

# Further education and skills inspection handbook

Handbook for inspecting further education and skills providers under part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, for use from September 2019

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## Introduction

1. This handbook describes the main activities that inspectors undertake when they inspect further education and skills providers in England under Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. It also sets out the judgements that inspectors will make and on which they will report.
2. The handbook has two parts:
  - Part 1. How further education and skills providers will be inspected. This contains information about the processes before, during and after the inspection.
  - Part 2. The evaluation schedule. This contains the evaluation criteria inspectors use to judge the quality and standards of further education and skills providers and the main types of evidence used.
3. This handbook is a guide for inspectors on how to carry out inspections of further education and skills providers. It is also available to providers and other organisations to make sure that they are informed about inspection processes and procedures. Inspectors will apply their professional judgement when they use this handbook. It balances the need for consistent inspections with the need to respond to each provider's individual circumstances. This handbook applies to inspections from 1 September 2019 under the 'Education inspection framework: education, skills and early years' (EIF).<sup>1</sup>

## Types of providers subject to inspection covered by this handbook

4. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and this handbook, the providers that Ofsted inspects include the following:
  - further education colleges
  - sixth-form colleges
  - independent specialist colleges
  - dance and drama colleges<sup>2</sup>
  - independent learning providers
  - local authority providers

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<sup>1</sup> 'Education inspection framework: draft for consultation', Ofsted, January 2019, [www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-draft-for-consultation](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-draft-for-consultation).

<sup>2</sup> Dance and drama colleges are inspected against the principles of the EIF at the request of the DfE.

- designated institutions<sup>3</sup>
- employer providers
- higher education institutions where they provide further education and/or apprenticeship training up to level 5
- 16 to 19 academies/free schools.

## Privacy notice

5. During inspection, inspectors will collect information about staff and learners by talking to them, looking at the provider's records and survey responses and observing everyday life at the provider. Inspectors may also meet with employers where appropriate. No names will be recorded, but some of the information may make it possible to identify a particular individual. Ofsted uses this information to prepare its report and for the purposes set out in its privacy policy.<sup>4</sup>
6. Individuals and organisations have legal requirements to provide information to Ofsted as part of inspections. Ofsted has powers under section 132 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that relate to inspecting providers of further education and skills for learners aged 16 and over. Inspectors can 'inspect, take copies of, or take away any documents relating to the education or training' of students from the provider's premises. These powers also enable our inspectors to inspect computers and other devices that may hold such information.

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<sup>3</sup> Designated institutions have specially designated educational status under section 28 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Further education and skills: Ofsted privacy notice, [www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-privacy-notices/further-education-and-skills-ofsted-privacy-notice](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-privacy-notices/further-education-and-skills-ofsted-privacy-notice). Ofsted will not publish any information that identifies an individual in the report but may name the principal, the chief executive or equivalent.

## Part 1. How further education and skills providers will be inspected

### Before the inspection

#### How providers are selected for inspection

7. Ofsted uses risk assessment to ensure that its approach to inspection is proportionate, so that it can focus its efforts where it can have the greatest impact. Risk assessment has two stages:
  - stage one involves an assessment of each provider, based on analysis of published data
  - stage two involves a more in-depth desk-based review of a wider range of available information.
8. Ofsted uses a broad range of indicators to select providers for inspection. Where available, these include:
  - previous inspection records
  - self-assessment reports
  - performance data
  - destination data
  - information provided, or concerns raised, by a funding body, government regulator, employers, parents and carers, and learners
  - the views of learners, parents and carers, and employers, gathered through online questionnaires
  - relevant local intelligence such as changes to leaders or structures
  - any information about significant changes to the type of provision and the number of learners
  - the size and complexity of the provider, including the number and range of types of provision, the geographical spread of education or training centres and any recent changes to these.
9. Relevant information received at any point in the year can be used to select providers. Ofsted will review this information regularly.<sup>5</sup> The outcomes from monitoring visits and support and challenge visits will be taken into account when reviewing the providers selected.

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<sup>5</sup> 'Methodology note: risk assessment of good and outstanding further education and skills providers', Ofsted, April 2018; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/risk-assessment-methodology-for-schools-and-further-education-and-skills-providers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/risk-assessment-methodology-for-schools-and-further-education-and-skills-providers).

10. Ofsted may also carry out unannounced inspections and monitoring visits at any time.

## **Frequency of inspection**

### **Providers judged outstanding**

11. Providers judged outstanding at their most recent inspection are not normally subject to routine inspection.<sup>6</sup> However, a provider judged as outstanding may receive a full inspection if its performance declines or there is another compelling reason, such as potential safeguarding concerns. A provider judged as outstanding may also be inspected as part of Ofsted's survey work, or through a monitoring visit.

### **Providers judged good**

12. Providers judged good for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection will usually be inspected within five years of the publication of the previous inspection report. This will normally be a short inspection but may be a full inspection if information suggests that this is the most appropriate way forward, for example if the provider's performance has declined. For more information, see the section on short inspections (paragraphs 123 to 156). A good provider may also be inspected as part of Ofsted's survey work, or through a monitoring visit. (See sections on these events below.)

### **Providers judged to require improvement**

13. A provider judged to require improvement at their most recent inspection will normally have a full re-inspection within 12 to 30 months of the publication of the report of its previous inspection. These providers will be subject to a monitoring visit before the full re-inspection (see paragraph 29).<sup>7</sup>

### **Providers judged inadequate**

14. Ofsted will carry out re-inspection monitoring visits to providers judged as inadequate (see paragraphs 34 to 40). It will also carry out a full inspection (termed a re-inspection) of a provider judged as inadequate within 15 months of publication of that provider's last full inspection report. The major exceptions to this are providers that no longer receive their main funding or that have

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<sup>6</sup> The following types of provision are still subject to routine inspection when they have been judged to be outstanding: higher education institutions offering further education and/or apprenticeships; local authority providers; independent specialist colleges.

<sup>7</sup> Except those providers judged to require improvement that were notified of their inspection before 10 November 2017. See: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-and-challenge-for-further-education-and-skills-providers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-and-challenge-for-further-education-and-skills-providers) and [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/inspection-visits-to-further-education-and-skills-providers-judged-to-require-improvement](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/inspection-visits-to-further-education-and-skills-providers-judged-to-require-improvement).

been removed from the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers (RoATP) and deliver only apprenticeship provision.<sup>8</sup> From that point, neither a re-inspection monitoring visit nor a full re-inspection will normally take place.

## New providers

### *Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision*

15. Ofsted will normally carry out a monitoring visit to any provider that became newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision from or after April 2017. The monitoring visit will normally be carried out within 24 months of the start of the direct funding by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or through the apprenticeship levy.<sup>9</sup> For more details about monitoring visits, see paragraphs 26 to 28 and 30 to 33.
16. Such providers will normally receive their first full inspection within 24 months of the publication of the monitoring visit report. However, if a provider has received one or more insufficient progress judgements at the time of the monitoring visit, it will normally receive its full inspection within 6 to 12 months of the publication of the monitoring visit report.
17. If a provider is judged to have made insufficient progress with respect to safeguarding, it will normally receive one further monitoring visit to review only its safeguarding arrangements within four months of the previous monitoring visit.<sup>10</sup>

### *Other new providers*

18. Other new providers not covered in the section above that come into the scope of Ofsted inspection and receive direct funding for the first time from ESFA, will normally be inspected within three years of the start of the contract or the first drawing down of funding. This includes any provider newly directly funded for those types of provision set out in paragraph 50 (16 to 19 study programmes, adult learning or high needs) and providers that became newly directly funded

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<sup>8</sup> If a provider judged to be inadequate has apprenticeship provision graded inadequate and has also been removed from the RoATP, that apprenticeship provision will not normally be covered as part of the re-inspection monitoring visit and subsequent re-inspection. See also ESFA guidance, 'Removal from register of apprenticeship training providers', <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/removal-from-register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers>

<sup>9</sup> 'Apprenticeship funding: how it works', Department for Education, 2018; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work).

<sup>10</sup> If the provider's only insufficient progress judgement relates to safeguarding and it then receives a judgement of reasonable or significant progress with respect to safeguarding at the second monitoring visit, the provider will not then have a judgement of insufficient progress. The full inspection will then take place within 24 months of the publication of the first monitoring visit report.

for apprenticeship provision before April 2017 and that have not yet received their first full inspection. Any such new provider may receive a monitoring visit at any reasonable time. Risk concerns arising from such visits, or from other sources, may lead to an earlier full inspection within the three-year window.<sup>11</sup>

### *Newly merged colleges*

19. A newly merged college will normally be inspected as a new provider within three years of the merger. This will normally be a full inspection. For inspection purposes, regardless of the type of merger, all merged colleges will be viewed as new colleges.<sup>12</sup> A newly merged college will not carry forward any inspection grades from predecessor colleges. It will have no inspection grade until the first full inspection.
20. Any newly merged college may receive a monitoring visit at any reasonable time. A newly merged college will normally receive a monitoring visit before the first full inspection if the overall effectiveness grade of one or more of the predecessor colleges was requires improvement or inadequate.<sup>13</sup> Concerns about risks arising from this or other sources may lead to an earlier full inspection within the three-year window.<sup>14</sup>

### *Sixth-form colleges that convert to become 16 to 19 academies*

21. Sixth-form colleges that convert to become 16 to 19 academies will be treated according to their most recent inspection outcome. Those that are outstanding will normally only be inspected if their performance drops or there is another compelling reason, such as potential safeguarding concerns. Those that were good will normally receive a short inspection within five years of the publication of the previous inspection report (but may receive a full inspection within that timeframe if risks are identified). Those judged as requires improvement will normally be inspected within 12 to 30 months of the publication of the previous report and will normally receive a monitoring visit within 7 to 13 months of the publication of the previous report (as set out in paragraphs 13 and 29). Those judged inadequate will normally be inspected within 15 months of the last inspection of the converted college and normally receive re-inspection monitoring visits as set out in paragraphs 14 and 34 to 40.
22. A 16 to 19 academy/free school that is re-brokered for performance reasons and is therefore being treated as a new 16 to 19 academy will be treated as a new provider from the point of re-brokerage for the purposes of inspection.

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<sup>11</sup> See paragraph 7 above for the range of sources that Ofsted draws on for risk assessment.

<sup>12</sup> This refers to mergers between colleges.

<sup>13</sup> This may not apply if the merged college has already received a support and challenge visit or the most recent merger took place before January 2018.

<sup>14</sup> See paragraph 7 above for the range of sources that Ofsted draws on for risk assessment.



## Types of inspection

### Full inspection

23. Providers that are graded as requires improvement or inadequate will undergo a full inspection as outlined above. Providers judged as outstanding and good may also undergo a full inspection if, for example, their performance has declined.

### Short inspection

24. Providers judged good at their last inspection will normally undergo a short inspection. (For information about short inspections see paragraphs 123 to 156 of this handbook.)

### Survey visits

25. Surveys based on topics linked to national priorities may involve any providers, including those judged good or outstanding.

### Monitoring visits

26. A monitoring visit is a type of inspection that explores one or more specific themes. The purpose of a monitoring visit is to assess progress against these themes in order to encourage improvement and assess risk. Ofsted may carry out a monitoring visit of any provider at any reasonable time. There will normally be two working days' notice of a monitoring visit, although they may be unannounced. They will normally last up to two days. They will normally result in a published report. Concerns of risk arising from monitoring visits may lead to an earlier full inspection.
27. Ofsted will normally use one of the following progress judgements on monitoring visits:
- insufficient progress: progress has been either slow or insubstantial or both, and the demonstrable impact on learners has been negligible<sup>15</sup>
  - reasonable progress: action taken by the provider is already having a beneficial impact on learners, and improvements are sustainable and are based on the provider's thorough quality assurance procedures
  - significant progress: progress has been rapid and is already having considerable beneficial impact on learners.

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<sup>15</sup> Note the references to insufficient progress judgements with respect to ESFA intervention in this guidance: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/removal-from-register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/removal-from-register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers)

28. Monitoring visits follow a similar process to that set out in part 1 of this handbook, except where otherwise noted. Inspectors will arrive at progress judgements relating to the themes that have been explored on that visit, having regard to Part 2 of this handbook as the broader context for monitoring visits.

### **Monitoring visits to providers judged to require improvement**

29. Ofsted will normally carry out a monitoring visit to a provider that has been judged to require improvement. The visit will normally take place between 7 and 13 months from the publication of the report of the inspection at which it was judged to require improvement. Inspectors will make progress judgements in relation to the main areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. The monitoring visit will result in a published report.<sup>16</sup> Through the monitoring visit, inspectors will challenge the provider to improve so that it can become good by the next full inspection.<sup>17</sup> The report will set out what progress the provider has made since the last inspection and what improvements still need to be made.

### **Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision**

30. Ofsted will normally carry out a monitoring visit to any provider that became newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision from or after April 2017. This visit will normally be carried out within 24 months of the start of the direct funding by ESFA or through the apprenticeship levy. These monitoring visits will follow the themes below.
- How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?
  - What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?
  - How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place?
  - What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aims and/or personal goals? (If the provider has adult education provision.)
  - What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that learners benefit from high-quality 16 to 19 study programmes that

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<sup>16</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/consultations/inspection-visits-to-further-education-and-skills-providers-judged-to-require-improvement](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/inspection-visits-to-further-education-and-skills-providers-judged-to-require-improvement).

<sup>17</sup> If a provider judged to require improvement has apprenticeship provision graded inadequate and has been removed from the RoATP, that apprenticeship provision will not normally be covered as part of the monitoring visit.

prepare them well for their intended next steps? (If the provider has 16 to 19 study programme provision.)

31. For such providers, progress judgements are made by taking into account that the provider is newly directly funded and by considering the impact of actions taken to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours of apprentices.
32. Should the provider have other types of provision (for example, funding for learners with high needs) each type of provision will be covered by a separate theme and progress judgement.
33. If a provider is judged to have made insufficient progress with regard to the safeguarding theme, it will normally receive one further monitoring visit to review its safeguarding arrangements only within four months of the previous monitoring visit.

### **Re-inspection monitoring visits to inadequate providers**

34. Re-inspection monitoring visits to providers found to be inadequate overall are carried out soon after the publication of the inspection report, except where a provider's main funding has been terminated and/or the provider has been removed from the RoATP and the provider delivers only apprenticeship provision.<sup>18</sup>
35. The first visit will be to assess what steps the provider has taken to improve the weak areas identified in the inspection report and to recommend priorities for further improvement. Follow-up visits will be to assess the impact of measures to improve provision for learners and challenge the provider to improve. Ofsted will publish the findings and share them with ESFA and the further education commissioner or equivalent, as relevant.
36. Follow-up monitoring visits will normally continue to take place until the next full inspection is completed, usually within 15 months of the publication date of the most recent full inspection report.
37. Monitoring visits will normally last up to two days. On follow-up monitoring visits, inspectors will report and make progress judgements on the areas for improvement against themes and will set out priorities for improvement against each theme.

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<sup>18</sup> If a provider judged to be inadequate has apprenticeship provision graded inadequate and which has been removed from the RoATP, that apprenticeship provision will not normally be covered as part of the monitoring visit.

38. Themes are based on the areas for improvement in the recently published inspection report. They focus on actions that will lead to improvement for learners and not on processes and systems.
39. Ofsted will use the progress judgements that are set out in paragraph 27 above.
40. The process for the publication and quality assurance of monitoring visit reports is the same as for full inspection reports. (See paragraphs 112 to 122 of this handbook.)

### **Pilot inspections**

41. From time to time, Ofsted may pilot different approaches to inspection, to test, for example, proposed new frameworks. Specific details for this type of inspection will be provided on a case-by-case basis.

### **Scope of inspection**

42. Ofsted will normally inspect providers that have one or more of the following for which the provider is directly responsible:
  - a direct funding contract with ESFA
  - an advanced learner loans facility from ESFA
  - adult education funding from Greater London Authority (GLA) and/or one of the mayoral and combined authorities (MCAs)<sup>19</sup>
  - apprenticeship training provision funded through the apprenticeship levy (see paragraph 50).<sup>20</sup>
43. Subcontracted provision that is part of the directly funded provider's responsibility is also within the scope of inspection. As part of the inspection, inspectors may inspect any provision carried out on behalf of the provider through subcontract or partnership arrangements, including by subcontractors that hold additional direct contracts of their own. Typically, inspection visits to, or communications with, subcontractors are likely to include the inspection of the direct contract holder's arrangements to quality assure and improve the provision.

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<sup>19</sup>Nine combined authorities have been established so far, of which six have in place directly elected mayors. Details of all powers and funding that have been devolved to individual areas can be found on the Devolution Register. Currently the authorities are: Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region, West Yorkshire, North-East, Tees Valley, West Midlands, West of England, Cambridgeshire/Peterborough.

<sup>20</sup> Further education colleges and sixth-form colleges will continue to be inspected at corporation level.

44. Inspections will not include provision that the provider operates under subcontracted arrangements on behalf of other providers.
45. Ofsted reserves the right to inspect and grade any subcontractor and its provision as a separate entity against the EIF and this handbook.
46. Any provision that is part of a pilot scheme is normally outside the scope for inspection.

### **Inspecting residential provision in colleges**

47. Ofsted inspects residential accommodation in colleges against the national minimum standards for the accommodation of students under 18. The standards apply to 'institutions within the further education sector', as defined by section 91 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, which have residential accommodation for 16- and 17-year-olds.<sup>21</sup> These inspections are separate from the inspection of the education and training provision of the college described in this handbook.
48. These inspections are carried out by Ofsted's social care regulatory inspectors. The approach is set out in the 'Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): residential provision of further education colleges'.<sup>22</sup> If a college is registered as a care home, the Care Quality Commission inspects the accommodation.

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<sup>21</sup> Further and Higher Education Act 1992; [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/13/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/13/contents).

<sup>22</sup> [www.gov.uk/guidance/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif-residential-provision-of-further-education-colleges](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/social-care-common-inspection-framework-sccif-residential-provision-of-further-education-colleges).

## Inspection of religious education and collective worship in relation to Catholic sixth-form colleges

49. In the case of these colleges, denominational religious education, the college's Catholic ethos and the content of collective worship will be inspected by the relevant Catholic diocese. Inspectors will not comment on the content of religious worship or on denominational religious education. Inspectors may visit lessons and assemblies in order to help them evaluate how these contribute to students' personal development and behaviour and attitudes.

### What inspections will cover

50. On a full inspection, inspectors will make key judgements on:

- quality of education
- behaviour and attitudes
- personal development
- leadership and management.

They will also make judgements on each major type of provision, as set out in the table below.

Type of provision	Description of provision
Education programmes for young people	Provision funded through the ESFA 16 to 18 classroom-based funding stream for study programmes and traineeships for those aged 16 to 18, and for those aged 16 to 24 with high needs, and funded through high needs provision funding, and for ESFA-funded full-time provision for 14- to 16-year-olds enrolled in colleges.
Adult learning programmes	Provision funded through the adult education budget and/or advanced learning loans, including employability training for learners aged 19 and over referred for training by Jobcentre Plus. This includes community learning provision and traineeships for those aged 19 and over. This may include adult education provision funded by GLA and/or MCAs.
Apprenticeships	Apprenticeships at levels 2 to 5 funded by the ESFA and/or through the apprenticeship levy. <sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-accountability-statement](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-accountability-statement). Where a higher education institution provides apprenticeship training in one or more apprenticeship standards that includes a mandatory higher education qualification, the Office for Students may provide Ofsted with provider-specific information to inform the inspection judgement relating to the apprenticeship provision.

51. Inspectors will take account of all types of provision within the scope of the inspection (see paragraph 170 below). They will grade and report on the types of provision where there are significant numbers of learners, or a high level of funding, and on which learners who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable are enrolled. The quality of provision for learners with high needs and with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), a much broader group than those attracting high-needs funding, will always be considered during the inspection of any type of provision. If the number of learners in a particular type of provision is low, it will normally be inspected and reported on, but may not be graded. Sector subject areas will not be graded or reported on separately. However, inspectors will use their subject expertise to contribute to the evidence base for types of provision and key judgements.<sup>24</sup>
52. The lead inspector will confirm to the provider which types of provision will be graded and reported on separately.

### **Before the inspection**

53. Inspections and monitoring visits will be led by either one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or an Ofsted Inspector (OI) assisted by other HMIs and/or Ofsted Inspectors.<sup>25</sup>
54. The lead inspector's planning will focus primarily on how inspectors will gather evidence of learners' experiences, to evaluate the four key judgements of the EIF and the different types of provision offered by the provider.
55. Inspectors' evidence-gathering will include observations of teaching, as well as support arrangements, discussions with learners, scrutiny of learners' work and the arrangements made for them to gain experience of work. Inspectors may undertake some inspection activities jointly with members of the provider's staff, such as visits to learning sessions.
56. Inspectors may plan visits to learners at work to observe members of the provider's staff and subcontracted staff (if applicable) carrying out teaching or assessment activities with learners. These visits give inspectors the opportunity to hold discussions with learners and employers, to discuss learning programmes and to look at learners' work, where relevant. Inspectors may carry out interviews with learners, employers and staff by telephone or through webinars.

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<sup>24</sup> In the case of monitoring visits, inspectors will use their range of expertise to contribute to the relevant themes.

<sup>25</sup> An Ofsted Inspector is an inspector who is not an HMI but is deployed by Ofsted in a variety of roles, usually as a team inspector on further education and skills inspection.

57. The lead inspector will draw up a pre-inspection team briefing for the inspection team, including the nominee (see paragraphs 59–60). The purpose of this briefing is to focus inspection activity and identify areas for exploration.
58. Inspectors will select the learning activities, learners and employers to be visited, taking into account:
- the number of sites
  - the number of subcontractors
  - the value of the provider’s contract(s) with funding agencies or with employers
  - the geographical spread of learners
  - the mode of delivery and attendance
  - the demographics of the learner group
  - the types of provision.

### **The role of the nominee in inspection**

59. Each provider is invited to nominate a senior member of staff to act as the provider’s main link with the inspection team. The nominee should:
- have a detailed understanding of the provider’s programmes and operations, including, where appropriate, those of subcontractors
  - be sufficiently senior to ensure the cooperation of staff at all levels
  - have authority to carry out the role with autonomy.
60. The nominee’s responsibilities include:
- providing information for the lead inspector to support inspection planning
  - briefing the provider’s staff about arrangements
  - informing learners and employers about the inspection<sup>26</sup>
  - attending all team meetings, including the final team meeting
  - coordinating feedback arrangements during and at the end of the inspection
  - liaising with the lead inspector and ensuring that documents are available, and that staff can attend meetings.

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<sup>26</sup> Inspectors may identify a number of off-site learners and employers to observe and/or interview. The nominee should ensure that they are notified, as well as any other users and partners who inspectors wish to meet.



## Notification of inspection

61. Notification of all types of further education and skills inspections normally takes place up to two working days before the inspection unless the inspection is unannounced. Ofsted reserves the right to carry out unannounced inspections or monitoring visits.
62. Ofsted will notify the provider in the morning of the notification day and will email the notification letter. The lead inspector will then contact the provider as soon as possible and by the following morning at the latest. The lead inspector should make sure that:
  - good communications and effective working relationships are established
  - the arrangements for the inspection are confirmed.

## Planning for the inspection

63. As soon as the provider has been notified of the inspection, staff should draw together the information in the lists below that is readily available. These should be working documents and not prepared specifically for the inspection. Inspectors should keep review of documentation to a minimum. Providers are not expected to prepare anything extra for inspectors.
64. Inspectors should be aware that the provider will need to accommodate the inspection while still managing day-to-day operations.
65. Requests for a deferral will be handled in accordance with Ofsted's policy.<sup>27</sup>
66. To ensure that the lead inspector has a clear understanding of the scope and range of provision, the nominee will send the following information, as applicable, as soon as possible:
  - the current number of learners in the following age groups: 14 to 16<sup>28</sup>; 16 to 18; 19+
  - the current overall number of learners (excluding apprentices) at level 1 or below, level 2, level 3 and level 4/5, by subject area
  - the current number of intermediate, advanced and higher-level apprentices, according to age groups: 16 to 18, 19 to 24, and 25+, by subject area and by apprenticeship framework or standard
  - the current number of learners following employability programmes and those who have attended in the previous 12 months

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<sup>27</sup> 'Deferring Ofsted inspections', Ofsted, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferring-ofsted-inspections](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferring-ofsted-inspections).

<sup>28</sup> Inspectors may ask for specific information relating to 14- and 15-year-olds.

- details of learners who are on a study programme but who are not working towards a substantial qualification
  - the current number of learners following traineeships and those who have attended in the previous 12 months
  - the current number of learners on community learning programmes and those who have attended in the previous 12 months
  - the current numbers of learners with SEND and the number of learners for whom high-needs funding is received
  - the geographical spread of training premises and learners, particularly work-based learners and apprentices, according to regions or sub-regions
  - the names and location of employers
  - the names and location of subcontractors.
67. To ensure that the provider understands the inspection process, the lead inspector will hold a telephone planning meeting with the nominee/most senior member of staff.
68. The lead inspector will use the telephone planning meeting to arrange how necessary information is made available to inspectors. The provider should inform all subcontractors' staff, current learners, employers and other users about the inspection, emphasising that inspectors may visit any sessions involving learners either on the provider's premises or at other locations, including learners' workplaces or online.
69. Meetings with learners and key staff, visits to learners at work or external sites and online interviews or webinars should be agreed as quickly as possible. However, the lead inspector will not tell the provider which teaching or training sessions may be visited during any part of the inspection.
70. The team briefing letter will provide details about the start of the on-site inspection, including the location and timing of the initial meeting and any other relevant arrangements for the first day.

### **Seeking the views of learners, parents and carers, employers and staff**

71. Learners' views are important to inspection. It is important that all learners can express their views to inspectors. This also applies to employers and any other key stakeholders. Inspectors will consider the views of learners, parents and carers, and employers. They will do this before the inspection and during the inspection.
72. Ofsted's online questionnaires, Learner View and Employer View, are intended to gather the views of learners and employers. There is also an online questionnaire for parents. Respondents are able to complete these at any time during the year. There is also a questionnaire for members of the provider's

staff, which is only in place from the inspection notification stage. After notifying the provider of the inspection, Ofsted asks the nominee to tell all staff, learners, employers and (where appropriate) parents of learners, that the inspection is taking place. The nominee should ask them to give their views to the inspection team by using these online questionnaires.<sup>29</sup>

73. Surveys of learners' views carried out by the provider, funding bodies or other organisations provide evidence for the inspection and may indicate themes to explore further. They do not replace talking with learners during the inspection or views collected through Learner View.
74. Inspectors will talk to learners, for example group representatives, the provider's learner governor(s), student council members, and learners with SEND. This may happen face to face or remotely, for instance through a webinar. Ofsted may use other surveys to capture views.
75. Inspectors will take account of views expressed to them by learners, employers, parents, governors, staff and the nominee. Staff and learners must be able to speak to inspectors in private to ensure that their responses are not influenced by the presence of the nominee or senior staff. Meetings during the inspection are likely to include those with samples of learners selected by inspectors and open invitation meetings.
76. The lead inspector will take account of any external views on the provider's performance, for example through briefings from commissioning and funding bodies.

## During the inspection

### Days allocated to inspection and inspection team members

77. A full inspection normally lasts between two and five days on site, although the number of inspectors involved will vary according to the size and complexity of the provider. Some inspectors may only be required for part of the inspection.
78. Short inspections (see paragraphs 123 to 156) normally last no longer than two/three days on site, although the number of inspectors involved will vary according to the size and complexity of the provider. Some inspectors may only be required for part of the inspection.
79. Monitoring visits usually last between one and two days, depending on the scope of the visit and size of the provider.
80. How the lead inspector will deploy the team depends on the number of learners and sites, the type(s) of provision and range of learning programmes.

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<sup>29</sup> This does not apply in the case of monitoring visits.

## Gathering and recording evidence

81. Inspectors will spend most of their time collecting evidence on and off site, including through work scrutiny, speaking to learners, teachers and trainers, and observing teaching, training and assessment. Inspectors must ensure that observations include attention to the quality of learning for individuals and different groups of learners, either in individual or in group sessions.
82. Inspectors are also likely to review case studies of learners, including potentially vulnerable learners, such as learners with SEND, and including those who have high needs and young people in care. They may also ask for meetings with members of staff who work with individual learners who receive additional learning support. The inspection team will, wherever possible, meet with a student representative.
83. Other evidence sources include:
  - discussions with learners and scrutiny of their work
  - analysis of provider and learner records, showing planning for, and monitoring of, learners' individual progress and destinations from their starting points when they began their courses or apprenticeships
  - analysis of documents relating to leadership and management
  - learner and employer questionnaires
  - meetings with learners, employers, staff, governors, board members, councillors, trustees and the provider's partners, where appropriate.
84. The main focus of meetings will be on evaluating the impact of actions taken by the provider's staff on learners' personal development, their learning and progress and/or their outcomes.
85. During the inspection, inspectors will collect, analyse and record evidence and their judgements on paper or electronic evidence forms. It is essential that the evidence accurately reflects discussions. Inspectors should identify clearly information that was provided in confidence.
86. The evidence forms, together with any briefings, plans or instructions prepared by the lead inspector, and responses from learners and employers, either in hard copy or in emails, contribute to the evidence base. The lead inspector is responsible for assuring the quality of evidence.

## Inspecting the quality of education

87. Inspection of this key judgement is based on the impact that education has on learners' outcomes and personal development. Inspectors will gather evidence from a variety of learning activities, including:
  - direct observation

- evaluation of learning materials and their use by learners
  - evaluation of the use of technology to deliver content and assess learning
  - examination of what learners know, understand, can do and make as a result of their learning.
88. Ofsted has no preferred teaching style. Inspectors judge the quality of education by the ways in which learners acquire knowledge, develop skills and adopt successful behaviours for work and success in life or study. Providers are not expected to use the Ofsted evaluation schedule to evaluate teaching or individual lessons, or to undertake a specified number of lesson observations. Teaching staff should plan their lessons as usual. Ofsted does not require staff to provide inspectors with individual lesson plans, or to provide previous lesson plans. Ofsted does not specify how planning should be set out, the length of time it should take or the amount of detail it should contain. Inspectors are interested in the effectiveness of planning rather than the form it takes. Inspectors will not grade learning sessions or assessments.
89. Inspectors may visit employers, to observe learners' on-the-job skills development. They will evaluate how learners are progressing in relation to their starting points.
90. Inspectors may also conduct short, focused visits to lessons or workshops. These will usually last between 5 and 15 minutes and may have a specific focus, for example the arrangements for learner support, attendance, or the use of individual learning plans. Inspectors will not normally give feedback to individual members of staff following these sessions.
91. Inspectors will not normally indicate which sessions they plan to observe. The team reserves the right to visit any learner or employer and may cancel or add visits to ensure that enough evidence is collected.

### **Joint observations**

92. Inspectors may invite appropriate staff from the provider to take part in joint observations of learning sessions.
93. Inspectors will connect observation activity to other evidence for the purpose of triangulation. Observation is not about evaluating individual teachers or trainers; there will be no grading of the teaching or training observed by inspectors. Instead, inspectors will view learning across a sample of the provision to provide part of the evidence base to inform the judgements that are made against the EIF.
94. Observation is primarily useful for gathering evidence about 'implementation' and how learning sessions contribute to the quality of education. Inspectors can use observations to gather evidence about how well staff implement the curriculum by looking at teaching of one or more subjects, and by triangulating

observations with evidence collected through discussions with staff, learners, and, where relevant, employers, and through work scrutiny.

95. Observation is also useful for gathering evidence that contributes to other key judgements, including behaviour and attitudes. Observation enables inspectors to see direct evidence about how behaviour is managed and how behaviours and attitudes are developed in individual learning sessions. This evidence will complement the other evidence that inspectors gather about behaviour and attitudes during inspection.

### **Work scrutiny**

96. Inspectors may scrutinise learners' work across the provider and aggregate insights to provide part of the evidence for an overall view of quality of education, primarily around the 'impact' of the education provided. Inspectors will not evaluate individual pieces of work. Inspectors will connect work scrutiny to lesson observation and, where possible, conversations with learners, staff and, where appropriate, with employers.
97. Inspectors may invite appropriate staff from the provider to take part in joint scrutiny of learners' work.
98. Scrutiny is useful primarily for gathering evidence about the 'impact' of the quality of education. Inspectors can use work scrutiny to evaluate learners' progress and progression through their course of study. Work scrutiny will show whether learners know more and can do more, and whether the knowledge and skills they have learned are well sequenced and have developed incrementally. Inspectors will synthesise what they find in order to contribute to their overall assessment of the quality of education across the provider.

### **The use of data**

99. Inspection uses a range of data that is available publicly. Both before and during the inspection, inspectors will analyse the performance of the provider using the most recent validated data. Analysis may be at overall provider level and/or for individual subjects or types of provision. Although data alone will not lead directly to judgements, the primary data that measures success for each type of provision will provide important evidence for judging the impact of the quality of education.
100. Inspectors will evaluate learners' progress in relation to their starting points, based on their rate of learning, acquisition of knowledge, skills and behaviours and whether they have achieved their individual, challenging targets.

### **The self-assessment report**

101. Inspectors will use self-assessment reports, or equivalent documents, to assess risk, monitor standards and plan for inspection. If these documents are not

available in advance, the provider should share the latest report/plan(s) with the lead inspector following notification of the inspection.

102. Where a report is not available at the risk assessment and planning stage, inspectors will use readily available data.
103. During the inspection, inspectors will compare their findings with the provider's self-assessment.
104. Ofsted does not require self-assessment to be provided in a specific format. Any assessment that is provided should be part of the provider's processes and not generated solely for inspection purposes.<sup>30</sup>

### **Meetings during inspection**

105. The inspection team may hold a number of team meetings. These may include:
  - an initial team meeting to brief the inspection team on the schedule for the inspection, to clarify any queries relating to team members' roles and to receive a brief update from the provider, including, if appropriate, an initial briefing from the provider's managers with responsibility for key judgements of the inspection<sup>31</sup>
  - daily meetings for the nominee to hear the emerging judgements and identify any opportunities to provide additional evidence
  - a grading/progress judgement meeting on the last day of the inspection to reach judgements about the provider.
106. The nominee will attend team meetings, although they may not contribute to decisions about inspection judgements. By taking part in discussions about evidence collected during the inspection, the nominee can help to ensure that all appropriate evidence is taken into account. Any concerns about evidence should be raised with the lead inspector. The nominee will report to the provider's staff on the progress of the inspection.
107. Inspectors may hold additional meetings with the provider's staff, as agreed at the planning meeting.
108. The lead inspector will also hold a feedback meeting for the provider and invitees to hear the key messages at the end of the inspection.

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<sup>30</sup> Ofsted will periodically write to all providers to request that they provide a copy of their self-assessment. Providers can send their latest self-assessment to [fes.sar@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:fes.sar@ofsted.gov.uk) at any time.

<sup>31</sup> Not all inspectors will necessarily attend this meeting.

## Reaching final judgements

109. Inspectors will discuss emerging findings regularly with the nominee and, where appropriate, with senior staff.
110. The lead inspector will ensure that the inspection team agrees the judgements for full inspections using the descriptors in Part 2 of this handbook.<sup>32</sup> The overall judgements will reflect all of the evidence considered by the inspection team. The evidence base must support the judgements convincingly.

## Providing feedback

111. Before leaving, the lead inspector should ensure that the provider is clear:
- about the grades awarded for each judgement required<sup>33</sup>
  - that the grades awarded are provisional and, although unlikely, may be subject to change through moderation and quality assurance
  - that the points provided in the feedback, subject to any change, will be referred to in the text of the report (and that inspection findings may be shared with the Further Education Commissioner, ESFA, DfE, Ofqual and/or Office for Students (OfS) before the publication of the report), although the text of the report may differ slightly from the oral feedback
  - about the key findings and recommendations for improvement
  - about the procedures that will lead to the publication of the report
  - about the complaints procedure
  - where relevant, about the implications of the provider being judged as requires improvement or inadequate overall<sup>34</sup>
  - that, if the overall effectiveness or the leadership and management of a sixth-form college, further education college or designated institution are judged inadequate, this has implications for the college in relation to appointing newly qualified staff in future years.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> For monitoring visits, refer to paragraph 26.

<sup>33</sup> For monitoring visits, when grades are referred to, this should be understood to refer to progress judgements.

<sup>34</sup> Note the references to inadequate judgements on inspections and insufficient progress judgements on monitoring visits with respect to ESFA intervention in this guidance:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/removal-from-register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/removal-from-register-of-apprenticeship-training-providers)

<sup>35</sup> See 'Induction for newly qualified teachers (England)', Department for Education, 2018;

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/induction-for-newly-qualified-teachers-nqts](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/induction-for-newly-qualified-teachers-nqts).



## After the inspection

### Arrangements for publishing the report

112. The lead inspector is responsible for writing the inspection report and submitting the evidence to Ofsted shortly after the inspection ends. The text of the report should explain the judgements and reflect the evidence. The findings in the report should be consistent with the feedback given to the provider at the end of the inspection.
113. Inspection reports are quality assured before Ofsted sends a draft copy to the provider. The draft report is restricted and confidential and should not be shared externally or published. The inspection process is not complete until the provider receives the final version of the report. Ofsted may share the findings of the inspection with the Further Education Commissioner, ESFA, DfE, Ofqual and OfS as necessary.
114. Ofsted will inform the provider of the timescale for commenting about factual inaccuracies in the draft report. The provider must respond within two working days of receipt of the draft report. The lead inspector will consider any factual inaccuracies identified by the provider and will make changes as appropriate.
115. Typically, providers will receive an electronic version of the final report within 17 working days of the end of the inspection. In most circumstances, the final report will be published on Ofsted's website within 19 working days. Ofsted will tell the provider the publication date when it sends the draft report.
116. If Ofsted decides that a report requires further quality assurance or finds that the provider is provisionally inadequate, the provider will usually receive an electronic version of the final report within 26 working days. In these circumstances, the final report will usually be published within 28 working days.

### The inspection evidence base

117. The evidence base for the inspection must be retained for the time specified in Ofsted's guidance.<sup>36</sup> This is normally six years from the publication of the report. Information must not be disposed of if it is still required by Ofsted.

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<sup>36</sup> 'Retention and disposing of information'. Inspectors can access this through the Ofsted engagement hub: <https://ofstedengagement-hub.ofsted.gov.uk/user/login?destination=home>.

## Quality assurance and complaints

### Quality assurance of inspection

118. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector must ensure that inspections are carried out in accordance with the principles of inspection and the code of conduct.
119. Ofsted monitors the quality of inspections through a range of formal processes and senior HMI or HMI may visit some providers to quality assure inspections. Inspection evidence bases and reports are subject to quality assurance monitoring and moderation within Ofsted. The lead inspector will be responsible for feeding back to the team inspectors about the quality of their work and their conduct.
120. All providers are invited to take part in a post-inspection evaluation in order to contribute to inspection development.

### Handling concerns and complaints

121. The great majority of Ofsted's work is carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns arise during an inspection visit, they should be raised with the lead inspector as soon as possible in order to resolve issues before the inspection is completed. The lead inspector should seek advice where necessary. Inspectors should note any concerns raised, and actions taken, in the inspection evidence.
122. If it is not possible to resolve concerns during the inspection, the provider may wish to lodge a formal complaint. The lead inspector should ensure that the provider is informed of the procedures for making a formal complaint. Information about how to complain is available on Ofsted's website.<sup>37</sup> Complaints must be submitted no more than 10 working days after the publication of the inspection report. Ofsted does not normally delay publication of an inspection report while complaints are investigated. Complainants should not wait for the outcomes of any related Freedom of Information (FOI) request before making a complaint.

## Short inspections

### The purpose of short inspections

123. Providers awarded a grade of good for overall effectiveness at their previous inspection will usually be inspected within five years of the publication of the report of that inspection. Most will receive a short inspection (see paragraph 12). A short inspection will determine primarily whether the provider provides a

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<sup>37</sup>Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', Ofsted, 2018; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted).

good quality of education/training for learners and whether safeguarding is effective.

124. A short inspection letter will **not** make individual graded judgements. It will **not** change the provider's overall effectiveness grade.
125. Once a provider has received its first short inspection and is confirmed to be good, a further short inspection will usually be conducted within five years of the publication of the report of that inspection, unless risk assessment identifies that the provider should be selected for a full inspection.<sup>38</sup>

### **Working with leaders, managers and governors on short inspections<sup>39</sup>**

126. As with all other inspections under the EIF, the model of short inspections is designed to encourage constructive, challenging professional conversation between inspectors, leaders, managers and governors.

127. The main purpose of short inspections is to evaluate:

- whether the provider's quality of education/training is good
- whether safeguarding is effective
- the capacity of all leaders, managers and governors to drive continued improvement and manage change well.

128. Short inspections will cover the following themes.

- Is the quality of education/training good?
- Has the provider dealt with the areas for improvement/next steps identified in the previous inspection report well?
- Are the provider's safeguarding arrangements effective? (In the same way as would happen on a full inspection according to Part 2 of this handbook.)
- Are careers education and guidance of a good quality?
- Has the provider managed and implemented changes to provision effectively since the last inspection?

129. Lead inspectors will plan inspections so that leaders, managers and governors have time to present evidence about the good management and quality of their provision. The lead inspector, or in larger providers, two inspectors, will arrive

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<sup>38</sup> As at paragraph 12.

<sup>39</sup> Where there is no governing or supervisory body, we expect that this role will be covered by representatives of the provider.

at the provider on the day following notification and complete the planning for the inspection on site with the provider.

130. Leaders, managers and governors are **not** required to:

- prepare documentary evidence that is in addition to any standard documents or policies that leaders, managers and governors use for normal day-to-day business
- prepare a self-evaluation or equivalent in a specified format or with specific wording; any assessment they provide should be part of the provider's usual evaluation work and not generated solely for inspection purposes.

131. A short inspection will be carried out by one or more inspectors over one or two days, depending on the size and type of provider.<sup>40</sup> Inspectors, who may be HMI or Ofsted Inspectors, will have appropriate expertise in inspecting the particular type of provision.

132. Short inspections provide an opportunity for constructive professional dialogue between inspectors and providers. They focus on the themes set out in paragraph 128. Inspectors do not make judgements against all aspects of the EIF that are made during a full inspection but judge overall whether the provider is good and identify further areas for improvement.

133. The judgements will be fed back to the nominee and principal/chief executive (and others where relevant). A short letter will record how the provider has performed against the themes, state whether the provider is 'good' and outline any further areas for improvement. It will normally be published within 19 working days unless the inspection becomes a full inspection.

### **Outcomes of a short inspection**

134. There are three possible outcomes for a short inspection. These are explained below and illustrated in the diagram on page 33.

- **Outcome 1** – The provider continues to be a good provider.
- **Outcome 2** – The provider is good and there is sufficient evidence of improved performance to suggest that the provider may be judged outstanding, in which case the short inspection will be extended to a full inspection.
- **Outcome 3** – The inspection team has insufficient evidence to satisfy themselves that the provider remains good. Or, there are concerns, in which case the short inspection will be extended to a full inspection.

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<sup>40</sup> This is one or two days on site. Additional time is also allocated for the lead inspector to prepare and write the inspection report, some of this work may be completed on site.

135. Inspectors **will always** report on whether safeguarding is effective. If safeguarding is not effective, inspectors **will always** extend the short inspection to a full inspection.

136. Inspectors will inspect and report on careers guidance.<sup>41</sup>

*Providers that remain good (outcome 1)*

137. Where inspectors judge that a provider remains good, they will confirm this judgement in the final feedback to leaders, managers and governors at the end of the short inspection. Inspectors will also suggest 'next steps' for the provider to work on before the next inspection.

*Extending short inspections to full inspections (outcomes 2 and 3)*

138. Where the lead inspector has insufficient evidence to confirm that the provider remains good or has concerns that there is evidence that the provider may no longer be good (which may include concerns about safeguarding), or if there is sufficient evidence of improved performance to suggest that the provider may be judged outstanding, this will be made clear to the provider by the end of the short inspection.

139. In this situation, the lead inspector will extend the short inspection to a full inspection.

140. For outcomes 2 and 3, the short inspection will be extended to a full inspection as soon as possible. This will usually be completed within 15 working days of the short inspection. More inspectors may join the lead inspector on site. This may include HMI and/or OIs as team inspectors. The inspection team will gather and evaluate evidence in order to make a full set of graded judgements against the EIF. The lead inspector from the short inspection will usually continue on the full inspection.

141. A decision to extend the inspection **does not** predetermine the outcome of the full inspection. At the end of the full inspection, the provider may receive any grade on the four-point grading scale.

142. A short inspection letter will not be produced when the short inspection extends to a full inspection. Instead, the provider will receive a full inspection report.

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<sup>41</sup> Section 41 of the Technical and Further Education Act 2017 requires that Ofsted 'comment[s]' on careers guidance provided to students in further education colleges, sixth-form colleges and designated institutions. The Act defines students for this purpose as those aged 16 to 18 and those up to the age of 25 who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. While the statutory duty applies only to the inspection of the above institutions, inspectors will inspect and comment in similar fashion on careers advice on short and full inspections of all further education and skills providers as appropriate. If there are no 16- to 19-year olds or those with EHC plans, the inspection may not cover careers guidance.

143. The lead inspector of the full inspection will contact the nominee and inform them of when the full inspection will start. They will set out the team composition and deployment and areas for further investigation. The inspector may request further evidence and information for planning.
144. Between the end of the short stage and the beginning of the full stage, evidence from the short inspection will be shared with the new team. The lead inspector and that team will build on the evidence to complete the full inspection and avoid repetition or duplication.
145. The full stage of the inspection may move straight to evidence gathering, without an initial team meeting.

### **Inspectors' planning and preparation**

146. The lead inspector will prepare for the short inspection by reviewing:
- the previous inspection report, especially any recommendations
  - the findings of any recent Ofsted survey and/or monitoring visit letters
  - any other performance data sources available
  - the provider's self-assessment report, if this is available
  - responses from Learner View, Employer View and the parent and staff questionnaires
  - any other information available to the inspection team.
147. The lead inspector will share with the inspection team:
- essential information about the provider and the timings for the inspection
  - a short list of any areas to be investigated, based on a brief analysis of the pre-inspection information
  - a brief outline of inspection activity, for example any meetings with managers, staff, learners and employers. This will be finalised on site.

### **Notification and introduction**

148. Ofsted will normally notify the provider up to two working days before the inspection, unless the inspection is unannounced. Ofsted reserves the right to carry out unannounced inspections or visits. Ofsted will notify the provider in the morning of the notification day and will email the notification letter. The lead inspector will then contact the provider as soon as possible.
149. During the initial telephone call, the HMI lead inspector will:
- establish contact with the provider's nominee

- confirm the date of the inspection and remind the provider that the letter following the short inspection will be published on Ofsted’s website, except where the inspection becomes a full inspection
  - explain the purpose of the inspection, including the different possible outcomes of the short inspection
  - indicate the likely format and timings of the short inspection
  - ensure that the provider alerts all learners, employers, parents and carers and provider staff about the inspection and that they may give their views by means of Learner View, Employer View and the parent/carer and staff questionnaires
  - make initial arrangements for meeting or interviewing governors, managers and members of staff, learners, employers and others
  - make arrangements to visit employers or subcontractors as necessary.
150. Inspectors should also request, during the telephone call, by subsequent email or at the first opportunity on site, that the following information (where relevant) is available at the start of the inspection:
- information about learners, their types of provision, subject areas and locations
  - lesson/session/workshop timetable information
  - the staff list
  - the current self-assessment report or equivalent and any evaluation of the impact of actions taken to date
  - recent data on learners’ outcomes, performance and progress
  - lists of employers and subcontractors.
151. Inspectors should take into account that the provider will need to accommodate the inspection while still managing day-to-day operations.
152. Requests for a deferral will be handled in accordance with Ofsted’s policy.<sup>42</sup>

### **Feedback at the end of the short inspection**

153. The provider should receive oral feedback at the end of the short inspection. The lead inspector is responsible for managing this meeting and agreeing attendance with the nominee.

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<sup>42</sup> ‘Deferring Ofsted inspections’, Ofsted, 2016; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferring-ofsted-inspections](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferring-ofsted-inspections).

154. The feedback meeting will follow a similar approach to that for a full inspection (see paragraph 111). The main difference for short inspections is that the feedback meeting will:

- clearly state whether the provider has a good quality of provision and provide feedback, including next steps
- indicate whether there are any significant concerns or there is insufficient evidence to conclude that the provider is a good provider; if either is the case, the inspection will be extended into a full inspection and the process will be explained. (There will be no short inspection outcome letter in this case.)
- indicate whether there is sufficient evidence of improved performance to extend the inspection to a full inspection. (There will be no short inspection outcome letter in this case.)
- make clear whether the provider's safeguarding arrangements are judged to be effective
- make clear the provider's performance against the other themes in paragraph 128
- ensure that the provider is clear about the process when the lead inspector has indicated that the short inspection will be extended to a full inspection.

### **Reporting on the short inspection**

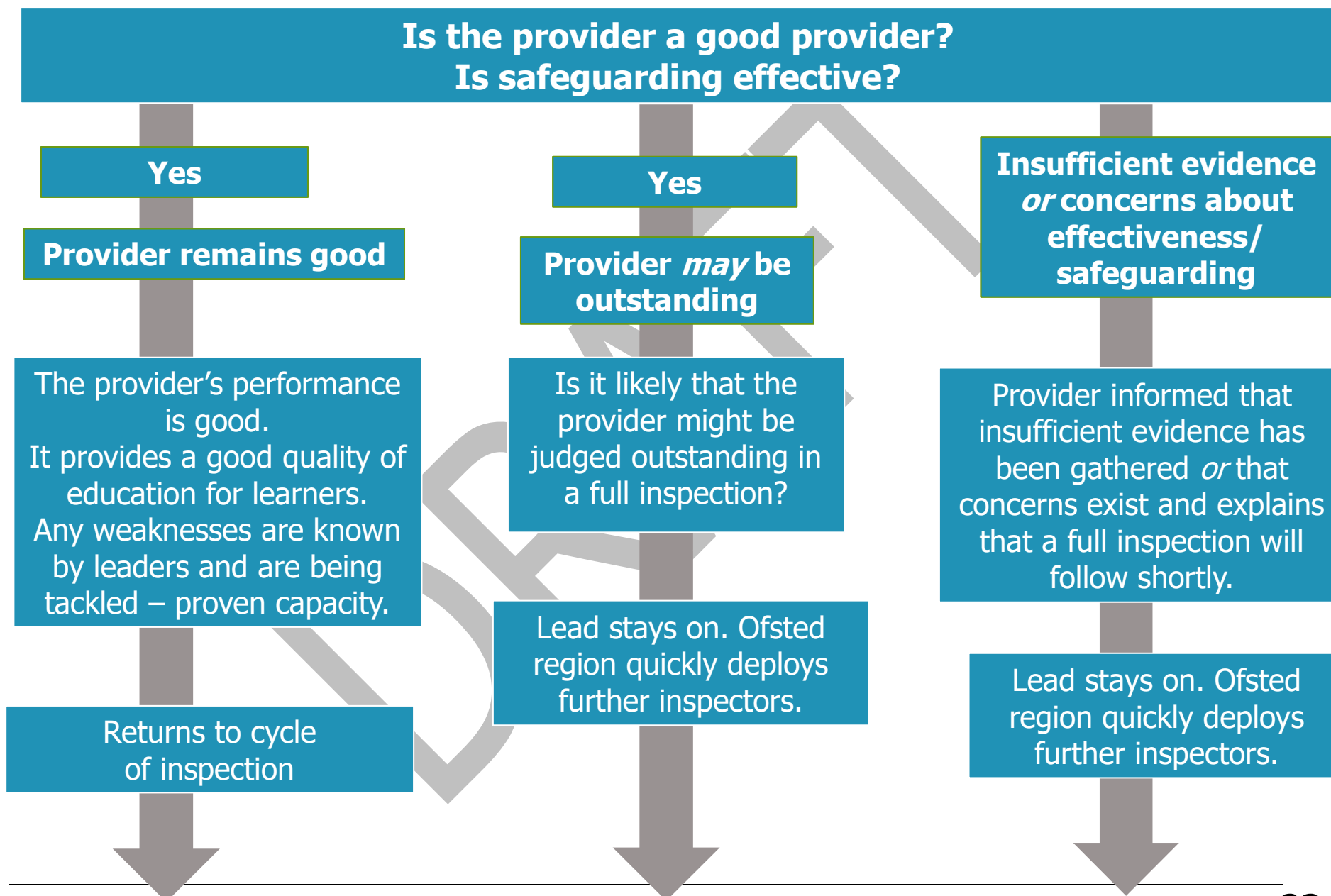
155. If the quality of provision is good, the provider will receive a report setting out the inspection findings, in the form of a letter giving:

- the date of the inspection
- a summary of how the provider has met each theme
- the judgement on whether safeguarding arrangements are effective
- confirmation that the provider is good
- any next steps that the provider should take.

### **Quality assurance and publication of the short inspection letter**

156. The short inspection letter will be published on Ofsted's website. Quality assurance and publication processes are the same as those for full inspection reports (see paragraphs 112 to 122).





## Part 2. The evaluation schedule: how further education and skills providers will be judged

### Background to the evaluation schedule

157. Inspectors must use the evaluation schedule alongside the guidance set out in Part 1 of this handbook, 'How further education and skills providers will be inspected', and the EIF.
158. The evaluation schedule is not exhaustive. It does not replace the professional judgement of inspectors. Inspectors must interpret grade descriptors in relation to the type(s) of provision inspected and context of the provider.
159. In line with the EIF, inspectors will make judgements on the following areas:
- overall effectiveness
- and the four key judgements:
- quality of education
  - behaviour and attitudes
  - personal development
  - leadership and management.
160. Ofsted has drawn the criteria for each of these judgements from inspection experience, areas of consensus in academic research and research that Ofsted has itself undertaken. You can find a full note of how the judgement criteria relate to the available research here.<sup>43</sup>
161. Inspectors use the following four-point scale to make all judgements, including, where applicable, on the effectiveness of the different types of provision offered:
- grade 1: outstanding
  - grade 2: good
  - grade 3: requires improvement
  - grade 4: inadequate.

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<sup>43</sup> 'Education inspection framework: overview of research', Ofsted, January 2019; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-overview-of-research](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-overview-of-research).

## The evaluation schedule and grade descriptors

### Overall effectiveness

162. Inspectors must use all their evidence to evaluate what it is like to be a learner at the provider. In making their judgements about a provider's overall effectiveness, inspectors will consider whether the quality of provision is good or whether it exceeds good and is therefore outstanding. If it is not good, inspectors will consider whether it requires improvement or is inadequate.
163. In judging the overall effectiveness, inspectors will take account of:
- the overall effectiveness judgement for each type of provision inspected
  - the four key judgements.
164. Inspectors will first judge the overall effectiveness of each type of provision inspected. To do this, they will apply the grading criteria set out in the EIF. The section 'Evaluating types of provision' (paragraph 169-179) sets out how inspectors will evaluate the overall effectiveness of each type of provision.
165. The inspection report will include a numerical grade for each type of provision inspected.
166. Inspectors will then grade the four key judgements. Where there are differences in grades given for a key judgement or a type of provision, inspectors will consider the following when awarding the grade for overall effectiveness:
- the number of learners in the relevant provision
  - the impact of the weaker areas on learners' overall outcomes and experience
  - the provider's capacity to improve, considering the availability of resources to ensure the sustainability of improvement, the track record of improvement and the impact of recent improvement activity.
167. Inspectors will always make a written judgement in the section on leadership and management about the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding learners.
168. Before making the final judgement on overall effectiveness, inspectors must evaluate the extent to which the education and training provided meets the needs of the full range of learners, including learners with SEND and who have high needs.

## Evaluating types of provision

169. The following section outlines what inspectors will look for to demonstrate how the grade descriptors for each key judgement apply to each type of provision.

### Education programmes for young people

170. To achieve comparability with the way in which Ofsted inspects and judges 16 to 19 provision in schools and academies under the EIF, the considerations below align with those in the school inspection handbook.
171. In the further education and skills handbook, inspectors will consider learners aged 14 to 16 enrolled full time at a college, and learners aged 16 to 24 with education, health and care plans (EHC) as part of this judgement.
172. Inspectors will consider how well leaders and teachers promote high expectations for achievement and progress through the systems they use to monitor and develop the quality of provision for learners, including the most disadvantaged and learners with SEND, and those with high needs. Inspectors will consider how leaders and teachers develop or adopt a purposeful curriculum that provides progression and stretch, as well as mathematics and English for all learners, including those without GCSE legacy grades A\* to C (reformed grades 4 to 9), as well as, where relevant, work experience or industry placements and non-qualification activities. Inspectors will review how high-quality impartial careers guidance enables learners to make progress and move on to a higher level of qualification, employment, further training or independent living when they are ready to do so.
173. Inspectors will use observations of teaching and training activities, and discussions with learners, teachers, support staff and, where relevant, employers, to consider how well learners develop personal, social and independent learning skills. Inspectors will judge how well learners achieve high levels of punctuality and attendance, and how well their conduct and attitudes, including in non-qualification or enrichment activities and/or work experience, prepare them for employment or to progress to higher levels of study and/or independence. Inspectors will also consider whether arrangements for safeguarding learners are effective.

### Adult learning programmes

174. Inspectors will judge, where appropriate, how well the curriculum for each strand of a provider's adult learning programme, such as programmes for those with SEND, vocational training, employability training and community learning, has a clearly defined purpose that is relevant to the education and training needs and interests of learners, and to local employment opportunities, and supports local and national priorities.

175. Inspectors will judge how effectively leaders, managers and governors focus public funding on people who are disadvantaged and least likely to participate in education and training, and work with other partners to widen participation and support learners' progression to further learning and/or employment relevant to their personal circumstances. Where appropriate, inspectors will judge how well providers record learners' progress and achievements to inform teaching and support programmes to help learners reach their goals.
176. Inspectors will also consider whether arrangements for safeguarding learners are effective.

### **Apprenticeships**

177. Inspectors will consider how well leaders and managers ensure that the apprenticeship curriculum meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Evidence will include the extent to which the provider's staff engage with employers to complete the apprenticeship commitment statement, plan the initial assessment, training, assessments, review points and milestones throughout, agree any additional qualifications to be included, if any, and monitor and support apprentices, including those with SEND and those who have high needs, to progress quickly, gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours and achieve to their full potential.
178. Inspectors will judge how well trainers, assessors, coaches and mentors communicate up-to-date vocational and technical subject knowledge that reflects expected industry practice and meets employers' needs. Inspectors will determine whether apprentices acquire that knowledge effectively so that they demonstrate the required skills and behaviours that enable them to complete their apprenticeships, contribute to their workplace and fulfil their career aims through progress to their intended job roles or other sustained employment, promotion or, where appropriate, a move to a higher level of apprenticeship or qualification.
179. Inspectors will also consider whether arrangements for safeguarding young people and vulnerable learners are appropriate and effective.

### **Grade descriptors for overall effectiveness**

#### **Outstanding (1)**

- The quality of education is outstanding.
- All types of provision offered are likely to be outstanding, including provision for SEND learners and learners who have high needs. In exceptional circumstances, a type of provision may be good, as long as there is convincing evidence that the provider is improving this provision rapidly and securely towards it being outstanding.
- All key judgements are likely to be outstanding. In exceptional circumstances, one of the key judgements may be good, as long as there is

convincing evidence that the provider is improving this area rapidly and securely towards it being outstanding.

- Safeguarding is effective.

180. To judge whether a provider is **good, requires improvement** or is **inadequate**, inspectors will adopt a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

### **Good (2)**

- The quality of education is at least good.
- All types of provision offered are likely to be good or outstanding, including provision for SEND learners and learners who have high needs. In exceptional circumstances, a type of provision may require improvement, if there is convincing evidence that the provider is improving this provision rapidly and securely towards it being good.
- All other key judgements are likely to be good or outstanding. In exceptional circumstances, one of the key judgement areas may require improvement, as long as there is convincing evidence that the provider is improving it rapidly and securely towards it being good.
- Safeguarding is effective.

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

- Other than in exceptional circumstances, it is likely that, where the provider requires improvement in any of the key judgements, the provider's overall effectiveness will require improvement.
- Safeguarding is effective, or, if there are any weaknesses in safeguarding, they are not difficult to rectify, and there are no serious failings that leave learners being harmed or at risk of harm.

### **Inadequate (4)**

- The judgement on the overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate where any one of the key judgements is inadequate and/or safeguarding is ineffective.

## **Quality of education**

181. Inspectors will take a rounded view of the quality of education that a provider delivers to its learners. Inspectors will consider the provider's curriculum, which embodies the decisions the provider has made about the knowledge, skills and behaviours its learners need to acquire to fulfil their aspirations for learning, employment and independence. They will also consider the way teachers teach and assess to support learners to build their knowledge and to apply that knowledge as skills. Finally, inspectors will also consider the outcomes that learners achieve as a result of the education they have received.

## **Intent**

182. In evaluating the provider's educational intent, inspectors will primarily consider the curriculum leadership provided by senior and subject leaders.
183. All learners in further education and skills deserve opportunities to follow an ambitious curriculum that enables them to build and secure the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to succeed, regardless of their intentions for study.
184. The curriculum is a powerful means to address social disadvantage, giving learners access to the highest levels of knowledge, skills and experience. The curriculum should be based on a firm agreement about what education and training should provide for each learner. What is the body of knowledge, and what are the technical, vocational and life skills that a learner needs so that they will thrive in the future and not be left behind? How are these influenced by the provider's local context and learners' typical gaps in knowledge and skills? Do they take account of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that learners bring with them?
185. Inspectors will seek to assure themselves that the provider intends to include all its learners in its high academic, technical and vocational ambitions. They will also seek to assure themselves that the provider offers disadvantaged learners or those with SEND, including those who have high needs, a curriculum that remains ambitious and meets their needs. It is expected that the provider's curriculum intent will have regard to the needs of learners, employers, and the local, regional and national economy as necessary.

## **The curriculum**

186. We recognise the importance of the provider's autonomy in choosing their own curriculum approaches. Therefore, if leaders can show that they have planned the coverage, content, structure and sequencing of the curriculum, and can show that they have implemented it effectively, then inspectors will assess a provider's curriculum favourably. Providers taking radically different approaches to the curriculum will be judged fairly on their own intentions and merits.

## **Intent – sources of evidence**

187. Inspectors will draw evidence about leaders' intent for the curriculum principally from discussion with senior and subject leaders. Inspectors will explore:
- how leaders have ensured that a subject curriculum includes content which has been identified as most useful and that this content is taught in a logical progression, systematically and explicitly for all learners to acquire the intended knowledge, skills and behaviours

- how leaders have sequenced the curriculum up to the point at which the inspection takes place
- how leaders ensure the curriculum supports learners' progression and provides knowledge and/or skills for the future (including non-qualification activity where relevant)
- how learners see links between different areas of knowledge and skills and recognise that some knowledge and skills are transferable
- how carefully leaders have thought about the sequence of teaching knowledge and skills to build on what learners already know and can do.

188. Inspectors will also consider any documentary evidence that leaders wish to provide in the format that the provider normally uses. Inspectors will not request materials to be produced or provided in any specific format for inspection.

### **Implementation**

189. In evaluating the implementation of the curriculum, inspectors will focus on how the curriculum is taught at subject, classroom or workshop level.

190. Teachers need sufficient subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge to be able to teach learners effectively. We recognise that there will be areas in which staff are not yet experts, so inspectors will explore what leaders are doing to support staff to ensure that no learner receives poor teaching.

191. Ofsted continues to have no preferred style of teaching or training. However, effective teaching and training should ensure that learners know more and remember what they have learned within the context of the approach that teachers have selected to serve the aims of their curriculum. Consequently, learners will be able to apply vocational and technical skills fluently and independently. Effective teachers also check learners' understanding effectively, identifying and correcting misconceptions.

### **The use of assessment**

192. When used effectively, assessment can help learners to embed and use knowledge fluently and show that they are competent in their application of skills. The results of effective assessment assist teachers to produce clear and actionable next steps for learners. However, assessment is too often carried out in a way that creates unnecessary burdens on staff and learners. It is therefore important that leaders and teachers understand its limitations and avoid its excessive use in producing data that serves little purpose.

193. Inspectors will evaluate how assessment supports the teaching of the curriculum, while not driving teachers towards excessive individualisation,



differentiation or interventions that are almost impossible to deliver without lowering expectations of some learners and/or driving up teacher workload.

### **Implementation – sources of evidence**

194. The following activities will provide inspectors with evidence about the provider's implementation of its intended curriculum:
- discussions with subject specialists, subject leaders and teachers about the curriculum that learners follow, the intended end points towards which those learners are working, and their view of how those learners are progressing through the curriculum
  - reviews of schemes of work or other long-term planning (in whatever form teachers and/or subject leaders usually produce and use them)
  - observations of classes, workshops and other activities
  - scrutiny of work produced by learners
  - interviews with learners
  - discussions with teachers about how often they are expected to record, upload and review data
  - discussions with subject specialists and leaders about the content and pedagogical content knowledge of teachers, and what is done to support them
  - discussions with staff, including specialist staff, who support learners in the development of their knowledge, skills and behaviours.
195. To allow the effective triangulation of evidence, inspectors will ensure that they gather a variety of these types of evidence in relation to the same sample of learners. Inspectors will also ensure that the samples of learners they choose are sufficient to allow them to reach a valid and sufficiently reliable judgement on the quality of education offered by the provider overall.

### **Impact**

196. When inspectors evaluate the impact of the education provided by the provider, they will focus on what learners have learned, and the skills they have gained and can apply.
197. Inspectors will make clear that there need be no conflict between teaching a broad, rich curriculum and achieving success in examinations and tests. A well-constructed, well-taught curriculum will lead to good results because those results will reflect what learners have learned. National tests and examinations are therefore a useful indicator of the outcomes learners achieve, and inspectors will balance these with their assessment of the achievement of learners drawn from the first-hand evidence they gather on inspection about

non-qualification activity and the progress that learners make from starting points.

198. Learning must build towards a goal. At each stage of learners' education, they are being prepared for the next stage of education, training or employment or independence. Inspectors will consider whether learners are ready for the next stage by the time they leave the provider or provision that they attend. Inspectors will also consider whether learners are ready for the next stage and are going to appropriate, high-quality destinations.

### **Impact – sources of evidence**

199. Inspectors will gather evidence of the impact of the education offered by the provider from the following sources:
- nationally generated performance information about learners' progress and attainment. This information is available in the inspection data summary report (IDSR), which is available to providers and inspectors
  - first-hand evidence of the progress learners are making, drawing together the evidence from the interviews, observations, work scrutiny and documentary review described above (see 'Implementation – sources of evidence')
  - any information provided by the provider about the destinations to which their learners progress when they leave the provider
  - telephone conversations or other similar discussions with a selection of the providers and other destinations that learners go to when they leave the provider
  - discussions with learners about what they have remembered about the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

### **Balancing intent, implementation and impact to reach a quality of education judgement**

200. Inspectors will reach a single graded judgement for the quality of education; they will not grade intent, implementation and impact separately. Inspectors will draw on all the evidence they have gathered, using their professional judgement.

### **Grade descriptors for quality of education**

#### **Outstanding (1)**

For the quality of education of a provider to be judged **outstanding**, the provider must meet **all** the criteria for a good quality of education **securely and consistently**. In addition, the following criteria must apply:

#### **Intent**

- The provider’s curriculum intent is strong. Throughout the provider and its subcontractors, teachers have a firm and common understanding of the intended curriculum and what it means for their practice.

### **Implementation**

- The provider’s implementation of the curriculum is consistently strong. Across all parts of the provider, including in subcontracted provision, and for learners with SEND, including those who have high needs, teaching and training are of a high quality, and training activities contribute well to delivering the curriculum intent.
- The work that learners do over time embodies consistently demanding curriculum goals and matches the aims of the curriculum in being coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.

### **Impact**

- The impact of the taught curriculum is strong. Learners acquire and develop high-quality skills and produce work of a consistently high standard

201. To judge whether the quality of education is **good, requires improvement** or is **inadequate**, inspectors will adopt a ‘best fit’ approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

202. \* [The sections of criteria in square brackets, below, are included in recognition that not all providers will have had the opportunity to complete the process of adopting or constructing their curriculum fully by September 2019. The bracketed sections are transitional only, and Ofsted will review the handbooks before September 2020 to identify whether they should be deleted.]

## **Good (2)**

### **Intent**

- Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious, appropriately relevant to local and regional employment and training priorities and designed to give learners, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders’ actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.\*]
- The curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders’ actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.\*]
- The provider is ambitious for all its learners, including those with SEND, and those who have high needs, and this is reflected in the curriculum. The curriculum remains ambitious and is tailored, where necessary, to meet individual needs. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders’ actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.\*]

- Learners study the intended curriculum; providers ensure this by teaching all components of the full programmes of study.

### **Implementation**

- Teachers have expert knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach. Leaders provide effective support for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise. Where relevant, teachers have extensive and up-to-date vocational experience.
- Teachers present information and/or demonstrate skills clearly, promoting appropriate consideration of the subject matter being taught. They check learners' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions and provide clear, direct feedback. In doing this, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary, but without having to use unnecessary, time-consuming, individual approaches to presenting subject matter.
- The work that teachers give to learners is demanding and ensures that learners build knowledge and acquire skills, improving what they already know and can do.
- Teachers encourage learners to use subject-specific, professional and technical vocabulary well.
- Teachers work effectively with support staff to ensure that all learners achieve as they should.
- Over the course of study, teachers design and use activities to help learners remember long term the content they have been taught, to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts and to apply skills fluently and independently.
- Teachers and leaders use assessment well, for example to help learners embed and use knowledge fluently and flexibly, to evaluate the application of skills, or to check understanding and inform teaching. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for staff or learners.
- Teachers create an environment that allows the learner to focus on learning. The resources and materials that teachers and trainers select and produce – in a way that does not create unnecessary workload for staff – reflect the provider's ambitious intentions for the course of study and clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning, independent living and employment.

### **Impact**

- Learners develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well across all areas of their study. Learners make substantial and sustained progress from their identified and recorded starting points in each of their courses and, where applicable, across the curriculum. Where appropriate, this is reflected in results from national examinations, which meet Government expectations, or in the qualifications or apprenticeship standards obtained.

- Learners are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They have gained qualifications or have met the standards that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests and aspirations and the goal of their course of study. Learners with SEND/high needs have greater independence in making decisions about their lives.

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

- The quality of education is not yet good.

### **Inadequate (4)**

**The quality of education is likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies:**

- The design, coverage or teaching of the curriculum does not provide adequately for all learners.
- The curriculum does not prepare learners for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.
- Weak assessment practice results in teaching that fails to meet learners' needs.
- Learners do not develop or improve the English and mathematical skills they need to succeed in the next year or stage of education, or in training or employment.
- The attainment and progress of learners are consistently low and show little or no improvement over time, indicating that learners are underachieving considerably.
- Learners have not attained the qualifications, skills or behaviours appropriate for them to progress to their next stage of education, training or employment.

## **Behaviour and attitudes**

206. This judgement considers how leaders and staff create a safe, disciplined and positive environment within the provider and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of learners.

207. The judgement focuses on the factors that research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to learners' positive behaviour and attitudes, thereby giving them the greatest possible opportunity to achieve positive outcomes. These factors are:

- a disciplined environment in the provider, classroom, workshop and workplace as an essential factor for learners to be able to learn
- the setting of clear expectations for behaviour across all aspects of provider life, including at work

- a strong focus on attendance at and punctuality to learning and work settings so that disruption is minimised, and learners gain valuable employability skills
- learner motivation and positive attitudes to learning
- a positive provider culture in which staff know and care about learners
- an environment that does not accept bullying, harassment or discrimination, and where staff deal with such issues quickly, consistently and effectively whenever they occur.

### **Learners with particular needs**

208. There will sometimes be learners with particular needs who a provider is working with to improve their behaviour or their attendance. Where this is the case, 'behaviour and conduct that reflect the provider's high expectations and their consistent, fair implementation' are likely to indicate improvement in the attendance, punctuality and conduct of these learners.
209. Some learners, or groups of learners, who have particular needs may have weak attendance or display challenging behaviour. When this is the case, inspectors will evaluate the impact of the provider's high expectations, the consistent, fair implementation of policies, the support given by the provider to the learners, and their impact on the marked and sustained improvement of the attendance and behaviour of these learners.

### **Sources of evidence**

210. Inspectors will use evidence gathered during the inspection as well as evidence of trends in learners' behaviour and attitudes over time. Inspectors will use first-hand evidence from visits to learning sessions and training workshops, including visits to learners at work or on work placements. Inspectors will also gather evidence from interviews with learners, staff, employers and other partners, for which documents such as attendance registers may also be used.
211. Inspectors' judgements about learners' behaviour and attitudes are concerned with their attitudes to learning and, where appropriate, to work, and the development of the skills relevant to their learning programme. Inspectors' judgements also take account of learners' ability to demonstrate appropriate behaviour for the learning and the work environments. Inspectors will consider the main purpose of the type of provision when they prioritise the impact that each of the criteria has on learners' behaviour and attitudes.
212. Inspectors will carry out other evidence-gathering activities that include, but are not limited to:
- observing learners' behaviour in a range of different classes/workshops at different times of the day

- observing learners' punctuality in arriving at the provider, to classroom and workshop sessions and to work
- observing learners' courtesy, respect for and good manners towards each other and adults, and pride in themselves and their provider and/or employer
- reviewing documentary evidence about behaviour, including how the provider tackles challenging behaviour
- gathering the views of learners, employers, parents, staff, those with responsibility for governance and other stakeholders
- gathering evidence about the typical behaviour of learners who are not on-site during the inspection
- balancing evidence seen during the inspection and evidence of trends over time.

### Grade descriptors for behaviour and attitudes

#### Outstanding (1)

For behaviour and attitudes to be judged **outstanding**, the provider must meet **all** the criteria for good behaviour and attitudes, **securely and consistently**. In addition, the following criteria must apply:

- Learners have consistently high levels of respect for others.
- Learners demonstrate consistently highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education and/or training. They are persistent in the face of difficulties. Where learners struggle with this, the provider takes intelligent, swift and highly effective action to support them.
- There are many examples of commitment beyond the basics, for example high participation in skills competitions or social action projects.

213. To judge whether behaviour and attitudes are **good, requires improvement** or are **inadequate**, inspectors will adopt a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

#### Good (2)

- Providers have high expectations of learners' behaviour and conduct and these are applied consistently and fairly. This is reflected in learners' behaviours and conduct.
- Learners' attitudes to their education or training are positive. They improve their attitudes over time. They understand their rights and responsibilities as learners. They are committed to their learning, know how to study effectively, are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements.
- Learners have high attendance and are punctual. This includes participation in any distance learning activities, such as online learning and the use of virtual learning environments.

- Relationships among learners and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture. Learners feel safe and rarely experience bullying, harassment or discrimination. If incidents occur, learners feel safe and confident to report them, knowing that staff will take swift and appropriate action.

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

- Behaviour and attitudes are not yet good.
- Learners feel safe and confident in reporting incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination, knowing that staff will take swift and appropriate action.

### **Inadequate (4)**

**Behaviour and attitudes are likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies:**

- Learners' lack of engagement, motivation or enthusiasm inhibits their progress and development.
- A significant minority of learners show a lack of respect and self-discipline. Learners ignore or rebut requests to moderate their conduct and are not ready for progression or the world of work.
- Attendance is consistently low and shows little sign of sustained improvement.
- Incidents of bullying, harassment or prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, both direct and indirect, are frequent.
- Learners have little confidence in the provider's ability to tackle bullying, harassment or discrimination successfully.
- Learners are not safe, or do not feel safe, at the provider or at work or subcontractor settings.

## **Personal development**

214. The curriculum should support learners to develop their knowledge and skills beyond the purely academic, technical or vocational. This judgement evaluates the provider's intent to provide for the personal development of learners, and the quality of the way in which they do this.

215. Providers can take effective action to extend learners' experiences, but the impact may not be seen for many years. Inspectors will not make judgements about the impact of the personal development of learners. Their judgements about learners' personal development are concerned with the opportunities that learners get to help them develop their character, confidence and resilience. These include opportunities and support to keep themselves healthy,



both physically and mentally. Inspectors will consider the support learners get to develop their plans for their next steps, including to employment.

216. The judgement focuses on the most significant dimensions of the personal development of learners:

- being responsible, respectful, active citizens
- observing the fundamental British values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance
- promoting equality of opportunity and diversity
- keeping physically and mentally healthy
- receiving careers guidance
- being prepared for the next stage.

### Sources of evidence

217. To inform this judgement, inspectors will use evidence gathered during the inspection and evidence of trends in learners' personal development over time. Inspectors will use first-hand evidence from visits to learning sessions and training workshops, including visits to learners at work or on work placements. Inspectors will gather evidence from interviews with learners, staff, employers and other partners. Evidence will also include information provided through learner, employer and parent questionnaires.

### Grade descriptors for personal development

#### Outstanding (1)

For personal development to be judged **outstanding**, the provider must meet **all** the criteria for good personal development **securely and consistently**. In addition, the following criteria must apply:

- The provider consistently goes out of its way to promote the personal development of learners, so that teachers have access to a rich set of experiences that teach learners why it is important to contribute actively to society. This is achieved through activities that strengthen considerably the provider's offer.
- The provider ensures that participation in these activities is very high, particularly among those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and all benefit from these opportunities and experiences.

218. To judge whether personal development is **good, requires improvement** or is **inadequate**, inspectors will adopt a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

#### Good (2)

- The curriculum extends beyond the academic/technical/vocational and provides for learners' broader development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents
- The curriculum and the provider's wider work support learners to develop their character – including their resilience, confidence and independence and, where relevant, help them know how to keep physically and mentally healthy.
- The provider prepares learners for future success in education, employment or training by providing: unbiased information to all about potential next steps; high-quality, up-to-date and locally relevant careers guidance, and opportunities for encounters with the world of work.
- The provider prepares learners for life in modern Britain by: helping to equip them to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society; developing their understanding of fundamental British values; developing their understanding and appreciation of diversity; celebrating what we have in common and promoting respect for the different protected characteristics as defined in law.

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

- Personal development is not yet good.

### **Inadequate (4)**

#### **Personal development is likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies:**

- A significant minority of learners do not understand how and why to live healthy, positive lives.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance, through their words, actions or influence, directly and/or indirectly, undermine or fail to promote equality of opportunity.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance do not protect learners from radicalisation and extremist views when learners are vulnerable to these. Policy and practice are poor, which means that learners are at risk.
- The provider does not ensure that learners have access to unbiased information about potential next steps, high-quality careers guidance, and opportunities to experience the world of work.

## **Leadership and management**

219. Leadership and management operate and have impact at many levels within a provider. Research suggests that shared, collective and extended leadership can be highly effective. Inspectors will therefore look at the work of principals, chief executives, senior leaders, subject leaders and others when considering the leadership and management judgement.

220. This judgement is about how leaders, managers and those responsible for governance ensure that the education and training delivered by the provider have a positive impact on all learners, including those with SEND and those who have high needs. It focuses on the areas in which inspection evidence and research show that leaders and managers can have the strongest impact on the quality of education and training provided. Important factors include:

- leaders' high expectations of all learners and the extent to which these are embodied in day-to-day interactions with and support for learners
- the extent to which leaders focus their attention on the education and training they provide, leading to better outcomes for learners
- the alignment of continuing professional development for teachers and staff with the curriculum, and the extent to which it develops teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge over time, so that they deliver better teaching for learners
- the extent to which leaders ensure that learners benefit from effective teaching and consistent expectations in classrooms, in workshops, at work or with subcontractors
- whether leaders engage with parents, their community and employers to plan and support the education and training that learners get
- the extent to which leaders consider the workload and well-being of their staff to enable them to deliver a high-quality education and to develop and strengthen the quality of the workforce
- the extent to which leaders' and managers' high ambitions are for all learners, including those who are difficult to engage
- whether leaders and those responsible for governance understand their respective roles and carry these out to enhance the effectiveness of the provider.

## **Governance**

221. Inspectors will seek evidence of the impact of those responsible for governance to determine whether they provide confident, strategic leadership and create strong accountability for, and oversight and assurance of educational and financial performance.

222. Inspectors should consider whether those responsible for governance:

- know the provider and understand its strengths and weaknesses
- support and strengthen the provider's leadership and contribute to shaping its strategic direction
- ensure that the provider meets its statutory responsibilities

- provide challenge and hold senior leaders and managers to account for improving the quality of learning and the effectiveness of performance management systems.

223. Inspectors will satisfy themselves that leaders understand their responsibilities and are ensuring that these are carried out appropriately within the provider. Inspectors and leaders are not expected to review a list of duties.

### **College groups and governance arrangements**

224. Many providers are cooperating as groups, with an overall board and chief executive officer, or similar arrangement, that assume some or all the responsibilities formerly shouldered by the individual college's/provider's governing body. In the case of such extended management and governance, inspectors will seek evidence of the impact of the overall board and its staff as well as the college's/ provider's local board, committee or governing body, to which there are relevant delegated responsibilities.

### **Safeguarding**

225. Inspectors will always have regard for how well providers help and protect young people and learners so that they are kept safe.<sup>44</sup> Although inspectors will not provide a separate numerical grade for this key aspect of a provider's work, they will always make a written judgement in the leadership and management section of the inspection report about whether the arrangements for safeguarding young people and learners are effective.

226. Where safeguarding is ineffective, this is likely to lead to a judgement of inadequate leadership and management. Safeguarding is ineffective when:

- learners' behaviour towards each other is unsafe, putting learners at risk of harm
- incidents of bullying or prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, either direct or indirect, are common
- learners have little confidence that the provider will address concerns about their safety, including concerns about the risk of abuse
- learners or particular groups of learners do not feel safe in the provider, the workplace or in a subcontractor's premises
- leaders and managers do not handle safeguarding allegations about staff members and learners appropriately.

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<sup>44</sup> Inspectors should also have regard to the provider's safeguarding of any young people below the age of 16 who may be on the premises of a provider, even when the quality of their education is not within the scope of inspection.

227. However, there may be circumstances when it is appropriate to judge a provider as requires improvement, rather than inadequate, when there are minor weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements that are easy to put right.
228. Ofsted has published a document setting out the approach inspectors should take to inspecting safeguarding in all the settings covered by the EIF. The document 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings'<sup>45</sup> should be read alongside the framework and this handbook.

### **Sources of evidence**

229. Inspectors will obtain a range of evidence from meetings with leaders, managers and governors and first-hand evidence of their work across the provider, including in subcontracted provision.
230. Inspectors will use documentary evidence that the provider supplies to evaluate the impact of the work of leaders, managers and governors, both currently and over time, in conjunction with first-hand evidence that may include that gathered from staff, learners, employers and relevant partners. This includes, but is not limited to:
- meetings with leaders and those responsible for governance, to evaluate how well they fulfil their statutory duties, including, for example, the Equality Act 2010, safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty and the Children and Families Act
  - documentary evidence that demonstrates the effectiveness of the provision for all learners
  - interviews with staff and learners to evidence how well leaders have created a positive culture
  - first-hand evidence gathered during the course of inspection
  - responses to the staff and learner questionnaires and Parent View. These will be particularly useful for judging the culture that leaders and managers have established
  - any evidence the provider has from regularly surveying the staff and the way in which leaders and managers have responded to concerns raised by staff, parents or employers.

### **Grade descriptors for leadership and management**

<b>Outstanding (1)</b>
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<sup>45</sup> 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings', Ofsted, August 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015).

For leadership and management to be judged **outstanding**, the provider meets **all** the criteria for good leadership and management **securely and consistently**. In addition, the following criteria must apply:

- Leaders ensure that teachers receive focused and highly effective professional development. Teachers' subject, vocational, technical, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge builds and develops consistently over time and improves the quality of education provided to learners.
- Leaders' engagement with learners, employers, parents and the local community/economy is very effective. They provide clear and direct evidence of the positive impact of how this engagement benefits learners.
- Leaders ensure that regular, frequent and meaningful engagement takes place with staff at all levels, so can be confident that issues will be identified. When issues are identified – in particular about workload – leaders deal with them consistently, appropriately and quickly. Staff consistently report high levels of support for well-being issues.

231. To judge whether leadership and management are **good, requires improvement** or **inadequate**, inspectors will adopt a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

### **Good (2)**

- Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for providing high-quality, inclusive education and training to all. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice.
- Leaders focus on improving teachers' subject and teaching knowledge to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment. The practice and subject knowledge, and up-to-date vocational expertise of staff build and improve over time.
- Leaders aim to ensure that all learners, including those with SEND and high needs, and disadvantaged learners, get the information, advice, guidance and support to complete their chosen programmes of study. Leaders provide the support for staff to make this possible.
- Leaders engage effectively with their community, including, where relevant, parents/carers, employers, local services and organisations responsible for local and regional economic planning.
- Leaders engage with their staff and are aware and take account of the main pressures on them. They are realistic and constructive in the way they manage staff including their workload
- Those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. They ensure that the provider has a clear vision and strategy and that resources are managed well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education and training.

- Those responsible for governance ensure that the provider fulfils its legal duties and responsibilities. These include, for example, those under the Equality Act 2010, and those in relation to the 'Prevent' strategy and safeguarding.
- Leaders protect staff from harassment, bullying and discrimination.
- The provider has an effective culture of safeguarding that enables staff to: identify learners who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming, exploitation, radicalisation or extremism; help learners to reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need, or referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help; and manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults and learners who may be a risk to other learners and vulnerable adults.

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

- Leadership and management are not yet good.
- Safeguarding is effective. There are some weaknesses in safeguarding that are not difficult to rectify, and there are no serious failings that leave learners being harmed or at risk of harm.

### **Inadequate (4)**

#### **Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies:**

- Leaders are not doing enough to tackle a poor quality of education. This significantly impairs the progress of learners, including the most disadvantaged, learners with SEND and those who have high needs.
- Leaders are not aware of, or do not take effective action to stem, the decline in the quality of provision.
- The curriculum fails to meet the needs of learners, employers, the local community or local and regional economies, reflected in the low proportion of learners who progress to destinations relevant to their career or learning aims.
- The curriculum does not equip learners with the skills, knowledge or understanding required to prepare them for life in modern Britain or enable them to progress to their next steps.
- Leaders, managers and those responsible for governance, through their words, actions or influence, directly and/or indirectly undermine or fail to promote equality of opportunity. They do not prevent discriminatory behaviour or prejudiced actions and views.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. The provider's arrangements for safeguarding learners do not meet statutory requirements and do not protect learners, or the provider takes insufficient action to remedy weaknesses following a serious failure of safeguarding arrangements.

- Leaders, managers and governors are not protecting learners from radicalisation and extremist views. Policy and practice are poor, which means that learners are at risk.

DRAFT





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