

# School inspection handbook

Handbook for inspecting schools in England under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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This handbook provides instructions and guidance for inspectors conducting inspections under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. It sets out what inspectors must do and what schools can expect, and provides guidance for inspectors on making their judgements.

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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## Introduction

1. This handbook describes the main activities undertaken by inspectors conducting inspections of schools in England under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 from September 2013. It also sets out the judgements that inspectors will make and on which they will report.
2. The schools subject to section 5 inspection are:
  - community, foundation and voluntary schools
  - community and foundation special schools
  - pupil referral units
  - maintained nursery schools
  - academies, including sponsor-led academies, academy converter schools, academy special schools, free schools, special free schools, alternative provision free schools, university technical colleges (UTCs), and studio schools<sup>1</sup>
  - city technology colleges and city technology colleges for the technology of the arts
  - certain non-maintained special schools approved by the Secretary of State under section 342 of the Education Act 1996.
3. For boarding and residential special schools, an inspection of the boarding or residential provision<sup>2</sup> will be integrated with the school inspection wherever possible. The inspection of the boarding or residential provision will follow the *Framework for inspecting boarding and residential provision in schools*<sup>3</sup> and the guidance set out in *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools*.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 16-19 academies, 16-19 UTCs and 16-19 studio schools are **not** inspected under this framework. They are inspected under the common inspection framework.

<sup>2</sup> The inspection of the boarding/residential provision will be conducted under The Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools or residential special schools, as appropriate.

<sup>3</sup> *Framework for inspecting boarding and residential provision in schools (110095)*, Ofsted, 2013, [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110095](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110095)

<sup>4</sup> *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools (100180)*, Ofsted, 2013; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100180](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100180).

4. The handbook has two parts.
  - **Part 1 – How schools will be inspected:** this contains instructions and guidance for inspectors on the preparation for and conduct of school inspections.
  - **Part 2 – The evaluation schedule:** this contains guidance for inspectors on judging the quality of education provided by the schools they inspect, and provides an indication of the main types of evidence they collect and analyse.

## Part 1: How schools will be inspected

### Before the inspection

#### Inspectors' planning and preparation

5. The lead inspector must prepare for the inspection by gaining a broad overview of the school's recent performance and how this may have changed since the last section 5 inspection. The outcomes of this preparation must be summarised on evidence forms (EFs).
  6. Inspectors must use all available evidence to develop an initial picture of the school's academic performance. Planning for the inspection must be informed by analysis of:
    - the previous inspection report
    - the findings of any recent Ofsted survey and/or monitoring letters
    - responses from Parent View<sup>5</sup> (Ofsted's online survey available for parents)<sup>6</sup>
    - issues raised by, or the findings from, the investigation of any qualifying complaints<sup>7</sup> about the school
- information available from the provider information portal<sup>8</sup> (inspectors do not investigate individual complaints but they must consider any wider issues raised by the complaint)<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

<sup>6</sup> Parents refers to mothers, fathers and/or carers.

<sup>7</sup> Ofsted has specific powers (under section 11A-C) of the Education Act 2005 to investigate certain complaints known as qualifying complaints. Further guidance is available at <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/complaints-ofsted-about-schools-guidance-for-parents>.

<sup>8</sup> The provider information portal (PIP) displays a high level view for Ofsted inspectors of information about providers we inspect and regulate.

<sup>9</sup> Further guidance for inspectors on obtaining complaints and concerns about a school in preparation of an inspection can be found in the guidance issued by the National Complaints Team, *Inspector*

- information available on the school's website, which may include a prospectus and other information for parents
  - data from RAISEonline, the school data dashboard<sup>10</sup>, the sixth form performance and assessment (PANDA) report, the Level 3 Value Added (L3VA) data<sup>11</sup> and available data about success rates.
7. The lead inspector should prepare and distribute brief joining instructions for the inspection team. These should include:
    - essential information about the school and the timings for the inspection
    - a brief analysis of the pre-inspection information, including important areas to be followed up
    - an outline of inspection activity for the first day – for example planned lesson observations and any meetings with pupils or staff; this will be finalised once on site.
  8. Lead inspectors should deploy their inspection team members as they see fit. All members of the inspection team must contribute to the evaluation of each of the four key judgements and come to a collective view about the quality of the education provided by the school.
  9. The lead inspector should plan sufficient time for holding team meetings and providing feedback to the school to ensure that the inspection is concluded on time.
  10. The inspection of boarding or residential provision in a school is undertaken by one or more social care inspectors. Contact between the education and social care inspectors should take place on the preparation day. Guidance on pre-inspection activity and notification arrangements for integrated inspections is set out in *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools*.<sup>12</sup>
  11. Certain types of schools (such as faith, Steiner and Montessori schools) exist as maintained or independent schools. When inspecting such maintained provisions, inspectors should familiarise themselves with the background

*guidance for obtaining complaints and concerns information held by Ofsted in preparation for school inspections.*

<sup>10</sup> <http://dashboard.ofsted.gov.uk/> (guidance on the use of the school data dashboard is available on this link as well)

<sup>11</sup> For more information refer to *Level 3 Value Added (L3VA) briefing*; Ofsted, 2013; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/briefings-and-information-for-use-during-inspections-of-maintained-schools-and-academies-september-2>.

<sup>12</sup> *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools* (100180), Ofsted, 2013; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100180](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100180).

information to these types of schools, which can be found in the guidance document *Types of independent schools*<sup>13</sup>.

### **The views of parents of registered pupils**

12. Inspectors have a statutory duty to have regard to the views of parents. The principal source of information that inspectors will use to access the views of parents is Parent View. Inspectors will also take account of the results of any surveys carried out by the school or commissioned by the school. Schools should encourage parents to complete Parent View by placing a link on their website to the Parent View website: <http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>. Where the response rate for Parent View is low, inspectors must take steps, during the inspection, to gather further evidence of the views of parents.

### **Notification and introduction**

13. The lead inspector will normally inform the school at, or just after, midday on the working day before the start of the inspection. Lead inspectors should bear in mind that they may not get through to the school immediately. They should reserve sufficient time to ensure that they make direct contact during the afternoon.
14. If the headteacher is unavailable, the lead inspector should ask to speak to the most senior member of staff available. Once the lead inspector has spoken to the school and is able to confirm that the inspection will take place, s/he will inform the inspection service provider (ISP), who will send formal confirmation to the school by email.
15. The purpose of the lead inspector's notification call is to:
  - inform the school of the inspection
  - make the school aware of its statutory duty to inform parents of the inspection, and that Parent View is the main vehicle for gathering the views of parents at the point of inspection; inspectors should remind the school that Ofsted's letter to parents containing the link to Parent View may be sent electronically as well as a paper copy sent via 'pupil post'
  - make arrangements for the inspection; this includes an invitation to the headteacher to participate in joint observations and main inspection team meetings
  - make arrangements for discussions with key staff
  - make arrangements for a meeting with the chair of governors and/or representatives of those responsible for governance, and request that as many governors as possible are present at the feedback meeting

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/types-of-independent-schools>

- request either a face-to-face meeting or a telephone call with a representative from the local authority, academy chain or other responsible body; this does not apply to stand-alone academy converters
  - request that, where possible, a representative from the local authority, academy chain or other responsible body is present at the inspection feedback; this does not apply to stand-alone academy converters
  - establish whether the school has any pupils who attend off-site alternative provision, either on a full or part-time basis
  - invite the school to provide a summary of its self-evaluation (if available)
  - request that relevant school documents, (see paragraph 17 below), are made available as soon as possible from the start of the inspection
  - provide an opportunity for the school to ask any questions.
16. The telephone call is an important opportunity to initiate a professional relationship between the lead inspector and the headteacher. It should be short and focused on practical issues. Inspectors should not use this conversation to probe or investigate the school's self-evaluation.
17. Inspectors should also request that the following information is made available at the start of the inspection:
- a summary of any school self-evaluation (if not already provided to the lead inspector)
  - the current school improvement plan
  - school timetable, staff list and times for the school day
  - any information about pre-planned interruptions to normal school routines during the inspection
  - the single central record, which summarises the checks and vetting of all staff working with pupils
  - all logs that record exclusions, pupils taken off roll, incidents of poor behaviour, racist incidents and incidents of bullying, including homophobic bullying
  - details of any off-site units run by the school or in partnership with other schools
  - details about the school's use of alternative provision
  - up-to-date attendance information
  - records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching
  - information about the school's performance management arrangements, including the most recent performance management outcomes and their relationship to salary progression. Inspectors should make it clear that this must be provided in an anonymised format



- documented evidence of the work of governors<sup>14</sup> and their impact
- reports arising from any external evaluation of the school.

### **Requests for deferral**

18. If a school requests a deferral of its inspection the lead inspector must make Ofsted aware. Ofsted will decide whether this should be granted in accordance with its policy on the deferral of inspections.<sup>15</sup> The deferral policy makes clear that the absence of the headteacher is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.

### **Informing parents of the inspection**

19. When the ISP sends confirmation of the inspection to the school by email, this will include a letter which gives formal notification of the inspection for parents. The school must make every effort and take such steps as are reasonably practicable to notify all parents of registered pupils, using this letter. In addition, the school should also be encouraged to notify parents using its own electronic systems (such as SMS messages) where available. The letter will invite parents to give their views about the school to the lead inspector and will provide them with the following information:
  - the website address for Parent View
  - how to communicate, or request a meeting, with the inspection team.

## **During the inspection**

### **The start of the on-site inspection**

20. Inspectors must show their identity badges on arrival and ensure that the headteacher (or other senior member of staff) has been informed of their arrival. Inspectors should ensure that inspection activity starts promptly.
21. The lead inspector should meet briefly with the headteacher and/or senior leadership team at the beginning of the inspection to:
  - introduce team inspectors, if there is more than one inspector
  - make arrangements for a longer meeting at a convenient time with the headteacher to discuss the school's self-evaluation and other relevant matters

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<sup>14</sup> 'Governors' refers to those responsible for governance in a school. They may be part of a school's local board, committee or governing body

<sup>15</sup> *Deferral of school inspections, information for schools*, Ofsted, 2012;  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/deferral-of-inspections-information-for-schools](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/deferral-of-inspections-information-for-schools).

- confirm arrangements for meetings with representatives of those responsible for the governance of the school and with key staff
  - confirm arrangements for providing feedback after lesson observations
  - request information about 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 capability 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 capability/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management.
22. Where there is more than one inspector, a short team meeting should take place to clarify inspection activities, the initial areas to be explored and individual roles and responsibilities.

### **Gathering and recording evidence**

23. Inspectors must spend as much time as possible gathering evidence on teaching and learning, observing lessons, scrutinising work (including in pupils' books and writing), talking to pupils about their work, gauging their understanding and their engagement in learning, and obtaining pupils' perceptions of typical teaching.
24. Inspectors must record their evidence clearly and legibly on EFs, ensuring that all relevant sections of the form are completed for all evidence-gathering activities. This includes records of analyses of data and the evidence that underpins key judgements. EFs should also be used to summarise the main points of discussion when feeding back to leaders and governors.
25. EFs may be scrutinised for the purposes of retrieval and quality assurance monitoring and in the event of a complaint. It is important that inspectors record accurately the time spent gathering the evidence recorded on the EF. Inspectors should highlight or identify any information that was provided 'in confidence'.

### **Lesson observations**

26. The key objective of lesson observations is to evaluate the quality of teaching and its contribution to learning, particularly in the core subjects. Inspectors must not advocate a particular method of teaching or show preference towards a specific lesson structure. As such, inspectors will not look for a preferred methodology but must record aspects of teaching that are effective and identify ways in which teaching and learning can be improved. Through lesson observations and subsequent discussions with senior staff and teachers, inspectors should ensure that they:
- judge the accuracy of teachers' and leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning

- gather evidence about how well individual pupils and particular groups of pupils are learning and making progress, including those with special needs, those for whom the pupil premium provides support and the most able, and assess the extent to which pupils have grown in knowledge
  - collect sufficient evidence to support detailed and specific recommendations about any improvements needed to teaching and learning.
- 27. Inspectors will not expect teachers to prepare lesson plans for the inspection. However, they will use the evidence gathered from lesson observations to help judge the overall quality of the school's curriculum planning.
- 28. There are many different strategies for lesson observations. Lead inspectors should not be constrained by a single approach, but should use their professional judgement to plan an appropriate lesson observation strategy. For example, inspectors may engage in:
  - short visits to a number of lessons, spending a few minutes in each
  - short observations of small group teaching, for example of phonics
  - lesson observations of more than 25 minutes, during which they may observe activities and talk with pupils about their work
  - tracking a class or specific group of pupils to assess their experience of a school day or part of a school day – inspectors may identify a class or classes that contain one or more pupils from the specific groups identified in the pre-inspection analysis. In this way, the experience, progress and learning of these pupils can be judged within the context of other pupils' experience.
- 29. Joint observations carried out with the headteacher and/or senior staff may be part of lesson observation within any of these approaches. Not all teachers will necessarily be observed. This will be the case in most secondary school inspections.
- 30. The lead inspector should share the lesson observation strategy with the inspection team and ensure that the school clearly understands the rationale for it. Lesson observations should cover a range of subjects, key stages and ability groups. The school should not normally be informed in advance about the lessons to be observed.
- 31. When inspectors carry out lesson observations, they should grade, where possible, key judgements such as achievement and teaching, indicating in particular the growth in students' knowledge and the quality of their learning. Judgements made through shorter observations will relate to the part of the lesson observed. For short observations, inspectors might not award grades, but should use the evidence they have gathered to inform the overall evaluation of teaching.

32. As noted above, inspectors must not advocate a particular approach to teaching or planning lessons. It is for the school to determine how best to teach and engage pupils to secure their good learning.

### **Participation of the headteacher or senior staff in joint lesson observations**

33. The lead inspector should invite the headteacher or a senior member of staff to take part in joint lesson observations. After a joint observation, the inspector and headteacher or senior member of staff must discuss their views about the quality of teaching and learning they have observed. If the headteacher or senior member of staff offers a written record, the inspector should consider this. Any differences in the analysis of the lesson and the judgements should be explored. The joint observation and subsequent discussion will allow the inspector to engage in a professional dialogue with the headteacher or senior member of staff. It will also enable the inspector to:

- assess the accuracy and quality of the school's monitoring and evaluation of teaching
- collect evidence in order to make specific recommendations about further improvements to teaching and learning
- discuss the effectiveness of the school's performance management arrangements and professional development programme for teaching staff
- help the headteacher to understand the judgements inspectors are making on the quality of teaching and how it might be improved.

34. The lead inspector should be mindful not to overload the headteacher and/or senior member of staff. The number of joint observations will be at the discretion of the lead inspector.
35. In most cases, the senior member of staff involved in the joint observation will give feedback. The inspector should observe the feedback, as this may provide evidence about the standard of discussion about teacher practice in the school, and the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for professional development and performance management.
36. The inspector should complete an EF on the lesson observed and the feedback. Any notes taken by the headteacher or senior member of staff should remain in the school; they are not included within the evidence base for the inspection.

### **Feedback and discussion with teachers and other staff**

37. With the exception of dual observations, where feedback is given by the headteacher or senior member of staff, inspectors must offer feedback to teachers. If the observation has been for 25 minutes or more, the feedback will take place at a time when the inspector and teacher/member of staff can discuss specific points that have been noted during the observation. If the observation is for less time than this, the feedback will not be extensive.

38. Feedback should address the main strengths and weaknesses identified during the observation, focusing on pupils' learning and the teacher's contribution to it, including the teaching judgement where one has been made.
39. Inspectors might also discuss:
- the context and content of the whole lesson
  - how the lesson fits into a sequence or programme of lessons
  - associated teaching and learning activities used by the teacher
  - how professional development has improved the quality of teaching
  - the extent to which leaders' monitoring of teaching has identified needs and provided targeted pedagogical guidance and support for teachers
  - the nature and impact of performance management.

### **Inspecting the teaching of literacy and mathematics**

40. Inspectors will consider the impact of teaching and outcomes across the range of the school's provision and will use the evidence they gather to inform the overall evaluation of pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching, and the impact of leadership and management on raising standards. When making the key judgements, inspectors will give particular attention to the teaching of literacy (including reading) and mathematics.

### **Literacy<sup>16</sup>**

41. Literacy includes the key skills of reading, writing and oral communication that enable pupils to access different areas of the curriculum. Inspectors should give attention to pupils' writing and communication skills, as well as their reading skills. They should also consider the extent to which the school intervenes to provide support for pupils, especially those that are at risk of underachieving.

### **Hearing children read**

42. Inspectors must listen to, among others, lower attaining pupils reading during the inspections of infant, junior, primary and middle schools and should discuss their reading with them. Inspectors will hear the weakest readers in Key Stage 1 and later years. There may be occasions when inspectors need to hear lower attaining pupils read in Years 7 and 8 in secondary schools. This is to find out how effectively the school is teaching reading to its weakest readers.
43. Inspectors should decide which pupils they will listen to, taking into account the school's progress data on reading and other information such as lesson

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<sup>16</sup> Please refer to the guidance for inspectors: *Getting them reading early* (110122), Ofsted 2011; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110122](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110122); *Reading, writing and communication (literacy)* (110125), Ofsted 2011; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110125](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110125).

observations. Inspectors should hear children read from books that are appropriate to their age, including from previously unseen books.

44. Wherever possible, inspectors should listen to children reading within a classroom or in an open area with which pupils are familiar.

### **Mathematics<sup>17</sup>**

45. When evaluating the effectiveness of a school's work in mathematics through the analysis of performance data, observations of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, inspectors will consider:
- how well the school is identifying and tackling inconsistency in the quality of mathematics teaching between different groups of pupils, key stages, sets and classes, including those taught by non-specialist teachers of mathematics in secondary schools
  - how well teaching, in the mathematics lessons observed and through discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work:
    - fosters mathematical understanding of new concepts and methods – this includes teachers' explanations and the way they require pupils to think and reason for themselves
    - helps pupils to apply the mathematical knowledge and skills they have been taught, by solving a variety of mathematical problems
  - how well pupils apply their mathematical skills across the curriculum.
46. Inspectors should evaluate the school's approach to early entry for GCSE mathematics and its impact on achievement and subsequent curriculum pathways. Inspectors should challenge the use of inappropriate early and multiple entry to GCSE examinations, including where pupils stop studying mathematics before the end of Year 11.

### **The use of data on inspection**

47. Inspectors should use a range of data to judge a school's performance, including that found in RAISEonline, the school data dashboard and examination or key stage results where available. No single measure or indicator determines judgements, particularly since much data are historical and relate to pupils that have left the school.
48. The data, including that provided by the school, should be used to:

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<sup>17</sup> Please refer to *Mathematics: made to measure* (110159), Ofsted 2012; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110159](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110159).

- check the accuracy of the school's assessment of pupils' progress and attainment levels, particularly where there are no externally marked test or examination results
- check the robustness and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation, particularly on achievement, teaching, and behaviour and safety.

### **Other observations**

49. Inspectors must ensure that they observe pupils in a range of situations outside normal lessons to evaluate aspects of behaviour and safety, for example:
- at the start and finish of the school day
  - during lunchtime, including in the dining hall, and break or play times
  - during assemblies and tutor periods
  - when moving between lessons.

### **Meetings with pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders**

50. Inspectors must take advantage of opportunities to gather evidence from pupils during the school day, for example in formal meetings and informally before and after school, at lunchtime and during break or play times. When engaging with pupils in lessons, inspectors should be mindful not to disrupt the flow of teaching and any activities taking place.
51. Inspectors must gather evidence from a wide range of pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those for whom the pupil premium provides support, pupils who are receiving other forms of support and the most able.
52. As well as meeting pupils, inspectors are highly likely to conduct meetings with:
- parents (these may be informal at the start and end of the day)
  - staff
  - or other stakeholders.
53. These meetings must take place without the presence of the headteacher or senior staff. In drawing on evidence from meetings with pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders, every endeavour must be made not to identify individuals. There may, however, be circumstances in which it is not possible to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewee. Inspectors have a duty to pass on disclosures which raise child protection or safeguarding issues and/or where there are concerns about serious misconduct or criminal activity.

## Meeting with governors

54. Inspectors will always seek to meet with governors, or members of the school's local board, committee or other authority where schools are combined in managed groups, federations or chains, during the course of the inspection.
55. Inspectors will expect governors to know about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Inspectors will expect school governors to be familiar with, and understand, performance data, including the information that the school data dashboard presents for their school.
56. The contribution of governors to the school is evaluated as part of the judgement on leadership and management. As with the meetings between inspectors and pupils, parents and staff, meetings with governors should take place without the presence of the headteacher or senior staff.

## Obtaining the views of registered parents and other stakeholders

57. Inspectors must obtain the views of registered parents at the school. Parent View, an online survey, is the primary means of obtaining their views. However, inspectors should take account of results of any other surveys carried out by the school, or commissioned by the school, in addition to results from Parent View. Inspectors must not come to any final conclusions on the basis of the Parent View survey data alone.
58. Inspectors will review the evidence from Parent View, and any other evidence from parents, towards the end of the first day on site and check Parent View responses again on the second day to ensure that all on-line responses received during the inspection are taken into account. Where individual parents raise serious issues, these should be followed up with the school.
59. Inspectors must also have regard to the views of pupils and staff when making their judgements. Data from surveys of parents, pupils or staff should be corroborated with other evidence.
60. During integrated inspections of boarding or residential special schools, social care inspectors will take account of the views that parents have given on Parent View about the school's boarding or residential provision. Views of boarders or residential pupils and boarding staff will have been gathered through Ofsted's annual point-in-time surveys<sup>18</sup>.
61. Inspectors may wish to speak to key partners who work with the school. They should make every effort to telephone or meet with those institutions where pupils are taught off-site to help assess the school's quality assurance

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<sup>18</sup> See *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools*, Ofsted, 2013 (110166): [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100180](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100180)



arrangements. They must evaluate the rigour with which the school monitors the attendance, behaviour, learning and progress of pupils attending alternative provision.<sup>19</sup>

### **Performance management and professional development**

62. Inspectors should consider how effectively senior leaders use performance management and the school's self-evaluation to focus professional development activities. This should include:

- analysis of the impact of professional development on teaching, and on specific teachers
- scrutiny of anonymised information on the performance management of teaching staff, and its relationship to salary progression, provided to those responsible for the governance of the school
- information about the performance management of the headteacher
- discussions with the headteacher, governors, senior and middle leaders, and other staff
- scrutiny of the school's records of lesson observations
- evidence of improvements in teaching over time and improvement in systems for tracking, monitoring and analysing the impact of teaching on progress
- scrutiny of the school's records on, and evaluation of, professional development
- evaluation of the support and professional development provided for newly qualified teachers and other teachers who are in the early stages of their careers
- analysis of information from staff questionnaires, where available.

### **How the headteacher or representative is involved in the inspection**

63. The lead inspector should meet the headteacher periodically throughout the inspection to:

- provide an update on emerging issues, including the identification of any inadequate teaching, and enable further evidence to be provided
- allow the headteacher to raise concerns, including those related to the conduct of the inspection or of individual inspectors
- alert the headteacher to any serious concerns.

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<sup>19</sup> See *Subsidiary guidance*, Ofsted, 2014 (110166): [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110166](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110166)

64. The outcomes of all meetings with the headteacher should be recorded on an EF.
65. The lead inspector should ensure that the executive headteacher, where such arrangements exist, is invited to make a contribution to the inspection.

### **Team meetings held during the inspection**

66. The inspection team should meet briefly at different points during the course of the inspection. In particular, the team should:
  - meet briefly at lunchtime on day one
  - meet at the end of day one to discuss emerging findings (the headteacher should be invited)
  - meet at the end of day two to finalise judgements and identify areas for improvement (the headteacher should be invited)
  - record the outcomes of all team meetings on EFs.
67. If, by the end of day one, there is evidence that the school may be judged as 'inadequate', the lead inspector should alert the headteacher to this possibility. It must be emphasised that final judgements are not made until the final team meeting at the end of day two.

### **Reaching final judgements**

68. Inspection activity, including lesson observations, should continue throughout the second day. The team should also ensure that time is set aside to complete any feedback to staff, and to prepare for the final team meeting and the final feedback. There also should be sufficient time planned for the team to meet, to consider the evidence available, and make final judgements. Final judgement grades should be recorded and key points for feedback should be identified as the meeting progresses.

### **Providing feedback to the school**

69. Following the end of the inspection, there must be a brief feedback meeting that includes the headteacher, where possible. Attendees at this feedback meeting should include as many representatives from the governing body, or those responsible for governance, as possible. It is for the lead inspector to decide, following discussion with the headteacher, whether other senior staff should be present. A representative from the local authority and/or the designated responsible body should be invited by the headteacher.
70. The lead inspector should explain to those present that the purpose of the feedback session is to share the main findings of the inspection and recommendations for improvement. The lead inspector must make clear that inspection outcomes are confidential to the school until it receives the final report. Governors and local authority representatives may seek clarification

about the judgements, but discussion should not be lengthy. Any feedback or comments should be in the form of professional and objective language, and should not include informal remarks that may be personally damaging to the reputation of a member of staff or to the professionalism of the inspectors. An EF should be completed by an inspector summarising the key points raised at the feedback.

71. In the event that the headteacher has declined, or has been unable to take up, the opportunities to engage with the inspection team, the lead inspector should prepare a more extended formal feedback meeting. In such circumstances, the lead inspector should inform the headteacher of the main findings in advance of the extended formal feedback meeting.
72. Where the school is judged as 'requires improvement', inspectors should indicate that Ofsted has published a report *Getting to good: how headteachers achieve success*<sup>20</sup>, which sets out the strategies used in schools that have moved from satisfactory to good or better. Inspectors should also direct schools to the guidance on *Monitoring visits and support for schools that require improvement*<sup>21</sup>.
73. Before leaving, the lead inspector must ensure that the school is clear:
  - about the grades awarded for each key judgement
  - that the grades are provisional and may be subject to change as a result of quality assurance procedures or moderation and should, therefore, be treated as confidential until the school receives a copy of the final inspection report
  - that the main findings of the inspection and the main points provided orally in the feedback, subject to any change, will be referred to in the text of the report
  - about the recommendations for improvement
  - about the procedures leading to the publication of the report
  - that the school is invited to complete the post-inspection survey
  - about (where relevant) the implications of the school being placed in a category of concern
  - whether, where a school requires special measures, newly qualified teachers may be appointed<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Getting to good: how headteachers achieve success* (120167), Ofsted, 2012; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120167](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120167).

<sup>21</sup> *Monitoring visits and support for schools that require improvement in order to become good or outstanding* (120319), Ofsted, 2014; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120319](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120319).

<sup>22</sup> In the case of an academy made subject to special measures, the lead inspector will make a *recommendation* on whether or not the academy may appoint newly qualified teachers.

- about the procedure for making a complaint.

## **Integrated inspections of education and boarding or residential provision**

74. In boarding or residential special schools, the social care inspector begins to inspect in the afternoon of the preparation day of the inspection and must use 'boarding time' during the first evening to talk to young people in the boarding or residential accommodation.
75. Lead inspectors are advised to consider the timing of team meetings in schools with residential provision so that the boarding inspector(s) are available to join those meetings. It is important that their findings contribute to all key and overall judgements about the school.
76. Inspectors must work closely together to plan sufficient time to discuss their findings throughout the inspection. The lead education inspector should join the social care inspector during boarding time so that they can gain a full picture of provision at the school. Further details can be found in *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools*.<sup>23</sup>

## **Aligned inspections of maintained and non-maintained schools or academies with dual registration as children's homes**

77. The inspection of education in a school which is also registered as a children's home may take place as a free-standing event or be aligned with the full inspection of the children's home<sup>24</sup>. Where possible, Ofsted will attempt to align both inspections so that inspectors may work together and share evidence.
78. Where the education inspection takes place as a free-standing event, inspectors must read the most recent education and children's home reports on the preparation day. They must make themselves aware of any current issues concerning children's welfare that may affect aspects of the school inspection, and ensure that they take these into consideration during the inspection.
79. Where the education and children's homes inspections are aligned, the education and social care inspectors should work together to share evidence.

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<sup>23</sup> *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools* (100180), Ofsted, 2013; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100180](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100180).

<sup>24</sup> All registered children's homes will have at least two inspections in a year. At least one of these will be a full inspection, and the children's homes may also be subject to an interim inspection. All inspections are conducted in line with the Inspections of children's homes, Framework for inspection (100195), Ofsted, 2012; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100195](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100195).]

Further details are provided in *Conducting inspections of non-association independent schools*<sup>25</sup>.

## **Implications for a school judged as 'requires improvement'**

80. Schools judged as 'requires improvement' will be subject to monitoring and support and will normally be inspected within two years from the date of the most recent section 5 inspection.

## **Schools causing concern**

81. All schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be 'inadequate' (those that have serious weaknesses or require special measures) will be deemed to be in a formal category of concern.

## **Serious weaknesses**

82. A school is judged to require significant improvement where it has serious weaknesses because one or more of the key areas is 'inadequate' (grade 4) and/or there are important weaknesses in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, leaders, managers and governors have been assessed as having the capacity to secure improvement.

## **Special measures**

83. A school requires special measures if:
- it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education  
and
  - the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

## **Procedures for judging a school as 'inadequate'**

84. If, by the end of the first day of the inspection, the lead inspector thinks it is possible that the school's overall effectiveness is 'inadequate' and that it will be judged to have serious weaknesses or to require special measures, s/he must ring Ofsted's schools causing concern helpdesk.
85. To ring the helpdesk, inspectors should use the hotline number 0300 123 4234 (and choose option 1). When the call is answered, the lead inspector should use the following form of words: 'I am an inspector leading an inspection in a

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<sup>25</sup> Conducting inspections of non-association independent schools (090048), Ofsted, 2013; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090048](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090048).

school and I would like to talk to the schools causing concern duty HMI'. The lead inspector will be asked for her/his name and the name and unique reference number (URN) of the school, and will then be put through to the duty HMI, with whom s/he will be able to talk through the evidence and emerging judgement.

86. During the second day of the inspection, the lead inspector may contact the helpline again to discuss emerging findings. When the inspection team has made the final judgement, and if it is that the school has serious weaknesses or requires special measures, the lead inspector must telephone the helpline prior to the oral feedback and use the form of words indicated in the previous paragraph. The lead inspector should be prepared to explain briefly the reasons and underpinning evidence for the judgement.

### **Informing a school that it is deemed to be a school causing concern**

87. If a school is deemed to require special measures or has been judged to have serious weaknesses or is being removed from a category of concern, inspectors must use the following words during the feedback, indicating that the overall effectiveness judgement is subject to moderation by HMI, and in the case of special measures agreement by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI):

- Where the school has serious weaknesses:

'In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is likely to be of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.'

- Where the school requires special measures:

'In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is likely to be of the opinion that this school requires special measures, because it 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.'

- When an inspection team judges that a school subject to special measures no longer requires special measures:

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

- When an inspection team judges that a school no longer has serious weaknesses:<sup>26</sup>

‘In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.’

### **Implications for a school causing concern**

88. If a school is judged to be a school causing concern, the timescale for publication of the report is extended so that the judgements can be moderated and, in the case of those schools judged to require special measures, confirmed either by HMCI or a Regional Director on his behalf.
89. Schools judged to have serious weaknesses will be subject to monitoring and support, and will normally be inspected within 18 months of the most recent section 5 inspection.
90. Schools judged to require special measures will be subject to regular monitoring and support. The timing of the next inspection will be determined by the rate of improvement of the school.

## **After the inspection**

### **Arrangements for publication of the report**

91. For schools judged as ‘requires improvement’, ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’, the ISP will forward the report to the school for a factual accuracy check shortly after the end of the inspection. The school has one working day to respond. The lead inspector will respond to the school’s comments about factual accuracy.<sup>27</sup>
92. Schools judged as ‘requires improvement’, ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ will normally receive an electronic version of the final report within 15 working days of the end of the on-site inspection.
93. For schools judged as ‘inadequate’, the ISP will forward the report to the school for a factual accuracy check shortly after the end of the inspection. The school has five working days to respond. The lead inspector will respond to the school’s comments about factual accuracy.
94. Schools judged to be ‘inadequate’ will normally receive an electronic version of the final report within 28 working days of the end of the on-site inspection.

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<sup>26</sup> This also applies to schools given a notice to improve before 1 September 2012.

<sup>27</sup> If there should be a grade change or the text of a report has been subject to significant amendments made after the school has completed its factual accuracy check, the lead inspector should talk this through with the headteacher.

95. Once a school has received its final report, it is required to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to secure that every registered parent of a registered pupil at the school receives a copy of the report within five working days. After that time, the report will be published on Ofsted's website.

### **The evidence base for the inspection**

96. The evidence base for the inspection needs to be retained for the period of time specified in Ofsted's *Handling and retention of inspection evidence*<sup>28</sup> guidance.

### **Quality assurance and complaints**

#### **How are inspections quality assured?**

97. Responsibility for assuring the quality of the inspection and the subsequent report lies with Ofsted. The lead inspector is expected to set clear expectations for the team and ensure that those expectations are met. The lead inspector must ensure that all judgements are supported by evidence and that the way in which the inspection is conducted meets the expected standard.
98. Some inspections are subject to quality assurance by HMI and/or senior ISP managers. When an external quality assurance visit is scheduled, the lead inspector should explain clearly the purpose and likely format of the visit during the initial telephone conversation with the headteacher.

#### **What happens if a school has a concern or complaint during the inspection?**

99. If a school raises a concern or complaint during the course of an inspection, the lead inspector should seek to resolve it. It is often easier to resolve issues on the spot and this helps to avoid formal complaints later.
100. The publication of an inspection report is not normally delayed by a complaint.

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<sup>28</sup> *Handling and retention of inspection evidence (100122)*, Ofsted, 2010; <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100122>.



## Part 2: The evaluation schedule – how schools will be judged

101. The evaluation schedule sets out the sources of evidence and grade descriptors that guide inspectors in judging the quality of education provided by the schools they inspect. The schedule is not exhaustive and does not replace the professional judgement of inspectors. It is interpreted within the context of each school.
102. The evaluation schedule must be used in conjunction with the guidance set out in Part 1 of this document – How schools will be inspected. Inspectors must interpret grade descriptors in relation to pupils' age, stage and phase of education.

### Judging the quality of a school

103. Inspectors must judge **the quality of education provided in the school**. This is the overarching judgement.
104. In order to make a judgement about the quality of education provided in the school, inspectors **must** first make four key judgements. These are:
- the achievement of pupils at the school
  - the quality of teaching in the school
  - the behaviour and safety of pupils at the school.
  - the quality of leadership in, and management of, the school.
105. In addition, inspectors must also consider:
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school
  - the extent to which the education provided by the school meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school, and in particular the needs of:
    - pupils who have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010
    - pupils who have special educational needs.
106. Where the school has a sixth form, inspectors should evaluate and report on its overall effectiveness.
107. In judging the quality of education provided by the school, inspectors will decide whether the school is 'outstanding' (grade 1), 'good' (grade 2), 'requires improvement' (grade 3) or 'inadequate' (grade 4). 'Inadequate' schools will be judged as either having serious weaknesses or requiring special measures. These will be categorised as schools causing concern.
108. Inspection is primarily about evaluating how well individual pupils benefit from their school. It is important to test the school's response to individual needs by observing how well it helps all pupils to make progress and fulfil their potential.

Depending on the type of school, it may be relevant to pay particular attention to the achievement of:

- disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs
- those with protected characteristics, including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children,<sup>29</sup> as defined by the Equality Act 2010
- boys
- girls
- the highest and lowest attainers
- pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support, including:
  - looked after children
  - pupils known to be eligible for free school meals – a school is unlikely to be judged outstanding if these pupils are not making at least good progress
  - children of service families
- those attending alternative provision<sup>30</sup>.

109. In making their judgements, inspectors draw on the available evidence, use their professional knowledge and consider the guidance in this document and, in particular, the grade descriptors for each judgement.

### **Overall effectiveness: the quality of education provided in the school**

110. When reporting on the quality of education, inspectors must evaluate evidence for each of the four key judgements and judge the extent to which the school meets the needs of the range of pupils on the school's roll. They must take into account the destination of pupils when they leave school and consider how well they have been prepared for their next steps.

111. Inspectors must also consider the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and the effectiveness of leadership in improving the quality of education or in maintaining already high standards. In addition, inspectors must evaluate the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (see paragraph 105).

112. In judging the school's overall effectiveness, inspectors consider whether:

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<sup>29</sup> Pupils with protected characteristics and other groups of pupils may include: pupils for whom English is an additional language; minority ethnic pupils; Gypsy Roma and Traveller children; lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils; transgender pupils; young carers; and other vulnerable groups.

<sup>30</sup> See *Subsidiary guidance*.

- the standard of education is 'good' (grade 2), or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as 'outstanding' (grade 1)
- the school 'requires improvement' as it is not a 'good' school because one or more of the four key judgements 'requires improvement' (grade 3), and/or there are weaknesses in the overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- the school is 'inadequate' (grade 4) and, if so, whether it has serious weaknesses, or requires special measures.
  - A school with serious weaknesses is 'inadequate' (grade 4) in one or more of the key areas, and/or there are important weaknesses in the overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, leaders, managers and governors are judged to be capable of securing improvement (this means that leadership and management are judged at grade 3 or above). Such a school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances be expected to perform.<sup>31</sup>
  - A school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education: it is 'inadequate' in one or more of the key areas, and the leaders, managers or governors are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

113. Evidence of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be found, for example, where pupils:

- are reflective about beliefs, values and more profound aspects of human experience, enabling them to develop curiosity in their learning, and as thoughtful, responsible individuals
- develop and apply an understanding of right and wrong in their school life and life outside school
- take part in a range of activities requiring social skills, including volunteering
- develop awareness of and respect for diversity in relation to, for example, gender, race, religion and belief, culture, sexual orientation and disability
- gain a well-informed understanding of the options and challenges facing them as they move through the school and on to the next stage of their education and training
- develop an appreciation of theatre, music, art and literature
- develop the skills and attitudes to enable them to participate fully and positively in democratic modern Britain

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<sup>31</sup> Under section 44(2) of the Education Act 2005;  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents>.

- respond positively to a range of artistic, sporting and other cultural opportunities
- understand and appreciate the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life.

## Grade descriptors – overall effectiveness: the quality of education provided in the school

*Note: These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach, which relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team. The exception is that teaching must be outstanding for overall effectiveness to be outstanding.*

### Outstanding (1)

- Teaching is outstanding and, together with a rich and relevant curriculum, contributes to outstanding learning and achievement, significant growth in students' knowledge, and excellent attitudes to learning. Exceptionally, achievement may be good and rapidly improving.
- Pupils, and particular groups of pupils, have excellent educational experiences at school and these ensure that they are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
- There is excellent practice which ensures that all pupils have high levels of literacy appropriate to their age.<sup>32</sup>
- The school's practice consistently reflects the highest expectations of staff and the highest aspirations for pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Best practice is spread effectively in a drive for continuous improvement.
- Other principal aspects of the school's work are good or outstanding.
- The school's thoughtful and wide-ranging promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their physical wellbeing enables them to thrive in a supportive, highly cohesive learning community.

### Good (2)

- Pupils benefit from teaching that is at least good and some that is outstanding. This leads to growth in students' knowledge, promotes very positive attitudes to learning and ensures that pupils are achieving well.
- Pupils and particular groups of pupils have highly positive educational experiences at school that ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.
- Pupils' progress is not held back by an inability to read accurately and fluently. Those pupils who have fallen behind are being helped to make rapid progress in their reading.
- The school takes effective action to enable most pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, to reach their potential.
- Other principal aspects of the school's work are likely to be at least good.
- Deliberate and effective action is taken to create a cohesive learning community through the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their physical wellbeing. There is a positive climate for learning.

### Requires improvement (3)

- The school requires improvement because one or more of the four key judgements requires improvement (grade 3) and/or there are weaknesses in the overall provision for pupils' spiritual,

<sup>32</sup> Pupils whose cognitive ability is such that their literacy skills are likely to be limited make excellent progress appropriate to their age and capabilities.

moral, social and cultural development.

**Inadequate (4)**

The school is likely to be inadequate if inspectors judge **any** of the following to be inadequate:

- the achievement of pupils
  - pupils' progress in literacy
  - the quality of teaching
  - the behaviour and safety of pupils
  - the quality of the leadership in, and management of, the school
- and/or
- there are serious weaknesses in the overall promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development or their physical wellbeing.

## Achievement of pupils at the school

114. This section deals with academic achievement. Other, broader aspects of achievement, such as those reflected in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, are taken into account in the evaluation of other areas for which there are key judgements and when reporting on the overall effectiveness of the school.
115. When judging achievement, inspectors must have regard for pupils' starting points in terms of their prior attainment and age. This includes the progress that the lowest attaining pupils are making and its effect on raising their attainment, and the progress that the most able are making towards attaining the highest levels and grades.
116. Inspectors must take account of:
- **the learning and progress across year groups of different groups of pupils currently on the roll of the school**, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the pupil premium provides support and the most able. Evidence gathered by inspectors during the course of the inspection should include:

    - observation of lessons and other learning activities
    - scrutiny of pupils' work, particularly their written work, to assess standards, progress and the quality of learning of pupils currently in the school
    - the school's own records of pupils' progress, including the progress of pupils who attend off-site alternative provision for all or part of the week, and the progress of pupils for whom the pupil premium or the Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium provide support
    - the quality and rigour of assessment, particularly in nursery, reception and Key Stage 1
    - in primary schools, how increasing participation in PE and sport is helping all pupils develop healthy lifestyles and reach the performance levels they are capable of
    - discussions with pupils about their work
    - the views of parents, pupils and staff
    - discussions with staff and senior leaders
    - case studies of individual pupils
    - in primary schools and some secondary schools, listening to pupils read in order to assess their standards and rates of progress in reading, with a particular focus on weaker readers
  - **pupils' progress in the last three years**, where applicable, including that for looked after children, disabled pupils, those who have special

educational needs and the most able. Evidence gathered by inspectors during the course of the inspection should include:

- the proportions making expected progress<sup>33</sup> and the proportions exceeding expected progress in English and in mathematics from each starting point<sup>34</sup>, compared with national figures<sup>35</sup>, for all pupils and for those for whom the pupil premium provides support
  - value-added indices for the school overall and for different groups of pupils and subjects
  - other relevant indicators, including value-added data
  - performance measures for the sixth form,<sup>36</sup> which include success rates
  - Early Years Foundation Stage Profile data
  - use of data below National Curriculum Level 1, including the national data analysis
  - any analysis of robust progress data presented by the school, including information provided by external organisations
- **pupils' attainment** in relation to national standards (where available) and compared with all schools, based on data over the last three years where applicable, noting any evidence of performance significantly above or below national averages; trends of improvement or decline; and inspection evidence of current pupils' attainment across year groups using a range of indicators, including where relevant:
- the proportion of pupils attaining particular standards
  - capped average points scores
  - average points scores
  - pupils' attainment in reading and writing
  - pupils' attainment in mathematics

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<sup>33</sup> Expected progress is defined by the government as two National Curriculum levels of progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 (for example, from Level 2a to Level 4, Level 2c to Level 4 or Level 3 to 5) and three National Curriculum levels of progress between Key Stages 2 and 4 (for example, from Level 3 to grade D, Level 4a to grade C or Level 4c to grade C). From 2013, expected progress data between Key Stages 1 and 2 in English are provided separately for reading and writing, but no longer aggregated for English.

Expected progress for pupils attaining below Level 1 of the National Curriculum at the end of Key Stages 1 or 2 is explained in *Subsidiary guidance*.

<sup>34</sup> Starting points at Key Stage 1 include Levels W (and P levels), 1, 2c, 2b, 2a and 3; starting points at Key Stage 2 include Levels W (and P levels), 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

<sup>35</sup> Comparison should consider the consistency with which the school's proportions are close to or above the national figures for each starting point; school proportions below national figures for one starting point should not be considered to be compensated for by school proportions above national figures for another starting point.

<sup>36</sup> See *Subsidiary guidance*.



- the outcomes of the most recent phonic screening check and any follow-up screening undertaken by the school
- attainment as shown by test and examination results available in school, but not yet validated or benchmarked nationally
- **Difference in achievement** between those for whom the pupil premium provides support and other pupils in the school, including:
  - gaps in attainment<sup>37</sup>, in particular in English and mathematics
  - differences in progress from similar starting points.

117. Inspectors should also note the following:

- in schools where attainment is not benchmarked nationally, for example in the final year group of a middle school, inspectors should draw on all the available evidence to decide whether attainment is above average, broadly average or low
- in schools or academies where pupils have completed part of a key stage elsewhere, inspectors should take this into account when evaluating the pupils' progress
- where numbers of pupils are small and achievement fluctuates considerably from year to year, inspectors should take into account individual circumstances when comparing with national figures, and should consider any available data of aggregate performance for consecutive cohorts
- for those groups of pupils whose cognitive ability is such that their attainment is unlikely ever to rise above 'low', the judgement on achievement should be based on an evaluation of the pupils' learning and progress relative to their starting points at particular ages, and any assessment measures held by the school. Evaluations should not take account of their attainment compared with national benchmarks
- for those schools where children are aged three and four years old and move to primary school before any nationally comparable assessments are made, the judgement should be based on an evaluation of children's learning and progress relative to their age and evidence of their starting points
- evaluation of achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage should take account of the proportions of children who have made typical progress or more from their starting points. An example of typical progress for a child is to start nursery or reception displaying the knowledge, skills and understanding that are typical for his or her age and then to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception. Evaluation of achievement should

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<sup>37</sup> Gaps in attainment must include the difference between the average points scores in each of English and mathematics in national assessments at the end of Key Stage 2, and at GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4, as explained in *Subsidiary guidance*.

also consider attainment at the end of reception in comparison with Early Years Foundation Stage Profile national figures and in terms of how well it prepares children for Key Stage 1

- evaluation of achievement in Key Stage 1 should take account of the proportions of pupils who have made typical progress or more from their starting points. An example of typical progress is for a pupil who has met the Early Learning Goals at the end of reception to attain Level 2b at the end of Year 2. Inspectors should take into account how well pupils with a lower starting point have made up ground, and the breadth and depth of progress made by the most able.

## Grade descriptors – Achievement of pupils at the school

*Note: These descriptors should not to be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach which relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.*

### Outstanding (1)

- From each different starting point<sup>38</sup>, the proportions of pupils making expected progress<sup>39</sup> and the proportions exceeding expected progress in English and in mathematics are high compared with national figures. For pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support, the proportions are similar to, or above, those for other pupils in the school or are rapidly approaching them.
- Pupils make rapid and sustained progress throughout year groups across many subjects, including English and mathematics, and learn exceptionally well.
- The achievement of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support at least matches that of other pupils in the school or has risen rapidly, including in English and mathematics.
- Pupils read widely, and often across all subjects to a high standard.
- Pupils develop and apply a wide range of skills to great effect in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.
- Pupils, including those in the sixth form and those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, acquire knowledge quickly and develop their understanding rapidly in a wide range of different subjects across the curriculum.
- The learning of groups of pupils, particularly those who are disabled, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the pupil premium provides support, and the most able is consistently good or better.
- The standards of attainment of almost all groups of pupils are likely to be at least in line with national averages with many pupils attaining above this. In exceptional circumstances, an outstanding grade can be awarded where standards of attainment of any group of pupils are below those of all pupils nationally, but the gap is closing rapidly, as shown by trends in a range of attainment indicators. This may include attainment in reading.

### Good (2)

- From each different starting point, the proportions of pupils making expected progress, and the proportions exceeding expected progress, in English and in mathematics are close to or above national figures<sup>40</sup>. For pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support, the proportions are similar to, or above, those for other pupils in the school or are improving.

<sup>38</sup> Starting points at Key Stage 1 include Levels W (and P levels), 1, 2c, 2b, 2a and 3; starting points at Key Stage 2 include Levels W (and P levels), 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

<sup>39</sup> Expected progress is defined by the government as two National Curriculum levels of progress between Key Stages 1 and 2 (for example, from Level 2a to Level 4, Level 2c to Level 4 or Level 3 to 5) and three National Curriculum levels of progress between Key Stages 2 and 4 (for example, from Level 3 to grade D, Level 4a to grade C or Level 4c to grade C). From 2013, expected progress data between Key Stages 1 and 2 in English are provided separately for reading and writing, but no longer aggregated for English.

Expected progress for pupils attaining below Level 1 of the National Curriculum at the end of Key Stages 1 or 2 is explained in *Subsidiary guidance*.

<sup>40</sup> Inspectors will balance evidence about previous cohorts of pupils with evidence about the progress being made by the pupils being taught in the school currently.

- Progress across year groups in a wide range of subjects, including English and mathematics, is consistently strong and evidence in pupils' work indicates that they achieve well.
- The achievement of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support at least matches that of other pupils in the school or is rising, including in English and mathematics.
- Pupils read widely and often.
- Pupils acquire knowledge and develop understanding quickly and securely in a wide range of subjects. They develop and apply a wide range of skills, in reading, writing, communication and mathematics. This ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education, training or employment.
- The learning of groups of pupils, particularly those who are disabled, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the pupil premium provides support and the most able, is generally good.
- Where attainment, including attainment in reading in primary schools, is low overall, it is improving at a faster rate than nationally, over a sustained period.

### **Requires improvement (3)**

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement as it is not good.

### **Inadequate (4)**

Achievement is likely to be inadequate if any of the following apply.

- From their different starting points, the proportions of pupils making expected progress, and the proportions exceeding expected progress, in English or in mathematics are consistently below national figures and show little or no improvement.
- For pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support, the proportions making and exceeding expected progress from the different starting points in English or in mathematics are consistently well below those of other pupils and show little or no improvement.
- Pupils' learning and progress in any key subject<sup>41</sup> or key stage, including the sixth form or the Early Years Foundation Stage, indicate they are underachieving.
- Groups of pupils, particularly disabled pupils and/or those who have special educational needs and/or those for whom the pupil premium provides support, and/or the most able, are underachieving.
- Pupils' communication skills (including reading and/or writing) or proficiency in mathematics are not sufficiently strong for them to succeed in the next stage of education, training or employment.
- Attainment is consistently below floor standards<sup>42</sup> or is in decline and shows little, fragile or inconsistent improvement.
- There are wide gaps in the attainment and/or the learning and progress of different groups.

<sup>41</sup> 'Key' subjects in primary schools are English and mathematics. In secondary schools they are English, mathematics, science and any specialist school subjects and/or GCSE subjects with very high levels of entry.

<sup>42</sup> Floor standards refer to the expected levels of performance set by the government in relation to standards of attainment at Key Stages 2 and 4 and the proportion of pupils exceeding the threshold for the number of National Curriculum levels of progress made in English and mathematics between Key Stages 1 and 2 or between Key Stages 2 and 4. Current figures are given in *Subsidiary guidance*.

## Quality of teaching in the school

118. The most important role of teaching is to promote learning and to raise pupils' achievement. It is also important in promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching should be understood to include teachers' planning and implementing of learning activities, including the setting of appropriate homework across the whole curriculum, as well as marking, assessment and feedback. It encompasses activities within and outside the classroom, such as additional support and intervention.
119. The judgement on the quality of teaching must take account of evidence of pupils' learning and progress over time. Inspectors must not simply aggregate the grades awarded following lesson observations.
120. Inspectors should consider the extent to which the 'Teachers' Standards' are being met.<sup>43</sup>
121. Inspectors must not expect teaching staff to teach in any specific way. Schools and teachers should decide for themselves how to teach. Inspectors should gather evidence to judge and report on how well children are engaged in lessons, acquire knowledge and learn well.
122. Inspectors must evaluate the use of, and contribution made by, teaching assistants.

## Observing teaching and learning

123. When observing and judging teaching, inspectors must be guided by the response and engagement of pupils and evidence of how well they are learning.
124. Inspectors must consider whether:
- teaching engages and includes all pupils, with work that is challenging enough and that meets their individual needs, including for the most able pupils
  - pupils' responses demonstrate sufficient gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding, including of literacy and mathematics
  - teachers monitor pupils' progress in lessons and use the information well to adapt their teaching
  - teachers use questioning and discussion to assess the effectiveness of their teaching and promote pupils' learning

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<sup>43</sup> DfE 'Teachers' Standards': effective from September 2012:  
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/reviewofstandards>.

- assessment is frequent and accurate and used to set relevant work from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards
  - pupils understand well how to improve their work
  - all pupils are taught well so that they are properly prepared for the next stage in their learning, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage where the development of their communication, language and literacy skills must equip them well for Key Stage 1.
125. Not all aspects of learning, for example pupils' engagement, interest, concentration, determination, resilience and independence, may be seen in a single observation.

### **Evaluating learning over time**

126. Inspectors' direct observation must be supplemented by a range of other evidence to enable inspectors to evaluate what teaching is like typically and the impact that teaching has had on pupils' learning over time. Such additional evidence may include:
- evidence arising from observations of lessons carried out by school leaders
  - discussions with pupils about the work they have undertaken and their experience of teaching and learning over longer periods
  - discussion about teaching and learning with teachers, teaching assistants and other staff
  - the views of pupils, parents and staff
  - the school's own evaluations of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning
  - scrutiny of pupils' work, with particular attention to:
    - how well and frequently marking, assessment and testing are used to help teachers improve pupils' learning
    - the level of challenge provided
    - pupils' effort and success in completing their work and the progress they make over a period of time.

## Grade descriptors<sup>44</sup> – Quality of teaching in the school

*Note: These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach which relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.*

### Outstanding (1)

- Much of the teaching in all key stages and most subjects is outstanding and never less than consistently good. As a result, almost all pupils currently on roll in the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the pupil premium provides support and the most able, are making rapid and sustained progress.
- All teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils. They plan and teach lessons that enable pupils to learn exceptionally well across the curriculum.
- Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where they may need to intervene and doing so with notable impact on the quality of learning.
- The teaching of reading, writing, communication and mathematics is highly effective and cohesively planned and implemented across the curriculum.
- Teachers and other adults authoritatively impart knowledge to ensure students are engaged in learning, and generate high levels of commitment to learning across the school.
- Consistently high quality marking and constructive feedback from teachers ensure that pupils make rapid gains.
- Teachers use well-judged and often imaginative teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework that, together with clearly directed and timely support and intervention, match individual needs accurately. Consequently, pupils learn exceptionally well across the curriculum.

### Good (2)

- Teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is usually good, with examples of some outstanding teaching. As a result, most pupils and groups of pupils on roll in the school, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the pupil premium provides support and the most able, make good progress and achieve well over time.
- Teachers have high expectations. They plan and teach lessons that deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding and enable them to develop a range of skills across the curriculum.
- Teachers listen to, carefully observe and skilfully question pupils during lessons in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught effectively.
- Teachers and other adults create a positive climate for learning in their lessons and pupils are interested and engaged.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning and progress regularly and accurately at all key stages, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They ensure that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
- Effective teaching strategies, including setting appropriate homework, and appropriately targeted support and intervention are matched well to most pupils' individual needs, including

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<sup>44</sup> These grade descriptors describe the quality of teaching in the school as a whole, taking account of evidence over time. While they include some characteristics of individual lessons, they are not designed to be used to judge individual lessons.

those most and least able, so that pupils learn well in lessons.

### **Requires improvement (3)**

- Teaching requires improvement as it is not good.

### **Inadequate (4)**

Teaching is likely to be inadequate where **any** of the following apply:

- As a result of weak teaching over time, pupils or particular groups of pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, those for whom the pupil premium provides support and the most able, are making inadequate progress.
- Pupils cannot communicate, read, write, or apply mathematics as well as they should.
- Teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations and teaching over time fails to engage or interest particular groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.



## The behaviour and safety of pupils at the school

127. The evidence collected for this judgement contributes to inspectors' evaluation of the school's promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
128. Inspectors must take account of the behaviour and safety of pupils attending off-site, alternative provision.
129. Judgements about behaviour and safety must not be made solely on the basis of what is seen during the inspection. Inspectors must take into account a range of evidence in order to judge both behaviour and safety over an extended period. This evidence **must** include documentary evidence about behaviour and the management of behaviour over time, and discussions with, and observations of pupils at informal times of the day (including break and lunchtimes).
130. Inspectors must make a clear written judgement about behaviour, and a separate clear written judgement about safety within the inspection report. There will be a number of instances, for example in relation to bullying and to conduct around the school, where inspectors may gather evidence which can contribute to both judgements. These judgements must be weighed to determine a balanced, graded judgement on behaviour and safety overall. This overall judgement is recorded in the inspection report.
131. Evaluating, judging and reporting behaviour and safety in this way enables inspectors to make a clear distinction between each area, in order that schools and parents have a clear understanding of the reported judgements. For example, where behaviour is judged as 'requires improvement', but the safety of pupils is judged to be 'good', inspectors are able to grade behaviour and safety as 'requires improvement' overall, while reporting to parents within the behaviour and safety section of the inspection report that pupils are safe.
132. Inspectors may look at a small sample of case studies in order to evaluate the experience of particular individuals and groups, such as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, looked after children and those with mental health needs.
133. Inspectors **must** also take account of the views expressed by pupils, including different groups of pupils, of their experiences of others' behaviour and attitudes towards them, and their understanding of the importance of such attributes in school and adult life. These views must not be gathered only through formal discussions, but must include discussions with a range of pupils at informal times. Inspectors must also take account of the views of parents, staff, governors and others.

134. When judging behaviour and safety inspectors should consider:

- the extent to which pupils' attitudes to learning help or hinder their progress in lessons<sup>45</sup>
- pupils' attitudes to school, conduct and behaviour, during and outside of lessons, their attitudes to other pupils, teachers and other staff, including the prevalence of low-level disruption
- the school's analysis of, and response to, pupils' behaviour over time, for example incident logs and records of rewards and sanctions
- rates, patterns of, and reasons for fixed-period and permanent exclusions<sup>46</sup>, and that they fall within statutory guidance and regulations on exclusions.<sup>47</sup>
- pupils' contribution and response to the culture of the school; how they conduct themselves, including: their respect, courtesy and good manners towards each other and adults; their understanding of how such behaviour contributes to school life, relationships, adult life and work;
- pupils' respect for the school's learning environments (including by not dropping litter) facilities and equipment, and adherence to school uniform policies
- types, rates and patterns of bullying and the effectiveness of the school's actions to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and harassment. This includes cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender reassignment or disability
- the school's success in keeping pupils safe, whether within school or during external activities through, for instance, effective risk assessments, e-safety arrangements, and action taken following any serious safeguarding incident
- the effectiveness of the school's actions to prevent and tackle discriminatory and derogatory language – this includes homophobic and racist language, and language that is derogatory about disabled people
- the extent to which pupils are able to understand, respond to and calculate risk effectively, for example risks associated with extremism<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> For example, inspectors may consider how quickly children settle at the start of lessons, whether they have the right equipment, their willingness to answer questions, whether they remain focused when working on their own, the tidiness of their work and the pride they show in its presentation, and the overall effort that they make.

<sup>46</sup> This includes patterns of permanent and fixed-period exclusions for different groups of pupils; the impact on behaviour of fixed-period exclusion and the impact of the school's work to follow up and support excluded pupils; the use and impact of internal exclusion; and the typical behaviour of any pupils who are not in school during inspection

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/exclusion/g00210521/statutory-guidance-regs-2012>

- the school's response to any extremist behaviour shown by pupils
- overall and persistent absence and attendance rates for different groups
- punctuality over time in arriving at school and at lessons
- the impact of the school's strategies to improve behaviour and attendance<sup>49</sup>
- the number of pupils taken off roll in the last year as a result of factors related to behaviour, safety and attendance
- the views of parents, staff and governors.

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<sup>48</sup> This also includes risks associated with e-safety, substance misuse, knives and gangs, relationships (including sexual relationships), water, fire, roads and railways.

<sup>49</sup> This includes the use of rewards and sanctions, the effectiveness of any additional on-site provision to support behaviour, work with parents and absence 'follow-up'

## Grade descriptors – The behaviour and safety of pupils at the school

*Note: These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach which relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.*

### Outstanding (1)

- Pupils consistently display a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning, including in independent, group and whole class work, which have a very strong impact on their progress in lessons
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are of an equally high standard across subjects, years, classes and with different staff.
- Parents, staff and pupils are unreservedly positive about both behaviour and safety. Pupils are keenly aware how good attitudes and behaviour contribute to school life, adult life and work.
- Pupils' behaviour outside lessons is almost always impeccable. Pupils' pride in the school is shown by their excellent conduct, manners and punctuality.
- Pupils are fully aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying, and actively try to prevent it from occurring. Bullying and derogatory or aggressive language in all their forms are rare and dealt with highly effectively.
- Skilled and highly consistent behaviour management by all staff makes a strong contribution to an exceptionally positive climate for learning. There are excellent improvements in behaviour over time for individuals or groups with particular behaviour needs.
- All groups of pupils are safe and feel safe at school and at alternative provision placements at all times. They understand very clearly what constitutes unsafe situations and are highly aware of how to keep themselves and others safe in different situations, including in relation to e-safety.

### Good (2)

- Pupils' attitudes to all aspects of learning, including in whole class work, group work, or when working on their own, are consistently positive, and have a good impact on the progress they make.
- Pupils are properly prepared for each lesson, bring the right equipment, and are ready and eager to learn.
- Pupils respond very quickly to staff's instructions and requests allowing lessons to flow smoothly and without interruption. Low-level disruption in lessons is uncommon.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive across subjects, years, classes and with different staff.
- There are few well founded concerns expressed by parents, staff and pupils about behaviour and safety. Pupils understand the importance of good attitudes and behaviour in school life, adult life and work.
- There is a positive ethos in, and around, the school. Pupils conduct themselves well at all different times of day, including at lunch time, attend regularly, have good attitudes and are punctual to lessons.
- Pupils take pride in their work, their appearance and their school.
- Pupils have a good awareness of different forms of bullying. There are few instances of bullying and these are dealt with effectively by the school.
- Behaviour is managed consistently well. There are marked improvements in behaviour over time for individuals or groups with particular behavioural needs.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe at school and at alternative provision placements and understand how to keep themselves safe in different situations.

### **Requires improvement (3)**

- Behaviour and safety require improvement as these aspects are not good.

### **Inadequate (4)**

Behaviour and safety are inadequate when **any** of the following apply.

- Pupils' lack of engagement and persistent low-level disruption of learning contribute to reduced learning and/or a disorderly classroom environment.
- A significant minority of pupils show a lack of respect and intolerance for each other or staff and a lack of self-discipline, resulting in poor behaviour around the school. Pupils exhibit negative attitudes about the value of good manners and behaviour as key factors in school life, adult life and work.
- Incidents of bullying overall or specific types of bullying are frequent, and/or pupils have little confidence in the school's ability to address bullying successfully.
- Pupils or particular groups of pupils are not safe or do not feel safe at school and/or at alternative placements.
- Attendance is consistently low for all pupils or groups of pupils and shows no or little sign of improvement.

## Quality of leadership in, and management of, the school

135. Inspection must examine the impact of leaders at all levels, including governors, and evaluate how efficiently and effectively the school is led and managed. In some cases, schools are making an effective contribution to improving the performance of other schools and, where relevant, this will be reported on by inspectors.
136. Many schools are cooperating as groups, federations or chains, with an overarching board and chief executive officer that assume some of the responsibilities formerly shouldered by the individual school governing body. Commonly, this infrastructure is supported by a portion of the budget of the member schools. In the case of such extended management arrangements, inspectors should seek evidence of the impact of the overarching board and its staff and the school's local board, committee or governing body.
137. Inspectors should focus on the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in creating a culture that fosters improvements in the school. They evaluate the extent to which the school meets the needs of a diverse pupil population, enabling all pupils to overcome specific barriers to learning.
138. Inspectors should pay particular attention to the contribution being made by the headteacher and ensure that they give sufficient credit where a headteacher is bringing about improvement in a school.
139. Inspectors should consider:
- how well leaders, managers and governors pursue excellence, modelling professional standards in all of their work, for example through:
    - the creation of a culture of high expectations and aspirations, academically and socially
    - the rigorous implementation of well-focused improvement plans which are based on robust self-evaluation
    - the consistent application of policies and procedures, in particular in relation to reading, writing and mathematics
    - the extent to which pupils, parents and staff are committed to the vision and ambition of leaders, managers and governors
    - the establishment of an orderly and hardworking school community
    - the respect and courtesy shown by staff towards each other and pupils
  - the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation and the extent to which it is shared with governors – this includes monitoring and evaluation of:
    - the quality of teaching and the achievement and progress of all groups of pupils, including those for whom the pupil premium provides support, relative to other schools nationally

- the performance of the school, including, if applicable, the school's sixth form
- the satisfaction of pupils and their parents
- how well the school uses the new primary school sport funding to improve the quality and breadth of PE and sport provision, including increasing participation in PE and sport so that all pupils develop healthy lifestyles and reach the performance levels they are capable of
- the use of performance management and effectiveness of strategies for improving teaching, including the extent to which the school takes account of the 'Teachers' Standards'<sup>50</sup> – this is demonstrated through:
  - the effectiveness of procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the extent to which underperformance is tackled
  - a strong link between performance management and appraisal and salary progression
  - the coherence and effectiveness of the programme of professional development, and the opportunities provided for promotion. Particular attention should be given to the extent to which professional development is based on the identified needs of staff and the needs of newly qualified teachers and teachers at an early stage of their career
  - the accuracy with which best practice is identified, modelled and shared
- how well leaders and managers ensure that the curriculum:
  - focuses on the necessary priorities for ensuring that all pupils make excellent progress in reading, writing and mathematics
  - is broad and balanced (in the context of the school) and meets the needs, aptitudes and interest of pupils including, if applicable, pupils in the sixth form
  - promotes high levels of achievement and good behaviour
  - promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils, including through the extent to which schools engage their pupils in extra-curricular activity and volunteering within their local community
  - is effectively planned and taught
  - does not compromise pupils' achievement, success or progression by inappropriately early entry to public examinations

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<sup>50</sup> Academies are not required to apply the 'Teachers Standards' as part of their performance management arrangements. However, inspectors should examine closely how the academy promotes high quality teaching through its performance management and professional development arrangements.

- is based at Key Stage 4 on an appropriate balance between academic and vocational courses
- provides timely independent information, advice and guidance to assist pupils on their next steps in training, education or employment
- planning in the sixth form takes account of completion rates in sixth form courses
- how well leaders and managers demonstrate the capacity to bring about further improvement through, for example:
  - a track record of improvements in achievement and/or maintenance of high levels of achievement, with particular reference to how well pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support achieve
  - improvements in the quality of teaching over time or the maintenance of good and outstanding teaching
  - rigorous self-evaluation, which underpins actions and plans that are focused accurately on the areas requiring improvement<sup>51</sup>
  - how well the school’s strategies and procedures, including the provision of appropriate guidance, help pupils to prepare for life in modern democratic Britain and a global society, including through providing a balanced curriculum, and to prevent extremist behaviour
  - how effectively the school works in partnership with other schools, external agencies and the community (including business) to improve the school, extend the curriculum and increase the range and quality of learning opportunities for pupils
  - how effectively the school engages with and promotes the confidence of parents, including how well the school gathers, understands and responds to the views of parents (including the use of Parent View data<sup>52</sup>)
- the quality of middle leadership in the school
- the extent to which schools are adequately developing their middle leadership
- succession planning and the development of future leaders in the school
- the effectiveness of governance including how well governors:
  - ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

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<sup>51</sup> Good intentions and an aspirational outlook or a recent change of headteacher following a period of poor leadership do not in themselves provide sufficient proof of the capacity for further improvement.

<sup>52</sup> Inspectors will consider the use of Parent View as one of a range of elements of a school’s engagement strategy with parents.



- contribute to the school’s self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses, including the impact of their own work
- support and strengthen school leadership, including by developing their own skills
- provide challenge and hold the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils’ achievement and pupils’ behaviour and safety, including by using the data dashboard, other progress data, examination outcomes and test results
- use performance management systems, including the performance management of the headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management
- ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively
- operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved
- engage with key stakeholders
- use the pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- how effectively the school promotes the confidence and engagement of parents, including by encouraging the use of Parent View
- the extent to which leadership contributes towards school improvement in the local or wider area, such as through system leadership, by working in partnership or by sharing of advanced skills practitioners, mentoring or shadowing opportunities for new middle leaders, or sharing best practice or offering other support and challenge on self-evaluation
- the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements to ensure that there is safe recruitment and that all pupils are safe<sup>53</sup>. This includes the:
  - maintenance of the single central record and appropriate arrangements for child protection
  - rigour with which absence is followed up
  - decision-making process involved in taking pupils off roll
  - care taken to ensure that pupils placed in alternative provision are safe at all times
  - action taken following any serious incident
  - promotion of safe practices and a culture of safety, including e-safety.

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<sup>53</sup> For full details see *Inspecting safeguarding briefing*, Ofsted, 2013: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/briefings-and-information-for-use-during-inspections-of-maintained-schools-and-academies-september-2>.



## Grade descriptors – Quality of leadership in, and management of, the school

*Note: These descriptors should not be used as a checklist. They must be applied adopting a 'best fit' approach which relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.*

### Outstanding (1)

- The pursuit of excellence in all of the school's activities is demonstrated by an uncompromising and highly successful drive to strongly improve, or maintain, the highest levels of achievement and personal development for all pupils over a sustained period of time.
- All leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, are highly ambitious for the pupils and lead by example. They base their actions on a deep and accurate understanding of the school's performance, and of staff and pupils' skills and attributes.
- Governors, or those with a similar responsibility, stringently hold senior leaders to account for all aspects of the school's performance.
- There are excellent policies underpinning practice that ensures that pupils have high levels of literacy, or pupils are making excellent progress in literacy.
- Leaders focus relentlessly on improving teaching and learning and provide focused professional development for all staff, especially those that are newly qualified and at an early stage of their careers. This is underpinned by searching performance management that encourages, challenges and supports teachers' improvement. As a result, teaching is outstanding, or at least consistently good and improving.
- The school's curriculum promotes and sustains a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning. It covers a wide range of subjects and provides opportunities for academic, technical and sporting excellence. It has a very positive impact on all pupils' behaviour and safety, and contributes very well to pupils' academic achievement, their physical wellbeing, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's actions have secured improvement in achievement for those supported by the pupil premium, which is rising rapidly, including in English and mathematics.
- The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents to the benefit of pupils, including those who find working with the school difficult.
- Senior leaders in the school work to promote improvement across the wider system.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- Staff model professional standards in all of their work and demonstrate high levels of respect and courtesy for pupils and others.
- Through highly effective, rigorous planning and controls, governors ensure financial stability, including the effective and efficient management of financial resources such as the pupil premium funding. This leads to the excellent deployment of staff and resources to the benefit of all groups of pupils.

### Good (2)

- Key leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, consistently communicate high expectations and ambition.
- Teaching is good and/or improving strongly as a result of accurate monitoring, effective performance management and professional development, which are closely matched to the needs of the school and staff.
- Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate, and the school's actions are carefully planned, concerted and effective.
- The well-thought-out policies ensure that pupils make at least good progress in literacy.
- Governors, or those in a similar position, systematically challenge senior leaders. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have improved, or previous good performance

in these areas has been consolidated.

- The school's curriculum encourages a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning. It covers a range of subjects and provides opportunities for academic, technical and sporting excellence and contributes well to pupils' academic achievement, their physical wellbeing and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It promotes good behaviour and a good understanding of safety matters.
- The school's actions have secured improvement in achievement for those supported by the pupil premium, which is rising, including in English and mathematics.
- The culture of the school is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all pupils.
- The school works well with parents, including those who might find working with the school difficult, to achieve positive benefits for pupils.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.
- Governors ensure the efficient management of financial resources. This leads to the effective deployment of staff and resources.

### **Requires improvement (3)**

- Leadership and management require improvement because they are not good but are demonstrating the capacity to secure improvement in the school.

### **Inadequate (4)**

Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if **any** of the following apply.

- Capacity for securing further improvement is limited because current leaders and managers have been ineffective in securing essential improvements.
- Improvements which have been made are unlikely to be sustainable, too slow or are dependent on external support.
- Self-evaluation lacks rigour and is inaccurate in its conclusions so that leadership and management do not have a realistic view of outcomes or provision.
- Leadership is not doing enough to ensure good teaching for all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Leaders and managers are not taking sufficiently effective steps towards securing good behaviour from all pupils and a consistent approach to the management of challenging behaviour.
- The curriculum fails to meet the needs of pupils or particular groups of pupils, or pupils are entered for public examinations inappropriately early, and pupils' achievement, physical wellbeing and enjoyment of learning are significantly impaired.
- The progress in English or in mathematics of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is falling further behind the progress of the other pupils with similar prior attainment in the school.
- Poor literacy is not being tackled urgently and this is impeding pupils' progress.
- Governors are not sufficiently diligent in holding the school to account for pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the effective and efficient deployment of resources.
- The school's strategies for engaging with parents are weak and parents express little confidence in the school.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet statutory requirements and give serious cause for concern, or insufficient action has been taken to remedy weaknesses following a serious incident.

## **Evaluating the quality of boarding and residential provision in schools**

140. Where the school provides boarding provision, inspectors will make five key judgements on that provision. These judgements will be made in accordance with the guidance and grade descriptors in the evaluation schedule for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools.<sup>54</sup>

## **Evaluating the quality of early years childcare provision**

141. Early years registered childcare is inspected as required by the Childcare Act 2006. This provision is either managed by the school or by a private, voluntary and/or independent provider, on the school site. The inspections of this provision will normally not take place at the same time as the school inspection and will be inspected separately. Following each inspection a separate report is provided for such registered provision.

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<sup>54</sup> *Evaluation schedule for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools* (110096), Ofsted, 2013; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110096](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110096).