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Policy paper

2010 to 2015 government policy: inspections of schools, colleges and children's services

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This is a copy of a document that stated a policy of the 2010 to 2015 Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government. The previous URL of this page was <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-inspections-of-schools-colleges-and-childrens-services-more-effective>. Current policies can be found at the GOV.UK [policies list](#).

Issue

The government wants to make sure its inspections of schools, colleges and children's services are demanding enough so that they help improve standards across all children's services and all levels of education. Inspection requirements need to be clear for education and service providers, without being too restrictive.

We believe simplifying regulations and inspections will give providers of education and other children's services more freedom and reduce the unnecessary burdens that prevent them from working effectively.

Actions

To make inspections more effective, we are taking the following actions.

Early years services

We're:

- making sure [Ofsted](#) inspections of early years services concentrate on children's education and their personal and emotional development
- making sure inspectors give greater attention to the progress children make
- putting an end to local authority inspections of early years providers, making Ofsted the only judge of quality of early years services
- giving more freedom to early years providers in managing their own service, while keeping strict controls for those who do not comply with requirements

Schools and colleges

We're:

- removing the 'satisfactory' grade and expect every school and college to achieve at least the 'good' grade
- only judging a school or college as 'outstanding' if the teaching is also judged 'outstanding'
- re-inspecting those found to 'require improvement' sooner than under previous inspection arrangements
- reducing the notice given to schools and colleges of when inspections will happen
- intervening when schools and colleges receive the 'requires improvement' grade or lower, and require governors, dioceses, academy chains or local authorities to act quickly to ensure improvement
- concentrating on how schools and colleges are using the pupil premium and the impact it is having on disadvantaged pupils

Services for looked-after children and care leavers

We're:

- replacing the separate inspections of looked-after children's services, local authority fostering services and local authority adoption agencies in 2013
- concentrating on the quality of practitioners and managers helping children into adoption and supporting looked-after children and care leavers
- assessing the educational progress children and young people make through their life in care and beyond

Background

Early years services

On 6 July 2010, we asked Dame Clare Tickell, Chief Executive of Action for Children, to carry out an [independent review of the early years foundation stage \(EYFS\)](#). A revised [EYFS](#) was published in March 2012 and came into force in September 2012.

As a result of the review, from 9 January to 6 April 2012, Ofsted led a [public consultation on changes to the way it registers and inspects early years providers](#), including nurseries and childminders.

The [revised inspections system](#) was introduced in September 2012, to coincide with the revised EYFS.

On 29 January 2013 we published the report ['More great childcare'](#), which included our response to Professor Cathy Nutbrown's review of [early education and childcare qualifications](#) and set out the changes we are

introducing to the inspections regime of early years providers, including:

- making Ofsted the only judge of quality of early years services
- introducing an option for providers to request a paid-for re-inspection when they feel they have made rapid improvement


Schools and colleges

On 9 February 2012, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills Sir Michael Wilshaw announced his proposals for improving the education system in England by introducing further changes to Ofsted's school and college inspections from September 2012.

Sir Michael's proposals were included in the consultation '[A good education for all](#)', open from 9 February to 3 May 2012. The responses to the consultation and details of the changes to school and college inspections were announced on 30 May 2012.

The [new school inspection system](#) came into force on 1 September 2012. The new common inspection framework for colleges and work-based training providers also came into force on 1 September 2012.

On 11 February 2013, Ofsted published '[The pupil premium: how schools are spending the funding successfully to maximise achievement](#)'. The report sets out some of the ways in which schools are spending their pupil premium funding effectively to raise the achievement of disadvantaged students.

 The premium gives schools extra funding for children from low-income families who are eligible for free school meals, looked-after children and those with parents in the armed forces.



Services for looked-after children and care leavers

In July 2012, Ofsted published proposals for a new programme of inspections of services for children in care to be carried out jointly with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

On 11 July, Ofsted launched the consultation [‘Arrangements for the inspection of services for children looked after and care leavers’](#), which ran until 18 September 2012.

Changes to the way Ofsted inspects local authority arrangements for children in care will be introduced from April 2013.

Who we’ve consulted

The government carried out several consultations as part of its reform of Ofsted inspections across all children’s services and all levels of education.



Early years services

The consultation [‘Regulation of providers on the early years register’](#) ran from 9 January to 6 April 2012. It received 1,180 responses from registered early years providers and individual practitioners, local authorities, parents and representatives of national provider organisations.

The consultation [‘Inspection of Sure Start children’s centres’](#) ran from 29

October 2012 to 11 January 2013. It sought views on proposals for a revised inspection system of Sure Start children's centres.

Schools and colleges

The consultation '[A good education for all](#)' ran from 9 February to 3 May 2012. It received over [5,000 responses](#) from professionals in maintained schools, free schools, academies and further education and skills institutions.

Services for looked-after children and care leavers

The consultation '[Arrangements for the inspection of services for children looked after and care leavers](#)' ran from 11 July to 18 September 2012.

Bills and legislation



The bills and legislation covering inspections of schools, colleges and children's services are:

- [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [Childcare Act 2006](#) (Early years providers and Children's Centre inspections)
- [Education Act 2005](#)
- [Education Act 2011](#)
- The [Statutory Framework for the EYFS](#) and 2012 amendments
- [Childcare \(Inspections\)\(Amendment and Revocation\) Regulations](#)



- [2012](#) and [Remit letter for Secretary of State](#)
- SI 2008/974 - [Childcare \(Early Years Register\) Regulations 2008](#)
- SI 2008/975 - [Childcare \(General Childcare Register\) Regulations 2008](#)
- [The Children's Centres \(Inspections\) Regulations 2010](#)

Who we're working with

We continue to work closely with [Ofsted](#) to make sure the inspections are rigorous and effective.

From April 2013, Ofsted will carry out inspections of local authority services for looked-after children and care leavers jointly with the [CQC](#).



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