

The logo for Ofsted, featuring the word "ofsted" in a white, lowercase, handwritten-style font on a black background.

# Strategic Plan 2005 to 2008

November 2004

Better  
education  
and care

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# Introduction

Over the past 12 years, Ofsted inspections have informed parents, helped schools and other educational institutions to improve and helped to influence national policy. Since 2001 our regulation and inspection work in the early years sector has also contributed to the improvement of childcare. Underpinning all of this activity has been Ofsted's independence, enabling us to continue to speak as we find.

We know that effective inspection and regulation can make a real difference to children's and young people's life chances. This is why our Strategic Plan for 2005–08 envisages major developments in inspection and regulation, including new inspection systems for schools and colleges, children's services, joint area reviews and a new early years inspection cycle. In brief:

- From September 2005 we shall be replacing the previous school inspection system with a shorter and sharper version. These changes, on which we have consulted widely, are being extensively piloted. They are based on the belief that the new arrangements will contribute more directly to schools' own drive for improvement. The main changes will be in cutting the notification period for inspections to the minimum possible, increasing the frequency of inspection to every three years and introducing more focused, lighter-touch inspections.
- Also starting in September 2005, Ofsted will be leading the implementation of a unified approach to the multi-agency inspection of children's services. The introduction of this integrated inspection framework will allow for the outcomes to be reported in a systematic way and should lead to a better understanding of the interrelationship between the work of different services. The joint area reviews will pull together evidence to report comprehensively on the outcomes for children and young people in the local area.
- Subject to the parliamentary process, we plan to move to a three-year cycle for the inspection of day-care providers, childminders and nursery education providers from April 2005. This will harmonise these inspections with the inspection frequency that we shall be adopting for schools and other educational bodies and establishments from September 2005.

These improvements require changes to Ofsted's existing structure. Closer partnerships between Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and contracted inspectors are at the heart of the new school inspection regime, which in turn means a greater emphasis on providing local support to the front-line inspection staff. This could not be achieved with the functionally separate divisions that have operated in the past within Ofsted's Education Directorate. Regional delivery of school inspections will provide an opportunity for closer links with Ofsted's early years work, which is already delivered regionally. Through these changes we shall create the unified organisation that this Strategic Plan envisages.

Key elements of this Strategic Plan, therefore, focus on strong regional delivery, organised through three regions: North (based in Manchester); Midlands (based in Nottingham); and South (based in Bristol). Each region will have an education division and an early years division to take responsibility for the delivery of all our inspection and regulatory activities. These regions will have responsibility for all operational functions, including corporate services such as human resources and finance. Ofsted will have a smaller central HQ operation than in the past, focused on developing and implementing the strategy for all of our services. This new delivery structure, with the regions at its heart and based on an inspection force distributed across the whole of England and working from home, is designed to be robust enough to cope with any further developments that may be required in future years.

This plan is also designed to build on the changes that we have made in previous years in improving our efficiency, in using new technology, in supporting home-based workers, and in improving and enhancing the skills of our staff. We shall ensure that Ofsted continues to operate efficiently and economically, and that our staff have the resources and support they need to do their jobs effectively.

All the objectives in this Strategic Plan are designed to help us do an even better job of promoting improvement in services for learners. At the same time they will make our inspection and regulation more proportionate and cost-effective, and will

ensure that a higher proportion of Ofsted's resources will be going into inspection and regulatory activities. This is in line with the government's wish to redirect resources to front-line service delivery and will enable us to meet our goal of delivering annual cost savings of 20%, representing about £40 million, by the end of 2007–08. In addition, they will harmonise Ofsted's range of activities, bringing childcare and education much closer together.

Our strategy has been designed to reshape Ofsted to meet our new vision over a three-year period, with some changes designed to be completed within a one- or two-year time frame. At all stages we shall be checking that the planned improvements in inspection and regulation are aligned with our goal of better education and care through effective inspection and regulation. Operating and managed locally, Ofsted will continue to make a real difference to the lives of millions of children and young people.

This plan gives shape to our aspirations for Ofsted's work and I commend it to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Bell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line underneath the name.

**David Bell**  
**Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools**  
**November 2004**

# Ofsted's purpose and values

Ofsted is the non-ministerial government department responsible for regulating childcare, inspecting schools, colleges, teacher education and local education authorities (LEAs), and leading the inspection of children's services in England. Ofsted's purpose is to serve the interests of children and young people, their parents and the community by providing impartial and authoritative inspection, evaluation and reporting of the quality and standards of education and childcare.

## Aim

Ofsted's overall aim is to contribute to:

Better education and care through effective inspection and regulation.

This aim will be achieved through:

- establishing effective inspection and regulation frameworks that meet the needs of all of our stakeholders (young people, parents, schools, LEAs, colleges and other education suppliers, and childcare providers)
- developing a skilled and motivated workforce that takes pride in its work and is both innovative and accountable
- listening to children and young people and putting their needs first
- reporting without fear or favour and effectively disseminating inspection findings to better inform, educate and influence
- focusing our resources appropriately to ensure a professional service and value for money.

Ofsted believes that inspection and regulation can make a real difference to life chances. Consequently, Ofsted must focus resources on the things that make the most impact: better inspection and regulation, with efficient professional support to make them happen.

Our aim will be achieved through the objectives and programmes described in this Plan.

## Values

In seeking to achieve our aim we are committed to:

- reporting accurately and impartially, without fear or favour
- acting with integrity and impartiality
- communicating clearly and frankly, using our knowledge to promote high standards and high-quality provision.

In doing so, we will:

- have high expectations of ourselves and others
- be open about our work and methods
- carry out evaluations rigorously
- act with courtesy and sensitivity, respecting diversity
- meet our objectives in partnership with others.

We articulate these values more specifically in the principles of inspection (see annex A) upon which all our inspection and regulatory frameworks are based.

Ofsted will advise, on the basis of its evidence, on such matters as approaches to caring for and supporting children, the effectiveness of different types of educational provision, and the effect of particular innovations and government strategies.

We hold to:

- the importance of a coherent approach to children's and young people's care and education, linking cognitive development to healthy personal and emotional growth and security
- the principle of the entitlement of children and young people to curricula that are accessible, challenging, motivating and relevant to their needs across the 3 to 19 age range, combining secure knowledge and understanding with the development of the skills, values and attitudes to prepare them for adult and working life
- the promotion of excellence and high standards for all, recognising the importance of teaching that is knowledgeable and stimulating, together with early identification and development of particular skills, gifts and talents
- a belief in the importance of parents, families, carers and other adults laying effective foundations for future success

- a commitment to inclusive approaches to the care and education of people with special educational needs (SEN) or disability and vulnerable groups. These must aim to overcome the barriers that result in unacceptable levels of failure for individuals or groups and should respond to specific needs and interests.

As part of this last commitment, we are determined to report on whatever works for or against successful inclusion.

In support of our central strategic aim, we set ourselves the goal of being a well-run organisation, using public resources efficiently and effectively, and being an exemplary employer. We aim to become a national exemplar of home-based working. We are committed to equality of opportunity and access, and to promoting race equality in our work. Our plans for this are set out in our Race Equality Scheme, published on our website at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Accountability

Ofsted's Accounting Officer is Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England (HMCI). He is accountable through ministers to parliament and is subject to regular scrutiny through twice-yearly evidence to the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee. Ofsted has a Strategic Board with two non-executive members sitting with members of the Management Board. There is also an Audit Committee with an independent chair and two other independent members.

Our inspection findings are normally published openly (other than reports on individual childminders, which from 1 April 2005 will be identifiable by an Ofsted reference number and the postcode of the childminder for security reasons). The work of Ofsted and its inspectors is subject to formal complaints procedures and recourse to an independent adjudicator.

# Structure of this Strategic Plan

Ten core objectives, which have been arranged in two strategic groupings, contribute to meeting our aim.

The first group of objectives highlights the inspection and regulatory activities that Ofsted will undertake over the next three years. In this section each objective relates to a statutory requirement to regulate or inspect a sector of education and care provision. It may also include programmes that incorporate responses to ministerial remits, priorities of government departments and, in particular, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), or matters identified by HMCI.

These objectives are supported by a second group that focuses on improvements to the way in which Ofsted functions as an organisation. These objectives are designed to support the operational changes required in regulatory and inspection activities. They introduce important improvements in the way in which Ofsted is structured and they focus on our use of resources to ensure a professional service and value for money.

Both sets of objectives have been designed to contribute to Ofsted's overall financial goal of reducing its annual budget by 20% by the end of this strategic planning period in March 2008.

Each objective in this Strategic Plan may cover several operational programmes. A programme may include a range of inspection activities. The inspection programmes are of four types, covering:

- institutional inspection or regulation
- thematic or cross-cutting inspection
- inspection of the quality of provision across areas or partnerships
- development and improvement of inspection.

The outputs of inspection always include feedback to those inspected and the creation of reports, written to high-quality standards and in most cases publicly available. An important duty is the provision of advice to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills through HMCI's annual report and other publications, and briefings and seminars for ministers and officials. We also work in partnership with other national

bodies in conducting inspection and providing information and advice. The outcomes are ultimately a contribution to the improvement in education, care and life chances of children and young people.



# Programmes and objectives

## Section 1. Inspection and regulatory activities

### Early years

The Care Standards Act 2000 transferred responsibility for the regulation and inspection of childminding and day care from local authorities to Ofsted. Childcare inspectors, supported by administrative staff based in regional centres, register, inspect and investigate the continuing suitability of providers following a complaint and, if necessary, take enforcement action.

Ofsted's first duty is to assure parents that those who care for their children are suitable to do so and contribute to their development and early learning. Second, regular inspection aims to ensure that providers meet the National Standards for Childcare, identify good practice and promote improvement in quality. The inspection of nursery education providers evaluates the quality and standards of nursery education received by children in the Foundation Stage. Where possible, Ofsted combines the care and nursery education inspection to reduce the demands on providers.

The DfES is considering whether to change the frequency of our inspection of childcare and nursery education, in order to harmonise with the inspection frequency that Ofsted is adopting for schools and other educational bodies and establishments. Subject to any ensuing parliamentary process from April 2005, Ofsted will inspect day-care providers, childminders and nursery education providers within three years of their previous inspection. We shall also increase the frequency with which we inspect those settings that may be causing concern.

We shall also continue to improve the efficiency of our operations and to respond as appropriate to national developments, including the establishment of Children's Centres, extended provision in schools and developments in policy relating to children's services. Evidence from this kind of work in early years has informed the work on children's services joint area reviews that is described in objective 3 of this Plan.

### Objective 1

Ensure that children in the registered care of others are safe, well cared for and engaged in activity that promotes their development and learning.

#### *Programmes*

- 1.1 **The registration of providers.** Each year, we receive some 24,000 applications for registration from potential childminders and providers of day care. We establish that the applicant is a suitable person to provide childcare and meets the National Standards. This involves a significant administrative task in carrying out a number of prescribed checks. Establishing that the registered person can meet the National Standards also involves a visit to check the premises by a childcare inspector and a formal interview.
- 1.2 **The inspection of providers.** Subject to the parliamentary process, from April 2005 we plan to inspect day-care providers, childminders and nursery education providers within three years of their previous inspection. We shall also inspect those settings causing concern more frequently, and inspect new providers within seven months of their registration. These inspections lead to a quality grading and a written report that is then published. We will carry out approximately 40,000 inspections during each year of this Strategic Plan.
- 1.3 **The investigation of complaints against providers to ensure their continuing suitability.** Over the past year we have investigated 6,250 complaints where concerns have been raised about the suitability of the provider or the childcare provision. These complaints vary widely in their content from issues relating to child protection to issues relating to child-adult ratios, qualification of managers and premises.
- 1.4 **The enforcement of action against registered or unregistered providers.** To date we have taken an average of 250 enforcement actions against providers each year. About one third relate to unregistered childminders.

**1.5 Inspection and regulation development.** During the period of this Strategic Plan, the emphasis will be placed on improving the processes in these areas. This will help to deliver the long-term efficiencies that are required.

**Targets**

Recurrent targets include:

- registering providers within target timescales
- on receipt of a relevant complaint, investigating the continued suitability of the provider within 30 working days
- taking necessary enforcement action within the prescribed time limits.

Milestone targets include:

- inspecting all registered providers at least once by 31 March 2008
- reporting annually on findings from our Early Years regulatory work in official Ofsted publications.

**Schools and colleges**

The Education Directorate (formerly the Inspection Directorate) has the central purpose of planning coherently for all school, college, teacher education and area-wide inspections in a way that brings together the best of our methods and expertise and creates systems that are as clear, consistent and comparable as possible. The directorate is also responsible for the inspection of joint area reviews (see Children’s Services below).

Our strategy and approach for the next three to five years, informed by an appraisal of current strengths, weaknesses and challenges, are based on the following frame of reference. The central purpose of inspection remains that of reporting clearly, independently and unambiguously on quality and standards, through effective feedback and well-written reports which convey rigorous professional judgements. To maintain the rigour of inspection standards, inspection development will be guided by the principle of using the same frameworks, methods, criteria, standards and gradings for inspections, except where specific characteristics justify differences.

Inspection contributes much – and we intend that it should contribute more – to what education providers themselves do to improve quality and choice as well as raise standards. We intend that self-evaluation should become more important in the inspection of schools and colleges to locate inspection in a cycle of planning, self-evaluation and review. We believe this to be consistent with the government’s intention to allow greater autonomy to managers in schools and colleges. We also intend to reduce significantly the cost of inspection and the burden it can impose on institutions. At the same time, by creating a local presence, we intend to ensure more regular contact, formal and informal, between institutions and inspectors.

We have carried out a full review of the inspection models for schools and colleges, and have piloted the schools model extensively. For both, we propose much briefer inspections (however, for colleges there will be significant variations in the weight of inspection depending on the performance of the college) carried out at short notice, leading to brief, jargon-free reports. Our plans have been widely welcomed, and we intend to implement them from September 2005, provided the necessary legislation is passed in good time. This will coincide with the completion of the first cycle of inspections of further education colleges. We intend to extend the same principle - of differentiated, low-cost inspection, leading to brief but incisive reports - to the new elements of our remit as we extend our coverage to adult learning and training.

*Maintained and independent schools*

**Objective 2**

Ensure that every school is inspected on a regular basis, that all schools causing concern are monitored, and that national strategies and other initiatives for the improvement of schools are evaluated rigorously.

*Programmes*

**2.1 Inspection of maintained schools.** We intend to proceed with the regular inspection of maintained schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) under section 10 of the School Inspections Act until the summer of 2005. At that point, we

shall implement our plans for the future of inspection, working alongside our partners in the inspection market. From September 2005, HMCI will publish all school inspection reports. We intend that HMI will be involved in all school inspections and will lead most inspections in secondary schools and a good proportion of inspections of primary schools, working with inspection contractors. We are developing an extensive programme of selection and training to ensure that registered and enrolled inspectors continue to make their vital contribution, and receive appropriate professional development. We also intend to bring in new ways of seeking parents' and other users' views. HMI will continue to inspect service children's schools as requested by the Ministry of Defence.

**2.2 Quality assurance.** Ofsted will work with inspection contractors to develop new systems for assuring the quality of inspections and the competence and effectiveness of inspectors, whether they are HMI or independent inspectors. The focus of the new systems will be on securing the validity of all reports issued in HMCI's name.

**2.3 Monitoring schools causing concern.** We shall continue to build on the strong track record of HMI's work with individual schools by maintaining our programme of monitoring visits to schools causing concern. However, having carried out a review of our work in this area, we are persuaded that some simplification is possible. Subject to legislation, we intend to reduce the number of categories into which schools causing concern can be placed to two: schools requiring special measures, and the less serious category of schools which require significant improvement.

**2.4 The regular inspection of independent schools** under section 163 of the Education Act 2002. We shall inspect independent schools that are not members of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) on a six-year cycle which began in September 2003. ISC schools will be inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate, which is subject to monitoring by HMI. Inspection reports will normally be published. Any funded nursery education, required to be inspected under section 122 of the School Standards and

Framework Act 1998, will be inspected, wherever possible, as an integral part of independent school inspections.

**2.5 The effects of national policy aimed at raising standards in schools.** We identify annually, in discussion with the DfES, the major issues on which we should provide advice to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, especially those involving the evaluation of policy. Our inspection of the Primary National Strategy will continue over the period of this Plan. We shall continue to evaluate the Key Stage 3 Strategy and cover teaching and assessment, and attitudes and behaviour throughout the secondary phase. Inspection will look at 14 to 19 developments including moves towards a more flexible curriculum at Key Stage 4 and the expansion of work-related learning. We also plan to evaluate the impact of the national agreement on workforce reform. We shall undertake more analysis of evidence on issues such as continuing underachievement in some schools and by some groups of pupils. We shall continue to monitor the extent to which schools provide for children with special educational needs and disabilities. We propose to strengthen such exercises through the more systematic use of educational research, both in the UK and internationally. From September 2005, our regular inspections of schools will no longer provide the information we require to comment authoritatively on the subjects of the curriculum. We therefore intend to develop, alongside our inspection of the aspects already listed, a programme of subject and aspect surveys carried out by HMI and independent inspectors working together. To minimise the impact of inspection on schools, we intend that no school, other than those causing concern, shall be visited more than once in the period between inspections of the whole school.

#### Targets

- Implement the new arrangements for school inspection by September 2005.
- Inspect all maintained schools on a three-year cycle beginning in September 2005.
- Produce a set of reports and dissemination events related to the inspections outlined in paragraph 2.5.

*Further education and related provision*

We shall complete the first cycle of college inspections in summer 2005, and have reviewed the inspection arrangements needed for subsequent programmes. Government policy for the 14 to 19 phase of education and issues arising from *Success for all, 21st century skills – realising our potential* and the enquiry into post-16 qualifications will mean further change and development in the course of this Plan. We shall continue to advise on the effects of those changes on the basis of inspection evidence from schools and colleges.

**Objective 3**

Ensure that every college and provider of work-based learning and all local authority services for providing adult and community learning are inspected on a regular basis, that provision for the 14 to 19 age group is evaluated within joint area reviews and that national strategies for improving the education of this age group are rigorously evaluated.

*Programmes*

**3.1 College inspections.** We shall complete the first cycle in summer 2005, in partnership with the Adult Learning Inspectorate. We intend from September 2005 to introduce a more differentiated approach, involving fewer inspector days for all colleges and many fewer for the better performers. As with schools, inspection will give more attention to self-evaluation, and the full inspections of colleges will be supplemented by annual assessment visits carried out by HMI. We intend to explore the possibility of involving inspection contractors in these inspections for the first time. We also intend to introduce a programme of surveys of aspects, subjects and curriculum areas.

**3.2 Evaluate access to post-compulsory education and the effects of policy initiatives.** We intend to continue with the current inspections of Connexions and of provision of 14 to 19 education in areas until summer 2005. From September 2005, these inspections will be

subsumed in joint area reviews. We intend to treat youth service inspections similarly, but to enhance the staffing of joint area reviews to evaluate rigorously provision inspected for the first time.

**Targets**

- Complete the current programme of college inspections by summer 2005, and commence a new cycle after that.
- Ensure adequate coverage of provision for the 14 to 19 age group in joint area reviews.

**Children’s Services**

Ofsted will be required, under the Children Bill currently before parliament, to co-ordinate the response of the inspectorates to their new duty to collaborate in the inspection of services relating to the well-being of children and young people at the local level. Ofsted will continue to work with the relevant inspectorates and commissions to develop an integrated programme of joint area reviews (which will subsume LEA inspections), and the DfES intends that each children’s services authority will receive such a review over a three-year period beginning in September 2005. We intend to consult on the framework and arrangements for these reviews, and on how best to capture the view of stakeholders, from December 2004.

Joint area reviews will become our overarching inspection regime and will draw upon the evidence of all our inspections of early years settings, schools and colleges. To facilitate the transfer of data, we are currently carrying out a revision of all our inspection frameworks to ensure a close match between them and to embed the principles of the Children Bill securely in them all.

**Objective 4**

Produce, with other inspectorates and commissions, a framework for inspection of Children’s Services and introduce a programme of joint area reviews from September 2005.

## Programmes

### 4.1 Framework for inspection of Children's Services.

Following a consultation on the framework beginning in December 2004, we intend to publish the framework in spring 2005.

**4.2 Joint area reviews.** We will continue to develop the methodology and arrangements for joint area reviews with our colleagues in the other inspectorates involved. A small number of reviews will be undertaken as pilots in the summer term 2005. The programme will begin fully in September 2005.

#### Targets

- Publish the framework for the inspection of Children's Services in spring 2005.
- Complete the programme of joint area reviews of all areas within three years from September 2005.

## Other educational frameworks

### Teacher training

Working in co-operation with the Teacher Training Agency and the DfES, we shall evaluate the initial training and professional development of those engaged in teaching and related roles, taking account of workforce reform and, in particular, the wider role in schools played by support staff, and the changing needs of schools and the education system.

#### Objective 5

Inspect the provision for the initial training of teachers to work in schools and further education, and the training provided in support of new policy initiatives.

## Programmes

**5.1 Initial teacher training (ITT) inspections.** ITT inspection will be completing the third year of a planned six-year programme by summer 2005. However, new

proposals were agreed with the Teacher Training Agency and the DfES and were the subject of public consultation in summer 2004. From September 2005, the original programme will be replaced by a new six-year programme where all good provision receives a short inspection and where all secondary provision is inspected as a whole rather than in separate subjects. This will result in an even lighter-touch programme than previously.

**5.2 Graduate Teacher Programme.** We are in the second year of a three-year programme of accreditation inspections of all designated recommending bodies for the Graduate Teacher Programme to be completed by the end of 2006.

**5.3 Further education (FE) teacher training.** FE teacher training inspection will be in the first year of a full four-year inspection programme in summer 2005.

**5.4 Evaluation of policy initiatives.** We plan to evaluate the impact of how the school workforce will be remodelled and will include a review of the effectiveness of teachers' continuing professional development.

#### Targets

- Complete the first three years of the original six-year programme of inspections of all ITT providers by summer 2005, and commence the new six-year programme from September 2005.
- Complete accreditation inspections of all designated recommending bodies by July 2006.
- Complete the inspection of all higher education providers of further education teacher training by July 2008.

### Improvement through inspection

Ofsted is committed to the continuing improvement and refinement of its inspection approaches, signalled in other places in this Plan. Equally, we intend to incorporate dissemination strategies into the planning of every inspection exercise to maximise the effect of inspection findings upon the

improvement of education and care provision. This approach will draw on the resources and expertise of all directorates within Ofsted.

### Objective 6

Ensure that Ofsted's data and inspection findings are disseminated and used to make the fullest possible contribution to the inspection process, the improvement of provision and educational debate.

### Target

- Publish HMCI's annual report for the years 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07.

### Programmes

**6.1 School performance indicators.** We shall work with the DfES and other organisations to ensure that best use is made of pupil-level data, inspection grades and other indicators to inform schools, LEAs and inspectors. This will lead to the development of an interactive performance and assessment (PANDA) report. We shall also undertake or commission research that uses inspection data to illuminate educational issues and trends.

**6.2 Improvement through inspection.** We shall disseminate widely the results of our analysis of evidence to inform the education service nationally and locally and promote debate. This will be done principally through HMCI's annual report to parliament; the changes to inspection identified elsewhere in this Plan mean that, during the course of the current strategic period, the format of this report is likely to change significantly. We shall publish, in a wide range of formats, reports resulting from our survey inspections, in which we probe specific issues emerging from inspection evidence, draw together evidence on aspects of education or evaluate policy initiatives. This Plan indicates within different inspection programmes how we see this work developing in the next few years. We shall also develop other strategies to inform the education service of our findings, for example by planning dissemination strategies into the design of exercises and using conferences and seminars to provide opportunities for discussion. HMI already act as external assessors to the educational work of various other bodies.

## Section 2. Organisational performance improvements

### Financial performance

Ofsted's challenge over the three years of this Strategic Plan is to make our inspection and regulation more proportionate and cost-effective, and to improve the efficiency of our back office and support operations. This will enable us to ensure that a higher proportion of Ofsted's resources will go into inspection and regulatory activities. This strategy is in line with the government's wish to redirect resources to front-line services, and will enable us to make the significant cost savings that are required. Approximately 50% of the required savings will come from a lighter-touch approach to inspection, with the remainder coming from internal efficiency and process improvements.

#### Objective 7

Deliver reductions in the overall costs of delivering Ofsted services so that the annual budget is reduced by 20% by the end of March 2008.

#### Programmes

**7.1 'Improving Ofsted' programme.** This programme has been established to co-ordinate all initiatives that are designed to improve Ofsted's inspection and regulatory processes, implement new organisational structures, and deliver efficiency improvements through human resources and financial process changes and the implementation of new information systems. In monitoring these activities, the programme will evaluate the progress being made to ensure that the promised efficiency savings, and consequential cost reductions, are delivered on schedule.

**7.2 Corporate governance and audit.** Ofsted will continue to make improvements to its system of corporate governance, including enhancements to risk management performance. A new investment review process will be established with the remit to evaluate all proposals for the investment of resources to ensure that they deliver the maximum possible benefits and that these decisions are consistent with the

long-term strategy outlined in this Plan.

#### Targets

- Meet targets for annual cost savings that will deliver a 20% reduction in the annual Ofsted budget by the end of March 2008.
- Implement a new investment review process, with the establishment of an Investment Review Committee to impact on decisions for 2005–06.

### Regional delivery

The new approaches to inspection described in this Plan require strong regional delivery. This will be organised through three regions: North, Midlands and South. Each region will have an education division and an early years division, taking responsibility for the delivery of all our inspection and regulatory activities. The organisational changes mean transferring functions to these core regional centres, including corporate services such as HR and finance.

#### Objective 8

By the end of March 2006, complete the establishment of three regions that will be responsible for running all of the Ofsted operations in the North, Midlands and South, together with a smaller, strategic HQ operation.

#### Programme

**8.1 Organisational change.** 'The Improving Ofsted' programme will deliver a major programme of organisational change during the initial years of this Strategic Plan. It is charged with moving resources closer to Ofsted's front line by establishing three core regions (in Manchester, Nottingham and Bristol), each responsible for running the Education Directorate and Early Years Directorate operations in the North, Midlands and South. The changes will also deliver an Ofsted headquarters in London that is smaller than in the past, and which will take the policy lead on all strategic and corporate activities, as well as providing professional advice to senior management and the DfES. The organisational changes will be

implemented in a series of phased stages, with ‘virtual’ regions being operational from April 2005. The regional structures will be fully in place one year later, at the start of the 2006–07 financial year.

**Target**

- Complete by April 2006 the organisational changes that will create fully functioning North, Midlands and South regions, and a new HQ structure.

**Organisational development**

We are committed to responding to Ofsted’s two recent staff surveys by building on existing programmes of activity to ensure that Ofsted operates efficiently and economically and that Ofsted staff have the resources and support they need to do their jobs effectively. These programmes will be realigned with the overall strategy outlined in this Plan to ensure that they continue to deliver the promised benefits.

**Objective 9**

Continue to implement plans that are aimed at improving Ofsted’s performance in four key areas:

- taking pride in Ofsted’s vital role
- developing our culture
- creating space for personal and professional development
- engaging and involving staff.

*Programmes*

**9.1 Home-based working.** The majority of Ofsted’s staff are home based. Activity in this area is designed to enable these staff to work safely, effectively and efficiently. Home-based working eliminates the inconvenience to staff of having to travel regularly to an office, while also allowing Ofsted to invest in supporting our core work rather than in expensive estate. Ofsted has now appointed a home-based working co-ordinator who will lead this programme of activity, with the aim of Ofsted becoming a leading exemplar of an effective organisation with a largely home-based workforce.

**9.2 Personal and professional development.** This programme of work has already seen the introduction of a number of initiatives across Ofsted, including new arrangements for the induction of staff and new programmes covering administrative skills, management and leadership training and development. We shall keep this development programme under constant review during the period of this Plan, to ensure that we can provide the most effective professional development opportunities to our staff as both our organisational structure and the responsibilities of individuals evolve.

**Targets**

- Demonstrate continuing improvements in areas such as leadership and communication through regular staff surveys
- Carry out a third staff survey during the period of this Strategic Plan.

**Administrative efficiency**

A key element of Ofsted’s strategy involves transferring key administrative operations, such as human resources and finance, to the core regional centres in Manchester, Nottingham and Bristol. The Corporate Services staff based in Ofsted’s headquarters will then be focused on developing and implementing policy and strategy. These changes are designed to improve administrative efficiency and will be completed by April 2006.

**Objective 10**

Demonstrate measurable improvements in administrative efficiency by April 2006.

*Programme*

**10.1 Improving administrative efficiency.** Making these improvements across Ofsted will require the acceleration of a number of initiatives that are designed to give managers more control over the resources and management processes that support the delivery of their objectives, while ensuring an appropriate level of consistency across Ofsted.



**Targets**

- Maintain systems to ensure that all correspondence is dealt with within 20 working days
- Reduce levels of sickness absence by 10% by March 2006 and set further reduction targets beyond that.
- Respond to complaints about Ofsted's work within published target times and report information on complaints annually in Ofsted's *Departmental Report*.

## Next steps

This Strategic Plan focuses on major areas of activity and important themes. We have already started the process of building comprehensive and robust business plans for 2005–06 that translate these strategic objectives into tactical plans that will continue to deliver all Ofsted’s services as well as the changes and improvements required by this strategy.

The Ofsted Management Board has identified the risks associated with each of the objectives outlined in this Plan, and has assigned a risk owner to each of them. The existing Ofsted risk register is being updated to reflect any new risks that have been identified and to modify any entries where the impact or probability of a risk has been determined to have changed. Since risk management is an integral part of Ofsted’s business planning process, every activity included in the business plans of each Ofsted division is also assessed for potential risks.

We shall report progress against all the targets in this Strategic Plan in our annual Departmental Reports, which are published at the start of each financial year. We shall update this Strategic Plan on an annual basis each autumn.

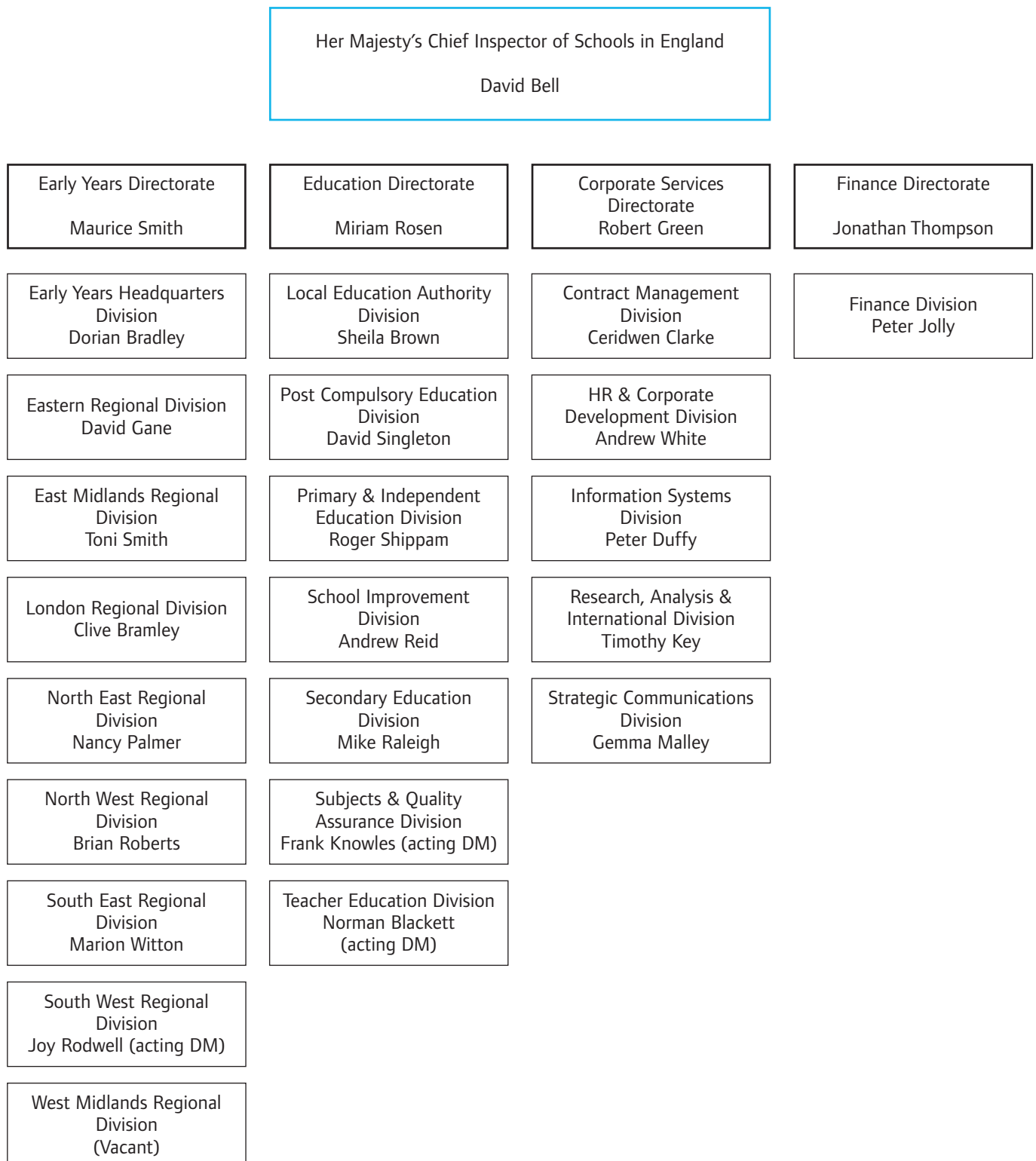
# Annex A. Principles of inspection

The following principles apply to all inspection activities carried out by or on behalf of Ofsted. They are intended to ensure that:

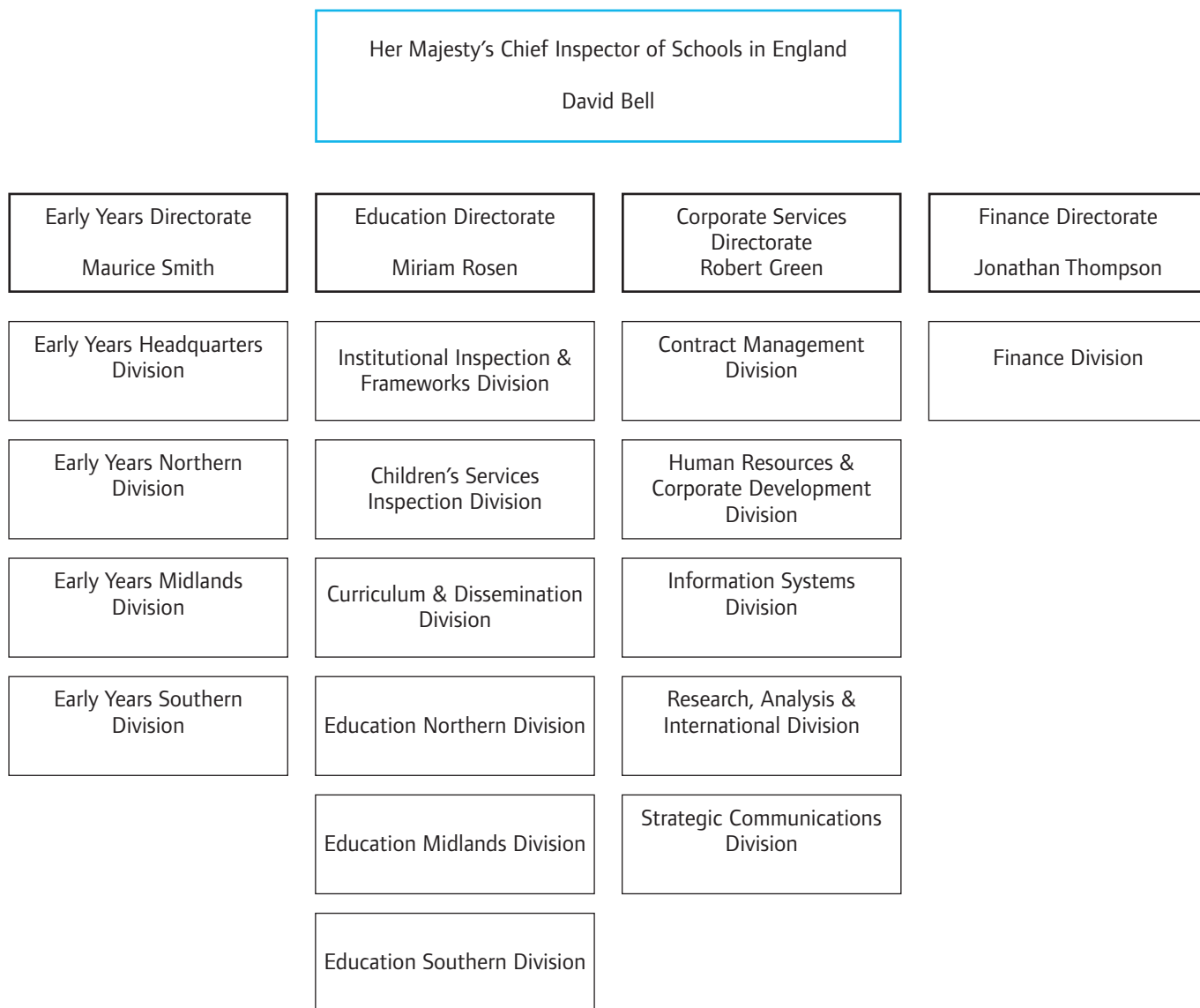
- the findings of inspection contribute to improvement
- the process of inspection promotes inclusion
- inspection is carried out openly with those being inspected
- the findings of inspection are valid, reliable and consistent.

- Inspection acts in the interests of children, young people and adult learners and, where relevant, their parents to encourage high-quality provision that meets diverse needs and promotes equality.
- Inspection is evaluative and diagnostic, assessing quality and compliance and providing a clear basis for improvement.
- The purpose of inspection and the procedures to be used are communicated clearly to those involved.
- Inspection invites and takes account of any self-evaluation by those inspected.
- Inspection will, as far as possible, minimise disturbance to the work of the institution concerned.
- Inspection informs those responsible for taking decisions about provision.
- Inspection is carried out by those who have sufficient and relevant professional expertise and training.
- Evidence is recorded and is of sufficient range and quality to secure and justify judgements.
- Judgements are based on systematic evaluation requirements and criteria, are reached corporately where more than one inspector is involved and reflect a common understanding in Ofsted about quality.
- Effectiveness is central to judging the quality of provision and processes.
- Inspection includes clear and helpful oral feedback and leads to written reporting that evaluates performance and quality and identifies strengths and areas for improvement.
- The work of all inspectors reflects Ofsted's stated Values and Code of Conduct.
- Quality assurance is built into all inspection activities to ensure that these principles are met and inspection is improved.

# Annex B. Senior management structure (at October 2004)



# Annex C. Senior management structure (from April 2005)



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