headteacher understands the purpose and focus of the inspection and the judgements that will be made.

46. In explaining the inspection arrangements, the lead inspector should:

- indicate the likely format of the inspection
- explain that the principles for engagement with senior staff set out in *Conducting school inspections* will be applied where possible, but that the lead inspector has the discretion to manage this in the way s/he feels is most appropriate
- agree with the headteacher the approach to feedback on lesson observations
- request electronic copies of existing school documents including, for example, timetables, evaluation reports and the school improvement plan, as soon as possible after the call, and request that hard copies are available in school
- request to see evidence of up to date self-evaluation, but **should not** expect an evaluation specifically prepared for the inspection team's use or ask the school to update their self-evaluation in readiness for the monitoring inspection
- indicate that s/he will need to see the single central register and may need to review other safeguarding arrangements if any concerns emerge during the inspection
- make domestic arrangements
- indicate the inspection team's intended arrival and departure times noting that it is recommended that inspectors arrive at the school no earlier than 8am and that they depart no later than 6pm, but explaining that these times are advisory and that the lead inspector might arrive later and leave earlier.

47. The telephone call should also provide the headteacher with an opportunity to highlight the progress that the school has made since the previous section 5 inspection or previous monitoring inspection, and to provide any new contextual information. Key points arising from the telephone call should be noted on an evidence form. Inspectors should be mindful that the headteacher will need to accommodate the inspection at short notice while still managing the day-to-day operation of the school.

Planning inspection activities

48. The first monitoring inspection should focus on the most important areas for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection that placed the school in special measures. It will reflect the issues raised by the pre-inspection preparation and the telephone discussion with the headteacher. The focus may shift as new evidence becomes available or other issues emerge.
49. Inspection activities in subsequent monitoring inspections will be shaped by the lead inspector's judgements about the progress made by the school. For example, it may be appropriate to focus sharply on a limited number of key areas where progress appears to be slow and defer consideration of some other issues to a later monitoring inspection.
50. The school should have opportunities to substantiate its views about the progress it has made since the last section 5 inspection or monitoring inspection. In setting up inspection activities the lead inspector should indicate to the school what needs to be tested and ask the school to suggest the best ways of finding the necessary evidence.
51. The lead inspector should prepare and distribute brief joining instructions to the inspection team. These should include:
 - essential information about the school and the timings and domestic arrangements for the inspection
 - details of the main focus of the monitoring inspection and the key issues that the team will explore
 - provisional allocation of specific subjects, year groups and areas of the school's work for team inspectors to observe and investigate.
52. The main focus of the inspection and the key issues the team will explore must always be shared with the headteacher during the pre-inspection telephone call or during the initial meeting at the start of the inspection. Lead inspectors may share the joining instructions with the headteacher.

During the inspection

The start of the inspection

53. At the start of the inspection there should normally be:
 - a brief introductory meeting with the headteacher and/or senior leadership team to:
 - receive an update on staff absence and other practical issues
 - ascertain whether there are particular reasons why any teachers should not be observed, for example if they are subject to informal or formal

capability procedures where the use of observations by Ofsted may compromise those procedures

- ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from lesson observations, whether joint or otherwise, should not be used as evidence in competency/disciplinary proceedings, or for the purposes of performance management
- ensure that the school understands the focus and purpose of the monitoring inspection
- a short briefing for staff, if appropriate, at the discretion of the headteacher
- where necessary, a short meeting of the inspection team to clarify roles and responsibilities and any other aspects of the inspection.

Inspection activities

54. The activities carried out during monitoring inspections are similar to those in section 5 inspections. They may involve: lesson observations; analysis of pupils' work; scrutiny of school records and documentation; discussions with staff, pupils, governors and, where appropriate, the school's strategic partners. While staff interviews are important, the main focus should be on gathering other first-hand evidence, including lesson observations.
55. Inspection activities should be tightly focused on issues that:
 - relate directly to the areas for improvement identified during the previous section 5 inspection or monitoring inspection
 - appear to be of greatest concern from the pre-inspection analysis.
56. Inspection activities are likely to cover some or all of the areas set out in paragraph 28, although the emphasis will depend on the circumstances of the school and its improvement priorities.
57. Inspectors **must** examine the single central register according to the guidance in paragraph 28. If it becomes clear that there are inadequacies in care, child protection or health and safety, they **must** be reported and may influence the timing of the next monitoring inspection or the reinspection of the school, and have an impact on the judgement about the overall progress made by the school.
58. Inspectors may meet with representatives of external partners, giving particular emphasis to the work of the local authority/proprietor and evaluate the impact of the support provided.
59. Inspectors are expected to be flexible about how the inspection proceeds depending on the school's circumstances. Inspectors may wish to consider the following.

- In a small school (where the headteacher may have a teaching commitment), inspectors may start the inspection with a brief discussion with the headteacher, followed by lesson observations and further discussions with the headteacher at a convenient time.
 - Discussions with the headteacher may also take place during a brief tour of the school, which will also enable inspectors to gain a better understanding of its context and ethos.
 - Where necessary, inspectors may conduct telephone interviews with governors, local authority personnel and parents if face-to-face meetings are not feasible.
 - Depending on the focus of the inspection, inspectors may wish to examine additional documentation, including, for example:
 - recent data on attainment and progress that the school may have gathered but had been unable to send electronically
 - reports or action plans from the local authority that were not available beforehand
 - reports from significant external partners
 - governing body minutes – particularly when, for example, a separate committee has been established to oversee progress on the areas for improvement
 - analysis of aspects of pupils' work that are closely related to the areas for improvement, for example, evaluations of improvements in writing or the use of targets for pupils.
60. Lead inspectors should aim to strike a balance between avoiding lengthy team meetings and providing sufficient opportunities for inspectors to discuss emerging inspection judgements. They may wish to consider:
- a very short team meeting at the start of the first day to clarify roles and responsibilities and the main focus of the monitoring inspection
 - a brief 'catch-up' session in the middle part of the first day to identify any unanticipated issues and reshape the inspection if necessary
 - a meeting at the end of the first day (where the inspection extends over two days) to establish preliminary views on the progress made by the school and the priorities for improvement.
61. At the final meeting, the inspection team must:
- agree the judgements on each area for improvement depending on the specific focus of the monitoring inspection – these will inform the key judgement about the overall progress made by the school
 - decide whether the school should be permitted to appoint newly qualified teachers (see paragraphs 33 to 35).

62. At each monitoring inspection, inspectors must consider whether the school still requires special measures. While the decision rests with the inspection team, it is likely that the lead inspector will discuss this with the headteacher, chair of the governing body and local authority. Whatever the outcome, the lead inspector should explain clearly the reasons for the decision to remove or not to remove a school from special measures during the feedback at the end of the inspection.

Registered provision for birth to three-year-olds

63. Registered provision and/or wraparound care managed by the governing body will not be inspected unless identified as an area for improvement by the section 5 inspection. If registered provision for birth to three-year-olds managed by the governing body was judged to be 'inadequate 1', it should be monitored under the special measures procedures by an additional inspector trained to inspect birth-to-three provision. If the provision was judged to be 'inadequate 2', enforcement procedures would be invoked by the Compliance, Investigation and Enforcement (CIE) team; this would be carried out by a regulatory inspector, most likely within three months of the section 5 inspection. However, this provision would then be a focus for each of the special measures monitoring inspections. As such there would need to be an additional inspector trained to inspect birth-to-three provision, either leading the monitoring or as part of the inspection team.

Boarding provision

64. This will be inspected only if areas for improvement were identified by the previous section 5 inspection. The inspection of the boarding provision will be led by a social care inspector and will include the inspection of any national minimum standards that have not been met.

The views of pupils, parents and other stakeholders

65. Inspectors may talk with pupils during lessons and during break and lunchtimes and, where appropriate, meet with pupils to discuss issues relating to the school's areas for improvement.
66. There is no requirement for schools to inform parents about monitoring inspections. However, headteachers should be encouraged to let parents know about these inspections and their outcomes. Monitoring letters will be published on Ofsted's website. It is the duty of the governing body to keep parents informed about the progress the school is making.
67. Meetings with pupils and surveys of parents' views will take place when they relate to the school's areas for improvement. Parents' comments received by Ofsted will be made available to inspectors. At an appropriate point during the monitoring inspection the lead inspector may consult parents on their views about the school by, for example, meeting a representative group of parents. Inspectors may also take account of the views of parents gathered by the

school as part of its own evaluation of its work, and refer to those views in the monitoring letter.

Recording evidence

68. Inspectors should follow the section 5 guidance on completing evidence forms. Inspectors are reminded of the following points.
- Evidence forms should be clear and legible. They are the main source of evidence for the inspection and may be scrutinised for retrieval, for quality assurance monitoring and used as a source of evidence in the event of a complaint. Inspectors should highlight or identify any information that was provided in confidence.
 - Evidence forms can be used for discrete events, such as a lesson observation. They can also be 'open' or 'running', where, for example, a particular theme is pursued across a number of lessons and/or discussions.
 - Although numerical grades are not always required, the text on the evidence form must make clear the overall judgement of progress on the issue being evaluated.
 - Evidence forms should be used for recording the main points of discussion when feeding back to senior leaders and for summarising evidence that underpins key judgements about the school's progress.
 - The evidence base must contain sufficient evaluative information to sustain, under external scrutiny, the judgements reached about the progress made by the school.

Engaging with the headteacher and senior staff

69. The principles for engaging with the headteacher and senior staff, which are set out in *Conducting school inspections*, should be applied during monitoring inspections. The lead inspector should exercise discretion in adapting and extending the approach according to the school's circumstances.
70. It is particularly important that inspectors maintain an ongoing dialogue with the headteacher and senior leaders. Emerging issues should be discussed and the feedback at the end of the inspection, especially when challenging, should not be a surprise to the school.
71. Throughout the inspection, inspectors should strike a careful balance between probing the areas of concern and acknowledging where the school has been successful in tackling areas for improvement. However, inspectors should remember that pupils are unlikely to be well served by a school that has dealt with a range of peripheral matters while shying away from tougher and more fundamental actions needed to improve its performance.
72. In order to promote further improvement, inspectors may refer to effective practices, for example, that they have observed in other schools or that have

been highlighted in Ofsted survey reports. However, they should not recommend a particular or specific kind of methodology that the school should adopt.

Feedback on lesson observations

73. Feedback on the quality of teaching and learning is an integral and essential part of the inspection. Feedback is valued by schools and is a valuable means of furthering improvement. For any lesson observation of 20 minutes or more, inspectors should offer feedback to the teacher concerned. If, as the inspection proceeds, it becomes clear that inspectors are seeing a significant proportion of inadequate teaching, the lead inspector should discuss with the headteacher the most appropriate way of handling feedback to individual teachers.
74. In addition, inspectors may feed back their general findings to:
 - small groups of staff following a series of short visits
 - key senior staff, for example the head of a key stage and/or senior staff with responsibility for professional development
 - subject leaders, for example specialist subject leaders in secondary schools, and foundation subject leaders and/or core subject leaders in primary schools.

After the inspection

Oral feedback at the end of the monitoring inspection

75. The school should receive oral feedback at the end of the inspection, typically towards the end of the second day of a two-day inspection. The whole inspection team should attend and will normally contribute to the feedback. It is the responsibility of the lead inspector to manage the meeting.
76. Oral feedback at the end of the inspection must:
 - report the range of evidence gathered
 - where relevant, comment on the impact of the school's specialist status
 - include the judgements made about progress on each of the areas for improvement as well as the judgement about the overall progress made by the school
 - cover any specific issues identified by the lead inspector in the pre-inspection preparation
 - make clear that the text of the letter or report may differ slightly from the oral feedback, but that the judgements will not change.
77. The lead inspector may indicate the main focus of the next monitoring inspection derived from the inspection findings.

78. Inspectors should identify additional priorities **only where they are essential** to the school's further development. Progress against these priorities has to be evaluated at the next monitoring inspection and reported in the monitoring letter. They are not to be added to the list of judgements to be made as set out in the annex to the covering letter. The priorities should help the school focus on what needs to be done next to improve the quality of education.
79. The feedback should normally be attended by:
- the headteacher
 - the chair of the governing body, interim executive board or the proprietor as appropriate
 - a representative from the local authority (except when the school is an academy)
 - a representative from the diocese, where appropriate
 - key external partners
 - a representative from the DfE, where the school is an academy or is soon to become one.
80. The lead inspector and headteacher should discuss which other members of staff, if any, will attend the feedback, especially if the feedback is challenging or raises sensitive issues.
81. Where the inspection team has reached the judgement that special measures are no longer required, the oral feedback and written report should include the formal statement that:

‘In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.’

This judgement is not subject to moderation and is, therefore, not confidential. Where special measures are removed, a full section 5 report must be written (see paragraph 87).

The monitoring letter

Before writing the letter the lead inspector should note the guidance in paragraphs 84 to 89 and also take account of the specific guidance provided in the template and the Ofsted style guide. The letter is in two parts, the covering letter with the judgements included and the second part with the detailed account of the monitoring inspection. The letter should be published on Ofsted’s website within 15 working days of the end of the inspection.

82. The arrangements for publication are as follows.

- The lead inspector will complete the letter the day after the inspection and send it to the appropriate inspection service provider within two working days of the end of the inspection.
- The inspection service provider will edit and send the letter to the school normally within five working days of the end of the inspection.
- The school has 24 hours to check and report any factual inaccuracies to the inspection service provider.
- The inspection service provider will prepare a final version of the letter which will be sent to:
 - the headteacher
 - the Secretary of State for Education
 - the chair of the governing body or interim executive board or proprietor as appropriate
 - the local authority (unless the school is an academy)
 - the diocese, where appropriate
 - the Young People's Learning Agency (for academies or secondary schools with a sixth form)
 - the lead inspector.

83. The letter should state:

- the overall progress made by the school since being placed in special measures
- on the second and subsequent monitoring inspection, the progress made since the previous monitoring inspection
- whether the school is permitted to appoint newly qualified teachers – this must be included in the first monitoring letter and in subsequent monitoring letters.

84. In the monitoring report, lead inspectors should make professional judgements about the extent of the detail needed to explain clearly the progress made by the school, depending on the complexity of circumstances. When a monitoring inspection focuses on only one or two aspects of provision, this should be clearly explained.

85. The report must include:

- a summary of the evidence gathered by inspectors
- a brief summary of any significant changes to the context of the school
- the judgement (using the four-point scale set out in paragraph 20) on the progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement under some or all of the following headings:

- pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning
 - other relevant pupil outcomes
 - the effectiveness of provision
 - the effectiveness of leadership and management
- where the school has specialist status, a brief evaluation of its impact if relevant
 - a judgement on the quality and impact of external support – there should be specific reference to the statement of action in the first monitoring inspection letter
 - priorities for further improvement.
86. When it is judged that the school no longer requires special measures, the section 8 monitoring inspection is deemed to be a section 5 inspection. A full inspection report must be written and published in accordance with relevant guidance on section 5 inspections.
87. The front cover of the report must include the statement:
- ‘This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.’
88. The introduction to the report should explain the circumstances in which the school was inspected and the opening of the overall effectiveness section of the report should include the statement:
- ‘In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.’

Conducting the fourth and subsequent monitoring inspections of schools requiring special measures

89. The school is notified of these monitoring inspections the day before. The lead inspector should decide whether to arrive at the school during the afternoon before the inspection starts, to complete preparation and planning, or to do this through telephone conversations. Paragraphs 91 to 104 set out the arrangements for conducting monitoring inspections with on-site preparation. Arrangements for inspections without on-site preparation are described in paragraphs 105 to 113.

Planning for inspections with on-site preparation

Off-site preparation

90. Inspectors should begin their pre-inspection planning in line with the approach set out in paragraphs 41 to 43. The purpose of the off-site preparation is to enable the lead inspector to reflect on the progress made by the school in the light of any more recently available information about its performance. Inspectors are not expected to undertake detailed pre-inspection planning or preparation before they arrive at the school.
91. Where applicable, the lead inspector should prepare and distribute brief joining instructions to the inspection team. These should include:
 - essential information about the school and the timings and domestic arrangements for the inspection
 - details of the main focus of the monitoring inspection and the key issues that the team will explore
 - provisional allocation of areas of the school's work to team inspectors to observe and investigate.
92. When the off-site preparation is complete, the lead inspector should travel to the school and arrive during the afternoon of the day before the inspection. Exact timings will depend on travel arrangements and the location of the school, but the lead inspector should ensure that there is sufficient time to complete the on-site preparation as set out in paragraphs 99 to 104. The lead inspector should telephone the school in the morning before they are due to arrive to inform the headteacher of the inspection. If the headteacher is unavailable, the lead inspector should ask to speak to the most senior member of staff present. If it is not possible to contact the school, the lead inspector should complete their journey and inform the school of the inspection on arrival as set out in paragraphs 94 and 95.

Arrival at the school

93. On arrival at the school the lead inspector must show their identity badge and ask to see the headteacher. If it was not possible to contact the school before, care should be taken not to inform administrative staff or others in the school about the inspection before speaking to the headteacher. The headteacher should be told that they may phone the National Business Unit (telephone: 0300 123 4234) to check on the identity of the lead inspector.
94. If the lead inspector is unable to speak to the headteacher, they should ask to speak to the next most senior member of staff. It is important that preparation for the inspection is not held up by waiting for a headteacher to arrive at the school.

95. **Requests for a deferral should be referred to the appropriate Regional Director.** Decisions will be made in accordance with Ofsted's policy on the *Deferral of inspections*. This makes clear that the absence of the headteacher is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.
96. As soon as it is certain that the inspection can take place, the lead inspector will notify the inspection service provider who will send formal confirmation to the school by email. The email will also include contact details for the inspection service provider and an outline of the arrangements for publication of the monitoring letter after the monitoring inspection. Where necessary the inspection service provider will ensure that any team inspectors are informed that the inspection will take place.
97. The lead inspector should ensure that the headteacher has time to notify their staff of the inspection. After this, there should be a brief introductory meeting with the headteacher to discuss the arrangements for the inspection as set out in paragraph 54 for the first three monitoring inspections.

On-site preparation

98. The lead inspector should provide the headteacher and/or senior leadership team with an early opportunity to contribute to the pre-inspection preparation and planning by clarifying the progress that the school has made since the previous monitoring inspection. Any significant changes to the context of the school should be discussed.
99. The lead inspector should scrutinise briefly the key documents provided by the school including, for example, the most recent self-evaluation, the updated school improvement plan and the most recent information about pupils' attainment and progress. Any emerging issues should be discussed with senior leaders whenever possible.
100. In setting up inspection activities, the lead inspector should indicate to the school what needs to be tested and ask the school to suggest the best ways of finding the necessary evidence to substantiate its views about the progress it has made. However, the focus of the inspection may shift as new evidence becomes available or other issues emerge.
101. The on-site preparation time may be used flexibly at the discretion of the lead inspector and, where appropriate, with the agreement of the headteacher. However, the lead inspector should not start the inspection early by, for example, conducting lesson observations or scrutinising the single central register during the preparation afternoon.
102. The lead inspector is not expected to compile a pre-inspection briefing. However, before leaving the school when the on-site preparation is complete, they should ensure that senior leaders have a clear understanding of the key inspection issues and have been given an opportunity to contribute to the planning of the inspection.

103. The lead inspector should also use the on-site preparation time to:

- agree with the school how senior leaders may engage in the inspection
- receive an update on staff absence and other practical issues
- ascertain whether there are particular reasons why any teachers should not be observed, for example if they are subject to informal or formal capability procedures where the use of observations by Ofsted may compromise those procedures
- ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from lesson observations, whether joint or otherwise, should not be used as evidence in competency/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management.

Planning for inspections without on-site preparation

104. Subject to the availability of the headteacher, or in the headteacher's absence the most senior member of staff, the lead inspector should make initial contact to inform the school of the inspection during the morning of the day before it is due to start. It is important that planning for the inspection is not held up by waiting for a headteacher who might be delayed or not due to be at school. If the school is using a telephone answering machine, the lead inspector should leave a message and state the time at which the message was left. Where the telephone remains unanswered, the lead inspector should persevere, keeping a note of the times at which they tried to make contact with the school.

105. **Requests for a deferral should be referred to the appropriate Regional Director.** Decisions will be made in accordance with Ofsted's policy on the *Deferral of inspections*. This makes clear that the absence of the headteacher is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.

106. As soon as it is certain that the inspection can take place, the lead inspector will notify the inspection service provider, who will send formal confirmation to the school by email. The email will also include contact details for the inspection service provider and an outline of the arrangements for publication of the monitoring letter after the monitoring inspection. Where necessary the inspection service provider will ensure that any team inspectors are informed that the inspection will take place.

107. Planning for the inspection should include similar activities to those described in paragraphs 91 to 93 and 99 to 104 for inspections with on-site preparation. The lead inspector should arrange an extended telephone call to provide the headteacher with an early opportunity to contribute to the pre-inspection preparation and planning by clarifying the progress that the school has made since the previous monitoring inspection. Any significant changes to the context of the school should be discussed.

108. The lead inspector should briefly scrutinise electronic copies of the key documents provided by the school including, for example, the most recent self-evaluation, the updated school improvement plan and the most recent information about pupils' current attainment and progress. Any emerging issues should be discussed with the headteacher through a follow-up telephone call whenever possible.
109. In setting up inspection activities, the lead inspector should indicate to the school what needs to be tested and ask the school to suggest the best ways of finding the necessary evidence to substantiate its views about the progress it has made. However, the focus of the inspection may shift as new evidence becomes available or other issues emerge.
110. The lead inspector should also use the pre-inspection telephone discussions to:
 - agree with the school how senior leaders may engage in the inspection
 - receive an update on staff absence and other practical issues
 - find out whether there are particular reasons why any teachers should not be observed, for example if they are subject to informal or formal capability procedures where the use of observations by Ofsted may compromise those procedures
 - ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from lesson observations, whether joint or otherwise, should not be used as evidence in competency/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management.

During the inspection

111. The lead inspector should meet briefly with the headteacher and/or senior leadership team at the start of the first day to discuss any changes to the previously planned inspection activities.
112. Thereafter the inspection, including feedback and the writing of the monitoring letter and report, should be conducted in line with the arrangements set out in paragraphs 55 to 89 for the first three monitoring inspections.