

School inspection update

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Message from the National Director, Education

Welcome to the 19th edition of the 'School inspection update' (SIU) and the last before we begin to inspect under the new education inspection framework (EIF) from September 2019.

This edition of SIU is intended to provide inspectors with a single point of reference for any policy matters relating to the new framework that are not covered by the EIF [school inspection handbooks](#) published in May. Information in this edition of the SIU replaces or reiterates all previous guidance in earlier editions.

There are some sections clarifying inspection practice. This includes:

- the pre-inspection conversation between the lead inspector and school leaders, where we have added some clarity about what inspectors will and will not expect from school leaders
- using Ofsted ParentView
- using data about groups of pupils
- some changes around inspection reports.

This edition also highlights minor corrections and updates we have made to the new handbooks since their initial publication.

Between now and September, our focus is very much on the final training for inspectors in preparation for the start of the EIF. I hope you'll agree that the programme of training over the last 18 months has prepared inspectors well for this last phase, which will focus on inspection methodology and practice under the new framework.

It's worth taking a moment to remind ourselves of the **key concepts** we have considered through training since we started with our renewed focus on the curriculum.

- Working from a definition of making **progress** with learning in school as 'knowing more and remembering more of the curriculum', we have considered how schools can best support this to happen for their pupils. Careful curricular thinking ensures that the right components are embedded in long-term memory to enable subsequent performance in more complex tasks.

- The acquisition of knowledge through a **well-planned, carefully structured and sequenced curriculum** enables pupils to build an interconnecting **schema**. Expertise depends on rich and detailed structures of relevant knowledge stored in long-term memory.
- **Understanding** deepens as structures of knowledge stored in long-term memory become increasingly complex. Having these things firmly in mind at inspection when looking at a school's curriculum enables us to consider its effectiveness.
- **Remember:** study, recall, recall, recall, recall! And 'recall' does not refer just to formal testing – it may be that pupils recall prior learning by applying it in a new context, for example, or by writing an essay, or explaining their knowledge to someone else. The struggle of trying to retrieve information is what makes memory stronger.

Of course, our training over the last year or so has not just been about curriculum, important as that is. It's also been about the kinds of terribly difficult situations that schools have to deal with, day in day out, across the country and how we should consider a school's subsequent actions at inspection.

One of these issues, with potentially devastating consequences for young people, is peer-on-peer sexual violence and harassment. Inspectors will remember that the spring training provided an opportunity to deepen our knowledge of this important safeguarding issue and to consider a tough scenario we might come across in schools and the potential wider implications.

It's vitally important that schools understand their duty of care to the victim and the alleged perpetrator in these circumstances, what they need to do to keep children safe in these often traumatic situations, whether they happen on the school site or not. ['Keeping children safe in education'](#) is crystal clear on this issue. We have a special feature on it in this edition of SIU. Inspectors should carefully consider a school's response to these situations when evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

It's a matter of great pride for us that so many of our inspectors are currently working in schools, still dealing with the realities of running them for the benefit of our country's children. We have put enormous effort and time into developing the inspector training programme. All our inspectors, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and Ofsted Inspectors (OIs), have invested heavily and your commitment and engagement in the programme have been outstanding. These things tell me that our aim of having the best trained, best informed group of inspectors we have ever had is well on the way to being achieved.

Thank you for all the hard work you have put in this year to help raise standards and improve the lives of young people in England. I hope you get a well deserved rest at some point over the summer break.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Sean Harford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Sean Harford HMI
National Director, Education**

Peer-on-peer abuse, including sexual violence and sexual harassment between children

Abuse of one young person by another can take many forms:

- sexual violence (rape, assault by penetration or sexual assault) and sexual harassment (any unwanted conduct of a sexual nature either online or offline)
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm
- sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery)
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

'[Keeping children safe in education](#)' makes clear that a school's child protection policy should include procedures for minimising the risk of peer-on-peer abuse and for supporting victims, perpetrators and any other children affected by the abuse. The policy and procedures should be familiar to all staff in the school. Staff should be trained in procedures to follow if there are incidents of sexual violence or sexual harassment between pupils.

The school's procedures should be underpinned by the principle that sexual violence and sexual harassment are never acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Decisions about what to do should be made on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration:

- the wishes of the victim
- the nature of the incident – might a crime have been committed?
- the ages of the children involved
- any power imbalance between the children for example, if one child is much older
- whether it was a one-off incident or a pattern of behaviour by the alleged perpetrator.

When there has been a report of sexual violence, the school should immediately consider how best to support and protect the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other children involved/affected). The designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should engage with children's social care, police and specialist services as required. They should make a referral to children's social care if any children have suffered abuse or are at risk of harm. If a crime has been committed, then they should also involve the police.

The school should consider how best to keep victims and alleged perpetrators of sexual violence a reasonable distance apart while on school premises and on transport to and from school. While the facts are being investigated, the alleged

perpetrator should be removed from any classes that they share with the victim. This is in the best interests of both children and should not be perceived to be a judgement on the guilt of the alleged perpetrator.

The school should continue to ensure that both the victim and perpetrator receive ongoing support as the case progresses.

The Department for Education (DfE) has published more detailed advice for schools and colleges on managing child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment. [‘Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges’](#) gives advice about taking a whole-school approach that includes:

- a clear set of values and standards that are upheld and demonstrated throughout all aspects of school life
- underpinning these values in the school’s behaviour policy and pastoral support system
- a planned programme of evidence-based content delivered through the whole curriculum, covering issues such as healthy relationships and consent.

The advice makes clear that the same safeguarding duties and principles apply to cases where sexual violence or harassment is alleged to have taken place outside the school’s premises or online. In those cases, appropriate information sharing and effective multi-agency working will be especially important.

Segregation by sex in schools

It is unlawful for schools to segregate pupils on the basis of any protected characteristics, such as sex, race or faith, while at school.

Exceptionally, the [Equality Act 2010](#) permits segregation for positive action to alleviate a disadvantage associated with a certain characteristic.

This could include pupils of one race or sex getting additional work experience in a sector in which they are under represented, or separating the pupils by sex for teaching in subjects if the school has evidence that this improves their academic outcomes. It also includes competitive sport, games or other competitive activities in which physical strength, stamina or physique are significant factors in determining success or failure.

Implications for inspectors

Inspectors will consider:

- Is there segregation of pupils on the basis of any protected characteristic in lessons, unstructured time and/or for any other school activities?
- If so, would or might a pupil reasonably take the view that segregation was detrimental to him or her?
- If so, is the segregation covered by an exemption?

Inspectors will reflect this in their judgements and reporting. A school cannot be judged good or outstanding in leadership and management if it is segregating pupils unlawfully.

If the school has genuine and imminent plans to reintegrate pupils or to otherwise comply with the law, a judgement of requires improvement will normally be appropriate. In other cases, the grade will be inadequate for leadership and management. If inspectors believe that the segregation is also having an impact on pupils' personal development, they should consider it as part of that judgement.

Careers advice

In our new [school inspection handbook](#), we include the following in the 'good' descriptor for personal development:

'Secondary schools prepare pupils for future success in education, employment or training. They use the [Gatsby Benchmarks](#) to develop and improve their careers provision and enable a range of education and training providers to speak to pupils in Years 8 to 13. All pupils receive unbiased information about potential next steps and high-quality careers guidance. The school provides good quality, meaningful opportunities for pupils to encounter the world of work.'

This is stronger than the grade descriptor we originally proposed in our consultation. However, we did not change the criterion in the inadequate grade descriptor at the same time:

'The school does not ensure that pupils get access to unbiased information about potential next steps, high-quality careers guidance and opportunities for encounters with the world of work.'

We feel that this potentially sets too high a standard for schools. It would be too easy for schools to receive an inadequate judgement based on one, relatively narrow issue.

With the stronger good criterion in place, we feel this inadequate descriptor can now be removed. We will delete it from the handbook.

External reviews of governance and pupil premium

From September 2019, under EIF, inspectors will no longer recommend that the school carries out an external review of the pupil premium and/or governance, where weaknesses have been identified. As a consequence, they will also not make reference to the fact that this will be followed up at the next inspection.

If a school has received a recommendation before September 2019 to have an external review of the pupil premium and/or governance, inspectors will not request to see any outcome of this at the school's next inspection. Nevertheless, inspectors will pay attention to any evidence if the school wants to share it.

The education focused phone conversation between lead inspector and school leaders

One of the new features of the EIF is that inspectors will hold an introductory phone call with school leaders on the day before the inspection begins. This should include giving school leaders more opportunity to explain their school's specific context and challenges.

Inspection experience, including our pilots for this framework, shows that this call helps both leaders and inspectors build stronger professional relationships. Inspectors and school leaders will be able to establish a rapport before inspection and develop a shared understanding of the starting point of the inspection.

The conversation will also help inspectors to form an initial understanding of leaders' views of the school's progress and to shape the inspection plan. Our experience from piloting the new framework shows that this is the part of preparation that school leaders and inspectors often find to be the most helpful and constructive.

Implications for inspection

Inspectors will use this conversation to understand:

- the school's context and the progress it has made since the previous inspection, including any specific progress made on areas for improvement identified at previous inspections that remain relevant under the EIF
- the headteacher's assessment of the school's current strengths and weaknesses, particularly in relation to:
 - the curriculum
 - the way teaching supports pupils to learn the curriculum
 - the standards pupils achieve
 - pupils' behaviour and attitudes
 - the personal development of pupils

- the specific areas of the school (for example, subjects, year groups, aspects of provision) that should be focused on during the inspection.

Inspectors will not follow any particular script in these conversations, though the existing questions to clarify the school's status and governance arrangements will continue to be part of the dialogue. The conversation will end once inspectors understand the headteacher's view of the school's context, progress and strengths and weaknesses. Crucially, it will only end once inspectors and leaders have a shared understanding of the subjects and areas that will be subject to curriculum 'deep dives' on the first day of inspection.

This conversation will normally last up to 90 minutes, but this is an upper limit rather than a target. There is no requirement for this conversation to be one continuous call. If the headteacher needs to pause the conversation for practical reasons or wants time to draw another colleague into the call, inspectors will act reasonably to accommodate this.

Inspectors will not expect leaders to have any particular information or evidence to hand in the conversation. They will not expect leaders to produce any information specifically for, or in anticipation of, this conversation. However, they will expect that headteachers have the level of understanding of the school's context, progress and strengths and weaknesses needed to lead that school day-to-day.

Upcoming changes to Ofsted ParentView

In the coming year, we will develop a new service to replace the existing [ParentView](#), the service we use to collect and publish parental feedback. The focus of the new service will be to increase the volume, quality and diversity of responses that we collect from parents during, and outside of, inspection.

Ahead of launching this new service, we are changing the current survey questions on the existing ParentView site to align them more closely with the EIF for September 2019. The new questions are informed by research we've carried out with parents and inspectors. We've used our findings to identify the types of questions parents are most able to answer about their child's experience.

Implications for inspectors

From September, survey responses from parents will be split out into academic year on provider results pages on the Ofsted ParentView site. There will no longer be a 365 rolling results tab. The replies from the new survey will be visible in the first tab of results (academic year 2019/20) on Ofsted ParentView results. Replies from under the old survey will be available in tabs for previous years. For the first year, therefore, inspectors will need to look at this and previous years' tabs when they consider ParentView results, giving appropriate weight to the number of responses and date of responses in each.

Using data for pupil groups on inspection

Performance differences between boys and girls as well as those between ethnic groups are not included in [inspection data summary reports](#) (IDSR).

While there can be differences between the performance of groups of pupils at a national level, this is likely to become meaningless when analysed at school level, particularly when there are small cohorts.

Focusing on the underperformance of a particular group, in which data can be highly variable, can also have unintended consequences, such as unrealistic demands on schools and interventions based on analysis of very small groups of pupils.

Implications for inspectors

Inspectors are reminded to use meaningful data to inform the inspection, and not to focus on single measures with small cohorts. The IDSR will highlight where data is meaningful and statistically significant.

Contextual information for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) will continue to be included in the new IDSRs to aid inspectors to gather evidence about these pupils as part of their deep dives into the curriculum. This will support inspectors to write about pupils with SEND in the inspection report, as required by statute.

Pupils with SEND should not be treated as a homogenous group due to the often vastly different types of pupils' needs. It is **not** appropriate to produce and analyse grouped averages at school level for pupils with SEND and to compare this with local or national benchmarks.

Clarification on the timing of the reinspection of inadequate schools

Schools judged as inadequate and not subject to an academy order will normally be reinspected **within** 30 months after the publication of their previous section 5 report. However, the ambition should still be for inadequate schools to improve and come out of a category of concern – special measures or serious weaknesses – within 24 months.

Inspectors are reminded that reinspecting inadequate schools **at** 30 months should be the exception, but there is flexibility for giving schools this bit longer, if appropriate, for example to improve to good.

Schools judged as good that convert to an academy before their section 5 inspection has taken place

From September, there are new arrangements for certain newly converted academy schools.

If the predecessor school of a new academy converter school was judged good at its most recent section 8 inspection, it may have received the judgement that:

- there was evidence that it might be better than good if inspected under section 5 at that time
- or
- the lead inspector identified areas for improvement.

In both of these circumstances, the school would have been informed that its next inspection would be under section 5.

However, if the school converts to an academy before the section 5 inspection has taken place:

- the new academy will receive a section 5 inspection as its first inspection
- the section 5 inspection will normally take place at least one year after the new academy opens.¹

Changes to reports from September 2019

The EIF presents a useful opportunity for us to review how we report inspection outcomes. Our [strategy](#) sets out our aim to make sure that the outputs of our inspections are accessible for the different audiences who use them. The chief, but not only, audience for school inspection reports is parents. This has been the basis for our review. Therefore, from September, our reports will look different.

Parents have told us that they would prefer reports to be shorter and clearer. They want to see more attention paid to what is distinctive about a school and less education jargon. They also want reports to explain what it is like to be a pupil at the school, with particular regard to behaviour and how the school deals with bullying. We are amending our inspection report templates for September along these lines. We will be sharing our emerging thinking shortly, and will also make sure that inspectors receive training on writing the updated reports in time for September.

¹ This approach also applies to maintained nursery schools, pupil referral units and special schools whose predecessor schools were judged outstanding. This is, because these types of outstanding school are not exempt from routine inspection.

Publication of a section 5 report after a school closes

When a school has been inspected under section 5 but closed before we published the report, we will still publish the report against the unique reference number (URN) of the school as it existed at the time of inspection.

This is in keeping with our two-fold duty under section 5 to inspect and to 'make a report of the inspection in writing'. So, a section 5 inspection is not complete until a report has been produced. We have no power to void an inspection.

When a school closes and then opens as a new academy under a new URN, there is no legal duty on leaders to distribute the inspection report that was made against the previous URN to the registered parents of pupils at the school.

Similarly, if the chair of governors and headteacher of the new school are dissatisfied with the report or other aspects of the inspection process, their current roles do not give them the authority to make a formal complaint through the Ofsted complaints procedure. Ofsted regions should seek advice from the policy team on any specific cases where they wish to send the 'notification of the moderated judgement' letter (Form 6) to a chair of governors and/or headteacher who may benefit from the information in their current role.

Opportunity areas

Inspectors should be aware of whether the school they are inspecting is part of the DfE's opportunity areas programme.

This programme aims to help more children and young people achieve their full potential through targeted funding (£72m in total) in 12 areas facing the biggest challenges to social mobility. There are 12 opportunity areas across all of the Ofsted regions, except London:

- North West: Blackpool and Oldham
- North East, Yorkshire and Humber: Bradford, Doncaster and North Yorkshire Coast
- West Midlands: Stoke-on-Trent
- East Midlands: Derby
- East of England: Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, Ipswich and Norwich
- South West: West Somerset
- South East: Hastings.

Each opportunity area has a local partnership board, headed by an experienced independent chair and supported by a DfE team. They engage with community organisations (including local nurseries, schools, colleges and universities) businesses, charities and young people to agree [a set of priorities and plans](#).

Improving education must be included in each plan, but work also extends beyond early years and schools.

Implications for inspectors

Inspectors will want to know if the school is receiving any support from, or working with, the local partnership board.

If the school has received support, inspectors will not evaluate and report on the quality and the impact of the support and challenge on improvement in the school. Instead, they will comment on the action that the school has taken and the impact that this has had on the quality of the school's work.



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