



OFFICE FOR STANDARDS
IN EDUCATION

INSPECTING SUBJECTS AND ASPECTS 11-18

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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INSPECTING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

As an inspector of equal opportunities, you need to report on the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils, highlighting where the school's provision does not match all the pupils' needs. You judge how effective the school is in raising standards, or maintaining them where they are high, and in promoting good personal, community and race relations. You evaluate the extent to which the school provides equal opportunities for all its pupils to learn and make progress.

This guidance deals specifically with gender and minority ethnic groups, including refugees and Travelling children, but the requirements apply across all groups, including high attaining pupils. Issues relating to special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language are included in other parts of *Inspecting subjects and aspects 11-18*.

The *Framework* applies to **all** pupils in the school¹.

Inspectors must ensure the full range of age, gender, attainment, special educational needs, ethnicity and background is taken into account, including the provision for, and attainment of, pupils for whom English is an additional language.

ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS

Interpreting data

- Make use of **national data** on the performance of boys and girls and any **analysis of test and examination results** which the school or the local education authority has carried out, and establish any significant differences between different groups of pupils, both in the overall results and in particular subjects.

In considering the relative performance of boys and girls and of different minority ethnic groups, including refugees and Travelling children, take into account any explanations which the school offers for the differences.

Using evidence from observations

- Evaluate what is achieved by different groups of pupils, using the evidence from **direct observation** of lessons, **looking at** written work, **talking with** pupils, and consulting teachers' **records**. See if there are differences in progress or patterns in the strengths and weaknesses apparent.
- In the light of these findings, judge how effective the school is in its educational provision for the groups in question.

¹ There is also specific legislation directly related to equal opportunities - Sex Discrimination Act, 1975; Race Relations Act 1976 and Disability Discrimination Act 1995. See also DfEE Circulars 11/96 and 12/96.

*The part played by the school and its teachers will be assessed in the relevant sections of the report, such as **teaching** and **leadership and management**.*

ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOUR, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND ATTENDANCE

- Be alert to any over-representation of girls, boys or of different minority ethnic groups in relation to **exclusions** and **attendance**.

Here the evidence will come from data and analyses provided by the school and/or the local education authority.

- In **lessons**, evaluate whether there are differences in pupils' attitudes to work or towards one another.
- Find out whether there are issues such as sexual or racial harassment, bullying and hostile behaviour.

The evidence may come from parents, from school records and from behaviour and attitudes around the school.

- Explore the **reasons** for any differences or difficulties identified above, and see if the school's explanations have been translated into effective action.
- Find out whether the school has **systematic monitoring** procedures and **responds effectively** to incidents of sexual and racial harassment, bullying and hostile behaviour.

TEACHING

- Focus on the extent to which the teaching provides equal opportunities. Consider whether:
 - teaching methods and organisation engage all pupils and or leave some out;
 - teachers' style, language and questioning in the classroom include all pupils equally;
 - teachers have high expectations of all pupils - for example, in the progress they should make or in the completion of work in the time available;
 - teachers choose suitable resources, which are used effectively as a stimulus to learning and reflect sensitivity to different groups, cultures and backgrounds, so as not to demotivate them through offensive images or stereotypes;
 - teachers are effective in challenging stereotypes and what are thought to be stereotypical activities - for example, by encouraging girls in physical sciences and boys in reading and the affective aspects of English;
 - the school has reviewed its teaching arrangements in relation to variations in learning and attainment, and whether any changes that have occurred are beneficial.

CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

- Be alert to evidence that:
 - positive attitudes are promoted both through the curriculum and in the general life of the school;
 - any features of curriculum planning, content or assessment advantage or disadvantage different groups - for example, vocational courses which are gender biased;
 - there is any inequality of access to the curriculum, courses and extra-curricular activities;
 - the school monitors the involvement of different groups across the range of activities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- Evaluate the extent to which there is an effective policy for equal opportunities, in as much as the school:
 - is aware of the needs of different pupils and monitors and evaluates the performance of girls and boys and of different groups of pupils;
 - responds effectively to different patterns of attainment and progress, behaviour, attitudes and attendance, and has ways of raising pupils' performance, aspirations or self-esteem - these might include the use of homework centres and support or after-school activities and other initiatives;
 - monitors and reviews its policy and supports it with staff development, to heighten awareness of differences in need and to promote the raising of achievement for all pupils;
 - affirms and supports ethnic, cultural, religious and social diversity and successfully promotes good personal, community and race relations.

ISSUES RELATING TO PARTICULAR GROUPS

Gender

- Evaluate whether there are equal opportunities in that:
 - the school has effective arrangements regarding the pupils' use of space both inside the building and outdoors, so that boys and girls have equal access to social and play spaces - for example, that boys do not dominate the playground for games;
 - guidance given on subject choices and careers encourages pupils to consider non-stereotypical opportunities;

- the school takes account of the need for positive role models when inviting speakers and representatives into school and promoting specific initiatives such as 'mentoring' or 'work shadowing' through employers and other links;
- gender issues are considered when preparing for work experience and following it up;
- pupils, whether girls or boys, may discuss personal and family relationships and learn about the skills of parenthood.

Minority ethnic groups, including refugees

■ Be alert to whether:

- the arrangements for linking with parents and involving them directly in the work of the school meet the particular needs of pupils and parents from minority ethnic groups, including refugees;
- the links established with the wider community are beneficial to the pupils;
- the school works effectively with other local services and agencies to support pupils from minority ethnic groups including refugees.

■ In those schools receiving additional grants such as Single Regeneration Budget, Section 11², and Section 488 funding³, evaluate:

- the effectiveness and efficiency of the arrangements in providing extra learning support;
- how well the support interrelates with the school's provision, in particular its teaching, curriculum and assessment;
- how well the school assesses the impact of the support on standards achieved.

Travelling children

'Travelling children' and 'Travelling communities' include Gypsy Travellers, Fairground families (or Show people), Circus families, New Travellers, Bargees and other families living on boats. Each community has its own distinctive life style and traditions. It is not intended that the use of specific

² Section 11 of the 1966 Local Government Act empowers the Home Secretary to pay grants to Local Authorities and other institutions to support the cost of employing additional staff to help minority ethnic groups overcome linguistic and other barriers which inhibit their access to and take-up of mainstream services. Since 1995, some of this funding has been administered by the Single Regeneration Budget co-ordinated by the Department of the Environment. Aimed originally at pupils with origins in the New Commonwealth, it can now be used by all pupils who have additional language support needs. Many refugees fall into this category.

³ Section 488 Specific Grant for Travellers and Displaced Persons, 1996 Education Act

or general terms should contribute to any stereotypical definitions, and no intention to offend should be inferred from the use of any of these terms⁴.

- Assess whether these children have unhindered access to schooling and are integrated fully into mainstream education.

This needs to be done, even though the numbers of Travelling children in school may be small.

- Evaluate these issues:

- in relation to **behaviour and attendance**, how well Travelling children are integrated into the school and what use the school makes of the Traveller Education Services to encourage the registration and attendance of Travelling children;
- as part of its **curriculum** provision, whether the school make effective use of distance learning packs and other resources for Travelling children to support pupils' continuous learning;
- how the school ensures effective continuity of learning through its **assessment** procedures and by its use of the record transfer (Green Card⁵) and how expeditiously the school works to secure the entitlement of Travelling children with special educational needs;
- the steps the school takes to affirm Gypsy and Traveller cultures, to share and broaden experiences of all pupils as part of its provision for **spiritual, moral, social and cultural education** and to acquire good resources and information;
- in relation to **support, guidance and pupils' welfare**, how effective the arrangements are for responding to the needs of Travelling children, particularly in the provision of sex education, playground supervision and contacts with brothers and sisters, school uniform and transport, involvement in school trips, and the wearing of jewellery;
- regarding **partnership with parents and the community**, how well the school involves parents and Travelling communities in an effective partnership and has a realistic notion of what this involves to promote mutual trust and respect in supporting the needs of parents of Travelling children;
- under **leadership and management**, the extent to which the school recognises that the educational responsibility for pupils rests not with the Traveller Education Services but with the school, and has established a shared approach to policy and practice in its use of support;

⁴ Inspectors seeking more information about the history, culture and educational opportunities of the Travelling communities should consult the report "The Education of Travelling Children" from OHMCI, published in March 1996 and available from OFSTED publications.

⁵ Record Transfer 'Green Card' for Travelling pupils, introduced by the DfEE in 1992, given to Travelling parents for each of their school-aged children. Every time Travelling parents register their children with a school the card is stamped with the school's name and address, enabling the next school to obtain the child's educational records more speedily than would otherwise be the case.

- the effectiveness and **efficiency** with which additional funds and specific school initiatives are used in providing extra support for Travelling children and their families.

In discharging their duty to make education available to all school-aged children resident in their areas, whether permanently or temporarily, most local education authorities are assisted by grant. This funding is used to support Traveller Education Services, which employ peripatetic teachers, classroom assistants and specialist educational welfare officers (sometimes known as home-school liaison officers) to work directly with Travelling children and their families and the schools which the children attend. Other agreed expenditure includes books and equipment, staff and pupil transport and uniform and other grants.

Generally, the most efficient model of staff deployment is one which maintains a team of peripatetic teachers and classroom assistants, thus allowing staff to move between schools in response to the changing needs of Travellers residing in the area or moving into it.

ABOUT THIS BOOKLET

This is one of a set of booklets which make up *Inspecting subjects and aspects 11-18*. The set consists of:

- an introductory booklet, *General guidance*, which is for all inspectors who evaluate the work of secondary age pupils - it is mainly about inspecting subjects;
- separate booklets on inspecting specific subjects and aspects; the contents page of *General guidance* shows the subjects and aspects which have booklets.

The main points in the *General guidance* are summarised in each subject, but if you are inspecting the work of secondary age pupils you should read the introductory booklet so that you are fully in the picture of what you have to do.

The contents of all the booklets are on the Internet and can be accessed from OFSTED's website [<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk>]. This will allow you to obtain guidance for individual subjects or aspects.

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