

Short inspections of good schools

Maintained schools and academies – consultation document

This consultation follows on from a previous one carried out between 15 June and 18 August 2017. It seeks your views on further proposals for changes to short inspections of maintained schools and academies from January 2018.

The closing date for this consultation is Wednesday 8 November 2017.

If you would like a version of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231 or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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About Ofsted

1. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people and in education and skills for learners of all ages.

Purpose and background to the consultation

2. This consultation seeks your views on proposals for changes to the short inspection approach for good maintained schools and academies from January 2018. The changes will also affect non-exempt outstanding schools.¹ Your views will help to refine and improve our inspection approach.
3. Between 15 June and 18 August 2017, we carried out an initial consultation into proposals for changes to short inspections. The outcomes of that consultation and the pilot inspections that we conducted during the summer term 2017 mean that we will be taking forward some of the changes we proposed. However, the wide range of useful feedback we received also helped us to refine our thinking on how we could further improve the way we conduct short inspections. The report on the outcomes of the previous consultation is available at www.gov.uk/government/consultations/short-inspections-of-good-schools.
4. We have listened to respondents to the initial consultation and the proposals in this further consultation are the direct result of that exercise. We are grateful to all who engaged with us and shared their views. This new consultation is a further opportunity for the sector and the wider public to influence the future operations of inspection.
5. The short inspection model has been a success and has been welcomed by the sector. Short inspections reduce the burden on good schools and also allow us to target inspection resources where they are most needed.
6. However, short inspections that immediately convert to full inspections have proven to be challenging for inspectors and for schools, so we want to try to reduce further the number of short inspections that convert. As set out in the initial consultation response,² we will go ahead with carrying out section 5 inspections for a proportion of good schools where the risk assessment indicates that the short inspection would be highly likely to convert. The new proposals we are consulting on in this document build on this by seeking to

¹ Certain types of schools that were judged outstanding for overall effectiveness at their most recent section 5 inspection are currently not exempt schools and must be inspected within the prescribed interval. These are special schools (including maintained special schools, special free schools, alternative provision academies and non-maintained special schools), pupil referral units and maintained nursery schools. However, these schools are eligible for a section 8 short inspection.

² 'Short inspections of good schools: a report on the responses to the consultation', Ofsted, September 2017; www.gov.uk/government/consultations/short-inspections-of-good-schools.

give good schools more time to improve if they undergo a short inspection and demonstrate potential to be outstanding or if inspectors have some concerns that they could be declining to requires improvement.

7. In summary, if a good school appears to demonstrate very strong practice at the short inspection, it will be given time to consolidate this and will next receive a section 5 inspection at an appropriate time. This will give an opportunity for the school's success to be recognised and celebrated.
8. Good or outstanding schools that have a short inspection and that may be at risk of decline to requires improvement or where inspectors have not gathered enough evidence to determine that they remain good will not normally see their inspection converted to a section 5 inspection. The short inspection will only convert if there are concerns that the school may be inadequate. Instead of conversion, the school will be given clear priorities for improvement. The overall effectiveness judgement will not change and the next inspection will be a section 5 within the statutory inspection window. This time period will be an opportunity for the school to address areas of concern before a full inspection. Exceptionally, where an outstanding school that deals with particularly vulnerable groups is at risk of decline to requires improvement, the inspection may be converted.
9. Central to this approach is a desire to arrest decline and, where necessary, enable schools to seek appropriate support as they see fit, for example from within their multi-academy trust, a local authority, national leaders of education, teaching school alliances or the regional schools commissioner's team. Through this approach, we are seeking to 'catch schools before they fall'.
10. The proposals, if taken forward, will also allow us to make more efficient use of our Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) resource and, most importantly, of Ofsted Inspectors who are serving practitioners, which we know brings benefits to the whole sector.

Proposals in full

11. These proposals seek to further reduce the number of conversions from short inspections to full section 5 inspections. We want to ensure that we use our discretionary power to convert a short inspection to a full inspection only where it is absolutely necessary. This is because we want to reduce further the burden on schools, offer opportunities for improvement and be more effective in the way that we deploy our inspectors, many of whom are serving practitioners.
12. We know that conversion can often be a stressful experience for school leaders, teachers and other staff. The current approach can be an imperfect use of serving practitioners' time. It creates uncertainty for Ofsted Inspectors, who often have to be placed on contingency only to be stood down at short notice. Our proposals set out in this consultation are designed to bring greater clarity to the process and make the experience of inspection less burdensome on both

schools and inspectors. These proposals have also been informed by the feedback we received in response to the consultation about short inspections that ran from 15 June to 18 August 2017.

Proposal 1

13. We propose that inspectors will continue to convert short inspections, normally within 48 hours, if there are serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education. Keeping children safe, while they are in their care, is the paramount responsibility of schools. Managing pupils' behaviour effectively so that learning and the progress that pupils make are not disrupted is also a key consideration. And parents need to know as soon as possible if the quality of education is likely to have declined significantly into inadequacy.
14. We propose that if inspectors have seen evidence that the school may be inadequate in one or more of the graded judgements under section 5 inspections, the short inspection will convert to a full section 5 inspection, normally within 48 hours. In these circumstances, conversion would be necessary because the school would be highly unlikely to achieve its current grade were a section 5 inspection to be carried out.
15. If the school provision includes early years and/or post-16 programmes of study and the evidence indicates that one of those areas may be inadequate, inspectors will need to take into account the size of the early years and/or sixth-form provision in relation to the size of the school when considering the impact of these judgements on the overall effectiveness grade. If early years and/or post-16 provision represent a small proportion of the overall school provision and if concerns about these aspects do not extend to the rest of the school, inspectors will not convert the short inspection to a full section 5 inspection. However, if they represent a reasonable proportion of school provision or concerns about them raise questions about the effectiveness of the overall provision, a conversion will take place. For example, shortcomings in the leadership and management of a sixth form may be indicative of wider failings in the leadership and management of the school overall.
16. If a short inspection converts to a full section 5 inspection, all the grades on the four-point scale will be considered by the inspectors who conduct the section 5 inspection. Conversion does not in any way predetermine the outcome of a section 5 inspection.

Proposal 2

17. If a short inspection does not convert in line with proposal 1, but inspectors are not fully confident that the school would receive its current grade if a full section 5 were carried out, the school will receive a letter setting out strengths and priorities for improvement. A section 5 inspection would be carried out at a later date. In this way, we would hope to 'catch schools before they fall from being good' and give them some more time to improve.

18. The letter to the school will be published. It will say that the school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection that will take place within the statutory timeframe. In line with statutory regulations, the 'inspection window clock' will not be reset by the short inspection because the essential test of those regulations has not been met. The school's current overall effectiveness judgement of good will stand until a new full inspection is carried out. The letter schools receive will confirm this.³
19. This will apply when:
- safeguarding is effective
 - behaviour is not inadequate
 - the evidence from the short inspection does not indicate that any of the section 5 graded judgements is likely to be inadequate
 - the evidence from the short inspection indicates that the school might not achieve a judgement of good if a full section 5 inspection were to be carried out.
20. For these schools, the inspection letter will confirm that their judgement has not changed. It will identify clear priorities for improvement. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection that must be conducted within five years from the end of the academic year in which the previous section 5⁴ inspection took place. Typically, this will be within one to two years because of the timing of inspections of good schools. This period will give the school the opportunity to address weaknesses and seek support to improve from appropriate bodies.

Proposal 3

21. If a short inspection does not convert in line with proposal 1, but inspectors identify strong practice that could indicate the school is improving towards being outstanding, the school will receive a letter that sets out strengths and priorities for further improvement. A section 5 inspection would be carried out at a later date. In this way, we hope to give the school time for the strong practice to be consolidated and the opportunity for it to be celebrated through confirmation of an outstanding judgement.

³ In accordance with the requirements of The Education (School Inspection) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015; www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/170/contents/made. In order for the inspection to be a 'relevant inspection' under the regulations, it must be conducted for the purpose of determining that the school remains good or outstanding, and having been so conducted the Chief Inspector is satisfied that the evidence does not suggest that the school would not achieve such a grade if a section 5 inspection were carried out.

⁴ Or a short inspection (a 'relevant inspection' under the regulations) previously carried out that confirmed that the school remained good or outstanding.

22. The letter to the school will be published. It will make clear that the school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection because of the strengths exhibited at the short inspection. It will confirm that the school remains good and highlight the specific areas where particularly strong practice has been evidenced. The decision on the timing of the full section 5 inspection will be for the relevant Ofsted regional director to determine. Typically, this will be less than two years, and could be much sooner, because we expect this to be earlier than the normal time for the next inspection of a good school. Schools may request an early inspection and these requests will be considered, as now, by the Ofsted region.

The consultation process

23. We welcome your responses to this consultation paper. The consultation opens on Thursday 21 September and closes on Wednesday 8 November 2017.
24. The information you provide us with will inform our consideration of changes to short inspections from January 2018.
25. We will publish a response to the consultation before schools close for the Christmas break.

Sending back your response

26. There are three ways of completing and submitting your response:

- **Online electronic questionnaire**

Visit our website to complete and submit an electronic version of the response form: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SIGoodSchools.

- **Download and email**

Visit our website to download a Word version of the response form that you can complete on your computer:
www.gov.uk/government/consultations/short-inspections-of-good-schools.

When you have completed the form, please email it to Kelly-Anne Smith at **inspection.consultation@ofsted.gov.uk** with the consultation name in the subject line.

- **Print and post**

Visit our website to print a Word or PDF version of the response form that can be filled in by hand: www.gov.uk/government/consultations/short-inspections-of-good-schools.

When you have completed it, please post it to:

Schools Policy Team
Floor 8
Ofsted
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

Questionnaire for short inspections of good schools

Confidentiality

The information you provide will be held by us. It will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research to help us to become more effective, influence policies and inform inspection and regulatory practice.

We will treat your identity in confidence, if you disclose it to us.

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

- Yes please complete Section 1 and the following questions
 No please complete Section 2 and the following questions

Section 1

If you would like us to consider publishing the views of your organisation, please indicate this below.

Organisation: _____

Section 2

Which of the below best describes you? Please tick one option.

I am:

Headteacher or school senior leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governor/academy trustee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pupil/student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other school staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Academy trust representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local government representative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inspector	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)			

Short inspections of good schools

Question 1

To what extent do you agree or disagree that inspectors should continue to convert short inspections, normally within 48 hours, if there are serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education?

For more information about this proposal see paragraphs 13 to 16 of this consultation document.

Do you...

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please add any comments to our proposal:

Question 2

To what extent do you agree or disagree that, where a short inspection does not convert but inspectors are not fully confident that the school would receive its current grade if a full section 5 were carried out, the school should receive a letter setting out strengths and priorities for improvement and a section 5 inspection should be carried out at a later date?

For more information about this proposal see paragraphs 17 to 20 of this consultation document.

Do you...

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please add any comments to our proposal:

Question 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree that, where a short inspection does not convert but inspectors identify strong practice that could indicate that the school is improving towards being outstanding, the school should receive a letter setting out strengths and priorities for further improvement and a section 5 inspection should be carried out at a later date?

For more information about this proposal see paragraphs 21 and 22 of this consultation document.

Do you...

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please add any comments to our proposal:

What did you think of this consultation?

One of the commitments in our strategic plan is to monitor whether our consultations are accessible to those wishing to take part.

How did you hear about this consultation?

- Ofsted website
- *Ofsted News*, Ofsted's monthly newsletter
- Ofsted conference
- Twitter (@ofstednews)
- Another organisation (please specify, if known)
- Other (please specify)

Please tell us what you thought of this consultation by answering the questions below.

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
I found the consultation information clear and easy to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found the consultation easy to find on the Ofsted website.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had enough information about the consultation topic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would take part in a future Ofsted consultation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is there anything you would like us to improve or do differently for future consultations? If so, please tell us below.

Additional questions about you

Your answers to the following questions will help us to evaluate how successfully we are communicating messages from inspection to all sections of society. We would like to assure you that completion of this section is optional; you do not have to answer any of the questions. All responses are confidential.

Please tick the appropriate box.

1. Gender

Female <input type="checkbox"/>	Male <input type="checkbox"/>
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2. Age

Under 14 <input type="checkbox"/>	14–18 <input type="checkbox"/>	19–24 <input type="checkbox"/>	25–34 <input type="checkbox"/>	35–44 <input type="checkbox"/>	45–54 <input type="checkbox"/>	55–64 <input type="checkbox"/>	65+ <input type="checkbox"/>
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3. Ethnic origin

(a) How would you describe your national group?

- British or mixed British
- English
- Irish
- Northern Irish
- Scottish
- Welsh
- Other (specify if you wish)

(b) How would you describe your ethnic group?

Asian		Mixed ethnic origin	
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black African and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Caribbean and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Asian background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other mixed ethnic background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black		White	
African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any White background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other ethnic background	
Any other Black background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese			
Any Chinese background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

4. Sexual orientation

Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian <input type="checkbox"/>	Gay <input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>
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5. Religion/belief

Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other, please state:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	

6. Disability

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
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