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Guidance

School inspection handbook

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Introduction

1. This handbook describes the main activities carried out during inspections of maintained schools and academies in England under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.[footnote 1] It sets out the evaluation criteria that inspectors use to make their judgements and on which they report.

2. This handbook is primarily a guide for inspectors on how to carry out school inspections. However, it is made available to schools and other organisations to ensure that they are informed about the processes and procedures of inspection. It seeks to balance the need for consistency in inspections with the flexibility required to respond to the individual circumstances of each school. This handbook should not be regarded as a set of inflexible rules, but as an account of the procedures of inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement when they use this handbook. It applies to school inspections carried out from September 2019 under the education inspection framework (EIF).

3. The handbook has 3 parts:

- Part 1. How schools 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 make the graded judgements about schools and includes examples of the kinds of evidence and activities used by inspectors to make their judgements
- Part 3. Applying the EIF in different contexts: This contains guidance on how to apply the EIF in specific contexts and provisions

Privacy notice

4. During inspection, inspectors will collect information about staff and children at the school by looking at school records, responses to the pupil survey and the staff survey where appropriate, and by observing the everyday life of the school. We use this information to prepare our report and for the purposes set out in our privacy policy. In most cases, we will not record names. However, some of the information may make it possible to identify a particular individual. We will not publish any information that identifies an individual in the report, but we will usually name the headteacher and the proprietor (where applicable).

5. Individuals and organisations have legal requirements to provide information to Ofsted. The Education Act 2005 gives our inspectors the power to inspect and take copies of any relevant records kept by schools. Regulations enable the Department for Education (DfE) to provide Ofsted with individual pupils' information that relates to school inspections.[footnote 2]

6. In the vast majority of schools, we will gather evidence electronically using a range of devices, including laptops, mobile phones and tablets. All evidence is securely transferred to Ofsted's systems. Our inspectors may take photographs of pupils' work. These will be stored as evidence, but not retained by the inspector personally.

Inspection during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic

7. This section sets out our approach as inspections resume. It covers how we will reflect the COVID-19 context and the disruption it has caused to all education providers when making judgements. We will keep our handbooks and methodology under review as circumstances change and we continue to emerge from the pandemic.

8. To minimise burdens on the sector, we have made a few changes to the inspection handbook. We outline here the additional considerations for inspectors when inspecting schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. This section should be read alongside the other parts of the inspection handbook.

Preparation and planning

9. During the preparation phone call with the headteacher, the lead inspector will seek to understand the specific impact of COVID-19 on the school community and how the school's leaders responded to the situation.

10. This discussion will also explore how the school implemented the curriculum remotely and what, if any, elements of remote education remain in place at the time of inspection.

11. If the school offers early years provision or is a maintained nursery school, the inspector will also determine whether it is disapplying (or has previously disapplied) the following requirements of the early years foundation stage (EYFS):

- learning and development
- assessment – progress check at age 2 and EYFS profile
- staff qualification and ratios
- paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate

12. In this conversation, the headteacher and lead inspector will agree safety protocols that the inspection team will follow to ensure that the inspection is completed in a COVID-19 secure way.

13. Given these additional discussions, the conversation may take longer than 90 minutes.

Curriculum

14. Inspectors recognise that most schools will have been unable to implement the curriculum in the usual way during the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognise that schools were not required by the DfE to provide education to all pupils from March 2020 to July 2020 due to COVID-19, and may not have been doing so. Throughout the inspection, inspectors will seek to understand how the school adapted and prioritised the curriculum from September 2020.

15. This will include exploring how the school implemented its curriculum remotely. Inspectors will also look at how subject leaders and teachers have identified pupils' learning gaps and new starting points, and how they have responded to that in their curriculum planning.

Remote education

16. Ofsted does not have a preferred model for remote education. Throughout the inspection, inspectors will discuss the decisions that school leaders have taken and how they have implemented them. The quality of remote education between March and August 2020 will not impact on our judgement of the school's quality of education.

17. Where remote education remains in place, inspectors may observe remote teaching and review materials. We will only expect to see the school's typical approach to remote education, and do not expect schools to arrange anything solely for inspection.

18. To understand the implementation of the curriculum, inspectors may discuss remote education with teachers, parents and carers, and pupils. They may also review completed work and teaching materials. This will be the case regardless of whether remote education is in place at the time of inspection.

19. Given the above, when we refer to the implementation of the curriculum in this handbook we are including remote education.

External data

20. Inspectors will consider available external data throughout the inspection. However, they will be mindful of the age of this data, especially around statutory assessment and qualifications, when making judgements.

21. Inspectors will not expect or accept internal data from schools either instead of or in addition to published data.

Leadership

22. We recognise that responding to COVID-19 has placed great demands on school leaders and may have disrupted schools' development plans.

23. Inspectors will seek to understand how school leaders supported the school community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, for example by understanding how:

- remote education was put in place and monitored
- teachers and support staff were prepared for remote education
- vulnerable pupils were kept safe and prioritised for face-to-face education
- parents were kept up to date with developments and changes
- COVID-19-related staff absence impacted on the running of the school
- staff and pupils' well-being have been promoted

Safeguarding and attendance

24. The COVID-19 pandemic increased safeguarding risks. Inspectors will pay close attention to how school leaders adapted approaches to safeguarding during the pandemic to make sure that:

- vulnerable pupils were prioritised for face-to-face education in school
- safeguarding procedures remained effective for those receiving remote education, as well as those attending school

Inspectors will discuss how safeguarding arrangements have changed over time due to the pandemic, and how school leaders have made sure that they remain effective.

25. Inspectors will discuss attendance patterns with school leaders to understand how the pandemic specifically affected the individual school. They will want to understand how, in the circumstances, the school ensured the best possible attendance for those pupils eligible to attend in person. Attendance between March 2020 and March 2021 will not impact on our judgement of the school.

26. Inspectors recognise that the context in which schools operate has changed as a result of the pandemic. Therefore, they will consider the specific context and the steps school leaders have taken to ensure the best possible rates of attendance since the school opened to all pupils in March 2021.

Personal development

27. When forming judgements about personal development, inspectors will seek to understand what took place before the pandemic, what the school has in place currently and what its future plans are. Inspectors recognise that many elements of personal development that were in place before the pandemic may have been disrupted. Therefore, they will focus on understanding the steps that leaders have taken to offer a wide range of personal development opportunities since the school opened to all pupils in March 2021.

Remote elements of the inspection

28. Inspections will be carried out on site. However, it may be pragmatic to carry out some elements of the inspection through video/telephone calls. This will be agreed with the headteacher at the start of the inspection. It will usually only be used to involve pupils, parents, governors/trustees and others with leadership responsibility in inspection who are unable to attend the school site.

Disapplication and modifications of the EYFS

29. To support early years providers and schools during the COVID-19 outbreak, in April 2020 the government temporarily disapplied and modified certain elements of the EYFS statutory framework. This includes detail on where schools should apply 'reasonable endeavours' and 'best endeavours' if they are using any modifications and disapplications.

30. If there is a COVID-19 case in a school, in most cases this does not automatically mean it can disapply the EYFS.

31. We recognise that the disruption to learning caused by the pandemic may have impacted on when children have been taught. This could result in some children having a wider than usual range of starting points and gaps in their knowledge. Inspectors will pay close attention to how schools identify and address any of these delays and gaps.

32. When determining inspection judgements, the inspector will take account of all failures to meet EYFS requirements, even where they have been modified (see 'Early years foundation stage: coronavirus disapplications'). If the inspector judges the early years provision not to have an acceptable standard of care and/or quality of education, the specific early years judgement and the overall effectiveness will be inadequate.

33. The learning and development requirements of the EYFS can be disapplied at the school's discretion, as long as the 2-stage test is met.[footnote 3] It is expected that the majority of schools will be largely unaffected, or affected only temporarily, and therefore should continue to deliver the learning and development aspects of the EYFS as normal.[footnote 4]

34. Inspectors will consider any circumstances where disapplications of the requirements are applicable and where the school has used 'reasonable endeavours' to meet the existing learning and development requirements.

35. When evaluating the quality of early years education, using the judgement criteria set out in paragraphs 316 to 327, inspectors will consider the extent to which leaders have designed an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. When considering the impact of the curriculum, inspectors will have due regard to any loss of learning the pandemic may have caused and the disapplications that may currently be applied or that have been applied previously. However, inspectors will consider what the school is doing to address any disruption to learning to ensure that children are well prepared for their next stage of education.

36. EYFS assessment arrangements have been altered as a result of the pandemic. Inspectors will need to understand where schools may have applied the modifications to some of the assessment requirements of the EYFS.[footnote 5] They will check how schools are meeting relevant assessment requirements or ensuring that assessment takes place as soon as practical. They will also seek to understand how staff are supported and the steps that are being taken to remove the risk of additional workload.

37. Inspectors will pay close attention to where schools are applying, or had applied, the modifications to the safeguarding and welfare requirements. They will also consider how schools adapted approaches to safeguarding during the pandemic to make sure that:

- vulnerable children, including those with SEND, were encouraged to attend the provision
- safeguarding procedures remained effective both for those at home and those attending the provision

Inspectors will discuss how safeguarding arrangements have changed over time due to the pandemic, and how schools have made sure that they remain effective.

Part 1. How schools will be inspected

What are the legal requirements for the inspection of schools?

How schools are selected for inspection

38. The EIF and this handbook set out the statutory basis for school inspections carried out under the Education Act 2005.

39. The handbook applies to all schools in England that are to be inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.[footnote 6] The schools subject to inspection under this section of the Act are:

- community, foundation and voluntary schools
- community and foundation special schools
- pupil referral units (PRUs)[footnote 7]
- maintained nursery schools
- academies[footnote 8]
- city technology colleges
- city technology colleges for the technology of the arts
- certain non-maintained special schools approved by the Secretary of State under section 342 of the Education Act 1996

40. An inspection of boarding or residential provision in a boarding or residential special school will be integrated with the school inspection, where possible (for details, see Part 3: Applying the EIF in different contexts).[footnote 9] Integrated inspections cannot be carried out when inspection cycles do not coincide. In these cases, we will only inspect the boarding or residential provision.

41. All schools have a unique reference number (URN). Any institution with its own URN that we inspect will receive an inspection report.[footnote 10] We may try to coordinate the inspection of certain groups of schools, where this is possible.

42. Ofsted is required to inspect at prescribed intervals all schools to which section 5 applies.[footnote 11] The regulations set the interval for section 5 inspections as 'within 5 school years from the end of the school year in which the last section 5 inspection took place'.[footnote 12] See also the section below on outstanding schools.

Risk assessment

43. We use risk assessment to ensure that our approach to inspection is proportionate, so that we can focus our efforts on where we can have the greatest impact. Risk assessment combines an assessment of each school, with a more in-depth desk-based review of a wider range of available information.

44. We use a broad range of indicators to select schools for inspection. The risk assessment process normally takes place in time for the start of the third school year after the most recent inspection.

45. In a risk assessment, we analyse:

- progress and attainment data from the DfE[footnote 13]
- school workforce census data
- the views of parents and carers, including those shown by Ofsted Parent View, our online questionnaire for parents[footnote 14]
- qualifying complaints about the school referred to us[footnote 15]
- pupil mobility[footnote 16]
- the outcomes of any inspections, such as survey inspections, that we have carried out since the last routine inspection.
- statutory warning notices
- any other significant concerns that are brought to our attention

46. We may also carry out unannounced inspections and monitoring visits under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 at any time.

Outstanding schools that were formerly exempt from routine inspections

47. Between 15 May 2012 and 13 November 2020, maintained primary and secondary schools and academies judged to be outstanding in their overall effectiveness at their most recent section 5 inspection were exempt from routine inspections. These schools are now once again subject to routine inspections under section 5. This also applies to academy converter schools that were formerly exempt because the overall effectiveness of their predecessor school was outstanding at its most recent section 5 inspection.[footnote 17]

48. All formerly exempt schools must receive an initial inspection under section 5 or section 8 before 1 August 2026. Those schools that were last inspected under section 5 before September 2015 will receive an initial section 5 inspection. Those last inspected under section 5 after this date will receive an initial section 8 inspection. If an initial section 8 inspection indicates that outstanding performance may not have been maintained, we will normally carry out a section 5 inspection within the next academic year or as soon as possible thereafter and, in any event, before 1 August 2027. Beyond these initial inspections, future inspections for these schools will take place as set out in the next section.

Section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools

49. Some good and outstanding schools will be subject to a full section 5 inspection instead of a section 8 inspection. This will happen, for example, if a school has undergone significant change, such as in its age range, or if there are indications that the quality of provision may have deteriorated significantly. We will select these schools through our risk assessment process. The section 8 handbook explains how these inspections will be carried out.

50. A section 8 inspection will not result in individual graded judgements. It cannot change the overall effectiveness grade of the school. If the inspection is converted to a section 5 inspection, then inspectors will make the full set of graded judgements, using the 4-point grading scale required under section 5.[footnote 18]

51. Usually, a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school will be followed by a further section 8 inspection after approximately a 4-year interval. However, if there is evidence that a good school has improved towards outstanding or may no longer be good, or that an outstanding school may no longer be outstanding, inspectors will specify that the next inspection is a section 5 inspection, with the full range of graded judgements available.

52. Our section 8 handbook sets out what is considered by inspectors on a section 8 inspection.

53. As is the case for all schools, a good or outstanding school may still receive a 'no formal designation' inspection carried out under section 8 at any time in certain circumstances. For example, we may decide that we should inspect a school earlier than its next scheduled inspection if:

- there are potential safeguarding issues, including a decline in the standards of pupils' behaviour and the ability of staff to maintain discipline, and/or welfare concerns
- a subject or thematic survey inspection raises general concerns
- we have received a qualifying complaint about the school that, taken alongside other available evidence, suggests that it would be appropriate to do so
- concerns are raised about standards of leadership or governance
- concerns are identified about the breadth and balance of the curriculum (including if the statutory requirement to publish information to parents is not met)
- HMCI or the Secretary of State have concerns about the school's performance

54. If, during the course of the section 8 no formal designation inspection, the lead inspector finds that the school's overall effectiveness may have declined, then the lead inspector may deem the inspection as a section 5 inspection.[footnote 19]

55. We may also inspect a school under section 8 if we select it as part of a sample to ensure that HMCI's Annual Report reflects evidence from a cross-section of schools of different types, phases and effectiveness.

56. The EIF supports proportionate inspections of schools' performance and circumstances. Maintained primary and secondary schools, and academies, that were judged good or outstanding at their previous section 5 inspection will normally receive an inspection under section 8 approximately every 4 years. This is to confirm that the quality of education remains good or outstanding.[footnote 20]

Schools requesting an inspection

57. Schools are able, via the appropriate authority (normally the school's governing body), to request an inspection.[footnote 21] We treat these inspections as an inspection under section 5. If we carry one out, HMCI may charge the appropriate authority for its cost.

Using evidence from section 5 and section 8 inspections

58. We may use the evidence that inspectors gather during section 5 and section 8 inspections to inform other work, such as national reporting.

Inspection of religious education and collective worship

59. The Secretary of State designates certain schools as having a religious character.[footnote 22] In schools without a religious character, we inspect religious education (RE) and collective worship as part of inspections under section 5.

60. This is different in schools with a religious character. In most of these schools, denominational education and collective worship are inspected by a body appointed by the maintained school's governing body under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 or as provided in the academy's funding agreement.[footnote 23] In a voluntary controlled school designated as having a religious character, we inspect RE, but not collective worship.

61. Inspectors may, however, gather evidence from anywhere relevant (including RE lessons and assemblies) to evaluate pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, personal development and/or behaviour and attitudes. The fact that the school has been designated as having a religious character must be referred to in the 'information about this school' section of the inspection report.

62. Section 48 inspections (or the equivalent inspection of an academy) are carried out every 3 to 5 years (and usually within 2 to 3 years of a new voluntary-aided school or academy/free school opening).[footnote 24] The lead inspector on a section 5 inspection will check the section 48 arrangements. This includes when the next inspection is due and when the last inspection was. They will write about this in the inspection report. They will ensure that the required consultation has taken place with the prescribed faith body when a school has a prescribed faith body and decides not to use that body's inspection service but to appoint its own inspector.

63. Inspectors will familiarise themselves with any issues raised in any section 48 inspection (or equivalent) held since the last Ofsted inspection. Inspectors will not, however, use that evidence in an Ofsted inspection.[footnote 25] The lead inspector will report if the section 48 inspection (or equivalent inspection of an academy) is overdue and that, therefore, the school is failing in its statutory duty. They will do this in the inspection report.

64. If a section 48 inspection (or equivalent inspection of an academy) happens at the same time as an Ofsted section 5 inspection, inspectors will mention this in the 'information about this school' section.

New academies

65. When a school becomes an academy, or when multiple schools come together to become an academy, the predecessor school(s) is/are closed. The new academy is legally a new school. Judgements made in any predecessor school's report are not judgements about the new academy. Inspectors may look at the performance of any predecessor school as part of pre-inspection planning. They can look at this data to consider whether the new academy has improved on, or declined from, its predecessor's performance and whether it has tackled any areas of weakness or built on strengths from the predecessor school. However, inspectors must take care not to give undue weight to any progress or attainment compared with those of the predecessor. Inspectors must not take account of the predecessor's key judgements or areas for improvement when reaching their judgements about the new academy. Inspectors will make clear to the new academy the extent to which they have taken account of the performance data from its predecessor school(s).

66. Maintained schools that become academies are normally treated as new schools for inspection purposes and are subject to a section 5 inspection as their first inspection. This will normally take place within 3 years of the new school opening.[footnote 26] New converter academies whose predecessor schools were most recently judged good or outstanding are eligible for an inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, as described in the section 8 handbook.

67. The first section 5 inspection report of a new academy will state 'not previously inspected as an academy'.[footnote 27] The first section 5 inspection report of a converter academy will include, in the context section, a statement that follows the example below:

> "Piccadilly Gate Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2019. When its predecessor school, Piccadilly Gate Secondary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall."

When can an inspection take place?

68. Inspection can take place at any point from 5 school days after the first day pupils attend in autumn term. For example, if pupils return to school on a Wednesday, inspection can take place as early as the following Wednesday.

Before the inspection

Clarification for schools

69. The information below confirms our requirements. This is to dispel myths about inspection that can result in unnecessary workload in schools. It is intended to highlight specific practices that we do not require.

70. Ofsted will:

- when making judgements, take a range of evidence into account, including official national data; discussions with leaders, staff and pupils; questionnaire responses; and work in pupils' books/folders/sketchbooks and so on
- judge fairly schools that take radically different approaches to the curriculum; inspectors will assess any school's curriculum favourably when leaders have built or adopted a curriculum with appropriate coverage, content, structure and sequencing and implemented it effectively
- report on any failure to comply with statutory arrangements when they form part of the inspection framework and evaluation schedule, including those relating to the workforce (see part 2 of this handbook)
- allow the school to invite as many governors or trustees as possible to meet inspectors during an inspection, as restrictions allow. These meetings may include a virtual option using video/telephone calls if necessary
- in academies, meet those directly responsible for management and governance, including the chief executive officer (CEO) or their delegate (or equivalent), the chair of the board of trustees and other trustees
- talk to the chair of governors/board of trustees by telephone if they are unable to attend a face-to-face meeting with the inspector in the school
- invite the headteacher (or equivalent) and, in academies, the CEO or their delegate, to observe the inspectors' final team meeting (as restrictions allow)
- expect schools to maintain, as they are required to, the single central record detailing checks carried out; we expect multi-academy trusts (MATs) to maintain this in each of their academies and to ensure that the information is recorded in a way that allows for details of each individual academy to be provided separately and without delay

71. Ofsted will not:

- grade individual lessons
- provide evidence from any lesson visit that could be used in capability/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management
- create unnecessary workload for teachers through its recommendations
- routinely check personnel files, although it may look at a small sample
- advocate a particular method of planning (including lesson planning), teaching or assessment; it is up to schools to determine their practices and it is up to leadership teams to justify these on their own merits rather than by referring to this handbook

72. Ofsted does not require schools to provide:

- evidence in any specific format, as long as it is easily accessible for inspectors

- curriculum planning in any specific format
- evidence for inspection beyond that set out in this handbook
- photographic evidence of pupils' work (although inspectors may request to take photographs themselves of pupils' work, which will be anonymised)
- any written record of teachers' oral feedback to pupils
- individual lesson plans
- previous lesson plans
- predictions of attainment and progress scores
- assessment or self-evaluation, other than that which is already part of the school's business processes
- performance and pupil-tracking information
- any specific document or plan in relation to the pupil premium other than its pupil premium strategy, and will not require any further school-generated data on the pupil premium, including information related to spending on individual students or to within-class or within-school gaps
- monitoring of teaching and learning and its link to teachers' professional development and the teachers' standards, other than that which is already part of the school's normal activity
- specific details of the pay grade of individual teachers who are observed during inspection
- evidence about each teacher from each of the bulleted sub-headings in the teachers' standards
- anonymised lists of teachers meeting or not meeting performance thresholds for pay progression
- recordings of live lessons, unless they are normally stored for staff or pupils' future use
- processes for the performance management arrangements for school leaders and staff

73. Ofsted does not require schools to:

- do additional work or to ask pupils to do work specifically for the inspection
- carry out a specified amount of lesson observation
- use the Ofsted evaluation schedule to grade teaching or individual lessons
- ensure a particular frequency or quantity of work in pupils' books or folders
- include targets relating to the proportion of good or better teaching in headteacher objectives
- set teachers' performance targets based on commercially produced predictions of pupils' achievement, or any other data set, from which it would then hold teachers to account
- retrospectively apply for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and other pre-employment checks for staff appointed before and continuously employed since the introduction of the DBS requirements
- take any specific steps with regard to site security; in particular, inspectors do not have a view about the need for perimeter fences
- take any specific steps to identify or track pupils or the work of individual pupils who would be included within the calculation of government pupil premium funding, other than that required for their pupil premium strategy
- carry out assessment or record pupils' achievements in any subject, including foundation subjects in primary schools, in a specific way, format or time
- use any particular format for policies relating to staff behaviour or have a separate code of conduct document
- be at similar stages of English Baccalaureate (EBacc) implementation as other schools, or provide additional information outside of their normal curriculum planning
- produce a self-evaluation document or summary in a particular format. Any assessment that is provided should be part of the school's business processes and not be generated solely for inspection purposes

74. Ofsted does not specify:

- how planning (including curriculum and lesson planning) should be set out, the length of time it should take or the amount of detail it should contain
- that tutor groups/form time must include literacy, numeracy or other learning sessions
- the frequency, type or volume of marking and feedback
- the content of, or approach to, headteacher and staff performance management
- the format in which staff records should be maintained, beyond existing legal requirements

Notification and introduction

75. Ofsted will normally contact the school by telephone to announce the inspection between 10.30am and 2pm on the school day before the inspection.

76. If the headteacher is unavailable when the notification call is made, we will ask to speak to the most senior member of staff available. Once we have informed the school by telephone that the inspection will take place, we will send confirmation to the school by email.

77. During the initial notification phone call, the inspection support administrator will check the number of pupils on roll at the school, the governance arrangements for the school and whether the school has any SEND, nursery provision for 2- and 3-year-olds or additional resource provision.

78. The inspection support administrator will then send the school a note setting out key information for leaders to be aware of before inspection. This will include:

- Ofsted's privacy notice
- informing the school that inspectors will use a range of technology to gather evidence electronically, including mobile devices, tablets and laptops
- informing the school that inspectors may request to take photographic evidence, for example of pupils' work and displays, but that inspectors will not take photographs of pupils

Information that schools must provide by 8am on the day of inspection

79. The inspection support administrator will also send the school a note requesting that the following information is available to inspectors by 8am the next day, at the formal start of the inspection:

- the school timetable, current staff list (indicating NQTs) and times for the school day
- any information about previously planned interruptions to normal school routines during the inspection
- records and analysis of exclusions, pupils taken off roll, incidents of poor behaviour and any use of internal isolation
- the single central record for the school
- records and analysis of sexual harassment or sexual violence
- records and analysis of bullying, discriminatory and prejudiced behaviour, either directly or indirectly, including racist, sexist, disability and homophobic/biphobic/transphobic bullying, use of derogatory language and racist incidents
- a list of referrals made to the designated person for safeguarding in the school and those that were subsequently referred to the local authority, along with brief details of the resolution
- a list of all pupils who have open cases with children's services/social care and for whom there is a multi-agency plan
- up-to-date attendance analysis for all groups of pupils
- documented evidence of the work of those responsible for governance and their priorities, including any written scheme of delegation for an academy in a MAT
- a summary of any school self-evaluation or equivalent
- the current school improvement plan or equivalent, including any planning that sets out the longer-term vision for the school, such as the school or the trust's strategy
- any reports from external evaluation of the school
- maps and other practical information
- access to wifi, if it exists, so that inspectors can connect to the internet

Preparation

80. Once we have informed the school of the inspection, the lead inspector will contact the school by telephone and ask to speak to the headteacher. Inspectors' preparatory telephone conversations with headteachers will have 2 elements:

- a reflective, educationally focused conversation about the school's progress since the last inspection, including how COVID-19 has affected this
- a shorter inspection-planning conversation that focuses on practical and logistical issues

81. It may be that both these elements are discussed in a single telephone conversation. Alternatively, they may be carried out as 2 separate conversations with a break in between, as agreed between the lead inspector and the headteacher.

Discussing the school's progress since the last inspection

82. Inspectors will hold an introductory telephone conversation with school leaders on the day before the inspection begins. This should include giving school leaders the opportunity to explain their school's specific context and challenges. Inspection experience shows that this helps both leaders and inspectors build stronger professional relationships.

83. 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 current inspection framework
- 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, and the personal development of pupils
- the specific areas of the school that should be focused on during inspection

84. This conversation will normally last up to 90 minutes. It may be longer where detailed discussions of the COVID-19 context are required. It will help inspectors and school leaders to establish a rapport before inspection and give them a shared understanding of the starting point of the inspection. It 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 implementing 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.

Inspection planning discussion

85. This discussion will be short and focused on practical issues. The lead inspector will:

- make the school aware of its statutory duty to inform parents of the inspection and that Ofsted's Parent View tool is the main method for gathering the views of parents at the point of inspection; inspectors will remind the school that our letter to parents containing the link to Ofsted Parent View may be sent electronically, or as a paper copy via pupils
- discuss the nature of the SEND resource base, if applicable
- discuss any nursery provision, before- and/or after-school care or holiday clubs led and managed directly by the school, particularly if these take 2- to 8-year-olds[footnote 28]
- invite the headteacher, curriculum leaders and other leaders to take part in joint visits to lessons and to observe the main inspection team meetings
- make arrangements for meetings with relevant staff
- provide an opportunity for the school to ask any questions or to raise any concerns, such as perceived conflicts of interest

86. The lead inspector will also use the discussion to establish whether the school has any pupils who attend off-site alternative provision, either full time or part time, run either by the school or in partnership with other schools. If the school uses off-site alternative provision, the lead inspector will request further details about this.

87. The lead inspector will also request that the school provides certain information as early as possible to aid preparation. This will include:

- a copy of the school timetable
- details of any relevant staff absence
- whether any teachers cannot be observed for any reason (for example, if they are subject to capability procedures)
- whether there is anyone working on site who is normally employed elsewhere in the MAT (if relevant)

88. It is important that inspectors speak to those responsible for leadership and governance during inspection. Since schools, and especially MATs, operate a wide variety of leadership and governance models, it is essential that inspectors establish who is responsible for leadership and governance.

89. The lead inspector will therefore:

- establish what the governance structure of the school or academy is, with reference to the range of functions delegated to local governing bodies or other committees[footnote 29]
- confirm arrangements for meetings with the school and, if appropriate, MAT executive leaders, as well as representatives of those responsible for the governance of the school and anyone else they think relevant. The lead inspector should be guided by the school here as to who they need to meet in the structure of a MAT
- make arrangements for a meeting with the chair of the governing body or, if appropriate, the chair of the board of trustees and as many governors/trustees as possible. Inspectors will also ask the school to invite as many governors/trustees as possible to attend the final feedback meeting
- request either a face-to-face meeting or a telephone call with a representative from the local authority, diocese, sponsor or other relevant responsible body as appropriate
- request that a representative from the local authority, diocese, MAT sponsor or other relevant responsible body is present at the final inspection feedback meeting as appropriate

90. If any issues arise, the lead inspector may also need further clarification from the school, for example when information is not available on the school's website.

Further inspection preparation carried out by the lead inspector

91. In addition to the information requested from the school, inspectors will review and consider:

- all relevant information held by Ofsted, including:
  - inspection reports on the school
  - any surveys or monitoring letters
  - any complaints made about the school to Ofsted[footnote 30]
  - replies to questionnaires
  - our inspection data summary report (IDSR)
  - information on our provider information portal, including any warning notices[footnote 31]
  - the most recent inspection report on the relevant local authority's children's services[footnote 32]
  - the main findings from the relevant local area's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) inspection[footnote 33]
- relevant publicly available information, such as the school's website[footnote 34]
- information published by local authorities, the DfE (including the Education and Skills Funding Agency and regional school commissioners) and the police

Resource bases

92. If the school has a SEND resource base delegated to it or the local authority maintains direct responsibility for the period when the pupils in the provision are in mainstream classes at the school being inspected, the resource base must be inspected. Inspectors must consider evidence about the resourced provision when making judgements about the school overall.

93. During the lead inspector's planning conversation with the school, they will get specific information about any resource base, including:

- the number of pupils and the range of the needs of pupils placed in additionally resourced provision, together with pupils' timetables, including when they are taught in mainstream classes (with and without support) and when they receive specialist support in separate resourced provision
- the type(s) of language/communication systems used. If the specialist provision is for deaf pupils, it is important to establish, if British Sign Language is used, whether a British Sign Language interpreter will be provided by the school when inspectors are meeting with the pupils. The lead inspector will contact the inspection support administrator as soon as possible if this support is needed. Details will be available in the team room
- staffing arrangements and details of any outreach services provided by the resourced provision

Requests for deferral or cancellation

94. A school may request a deferral of its inspection. It may make a request to the inspection support administrator when it is notified of the inspection, or to the lead inspector on the day it is notified of the inspection. We will not normally consider deferrals if we receive them after 4.30pm on the day the school is notified. The inspection support administrator or lead inspector must immediately contact the regional duty desk. We will decide whether this should be granted in accordance with our deferral policy.

95. Normally, if the school is providing education to pupils, an inspection will go ahead. In exceptional circumstances, however, an inspection might be cancelled or deferred after the school has been notified, following a request made by the school. We aim to let the school know whether a request is granted on the same day it is made, but in some cases (particularly when the request for deferral comes later), this may happen by 8am the next morning.

96. If a school is within 6 months of confirmed closure,[footnote 35] but the school does not request a cancellation when the inspection support administrator makes contact, the inspection support administrator will call the regional duty desk to highlight this and get advice about whether the inspection should still be carried out. Decisions will be made case by case.

97. In the case of unannounced inspections, any requests for a deferral will be passed to Ofsted's relevant regional director, who will decide whether the request can be granted.

No-notice inspections

98. We may carry out inspections without notice.[footnote 36] When this happens, the lead inspector will normally telephone the school about 15 minutes before arriving on site. In these cases, the inspector will make the initial call simply to inform the school that the inspection is about to begin and will leave all other arrangements until arriving at the school.

Seeking the views of registered parents and other stakeholders

99. When a school is notified of a section 5 inspection, it is required to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to notify all registered parents of registered pupils[footnote 37] at the school, including those who have been excluded, attend alternative provision or are away from school. Schools are also required to notify relevant bodies, including providers of alternative provision.[footnote 38]

100. Inspectors have a statutory duty to have regard of the views of parents and other relevant persons at the point of a section 5 inspection.[footnote 39] Our email confirming the inspection includes a letter that formally notifies parents. It also explains how to use Ofsted Parent View and how parents can contact inspectors. Schools will encourage parents to complete the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire by placing a link to it on their website. In addition, inspectors will encourage the school to notify parents using its own electronic systems (such as text messages), if these are available.

101. Inspectors will review the evidence from Ofsted Parent View throughout the inspection to ensure that all online responses received during the inspection are taken into account. If the response rate for Ofsted Parent View is low, inspectors may take steps during the inspection to gather further evidence of parents' views.

102. Inspectors will also take into account any other evidence from parents, including the results of any past surveys the school has carried out or commissioned. If individual parents raise serious issues, inspectors will follow these up with the school and record its response.

103. During integrated inspections of boarding or residential special schools, social care regulatory inspectors will take account of the views that parents have given on Ofsted Parent View about the school's boarding or residential provision. Views of children and young people who are boarders or residential pupils and boarding staff will have been gathered through Ofsted's annual point-in-time surveys.

Pupil and staff questionnaires

104. The views of pupils and staff in schools are gathered through online questionnaires. The inspection support administrator sends online links to the school with the formal notification of the inspection. The school is asked to encourage staff and pupils to complete the online questionnaires, apart from those pupils in any boarding provision, whose views will have already been sought through the point-in-time survey. Pupils and staff should complete their questionnaires by 3pm on the first day of the inspection.

105. As well as through online questionnaires, inspectors may gather evidence from parents or other stakeholders in person. This may include informal meetings at the start and/or end of the day. These meetings must take place without the presence of the headteacher or senior staff. In drawing on evidence from these meetings, every attempt must be made to protect the identity of individuals. There may be circumstances, however, in which it is not possible to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewee. Inspectors have a duty to pass on disclosures that raise child protection or safeguarding issues and/or when there are concerns about serious misconduct, bullying of staff or criminal activity.

The inspection

Days allocated to inspection and inspection team members

106. Inspections do not normally last longer than 2 days. The size of the inspection team will vary according to the size and nature of the school.

Concurrent inspections

107. We may schedule inspections at the same time for 'linked provision', which is when one or more schools have arrangements to share important aspects of their provision, such as sixth-form programmes or an inclusion unit. Inspectors will make sure that they communicate with each other before and during the inspections. They will also share evidence electronically. Inspectors will ensure that they give sufficient consideration to the emerging judgements of the linked provision.

108. The inspection of boarding or residential provision in a school is carried out by one or more social care regulatory inspectors. Contact between the education and social care regulatory inspectors will take place before the inspection. Guidance on pre-inspection activity for integrated inspections is set out in the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): boarding schools and residential special schools.

Arrival time on the first full day of inspection

109. On the first day of the inspection, inspectors will not arrive before 8am.

Gathering and recording evidence

110. Although meetings with leaders are important, inspectors' first priority during inspections is to collect first-hand evidence.

111. Inspectors will visit lessons; scrutinise pupils' work; talk to pupils about their work, gauging both their understanding and their engagement in learning; and gather pupils' perceptions of the typical quality of education and other aspects of life at the school in a range of subjects.

112. Inspectors will evaluate evidence of the impact of the curriculum, including on the most disadvantaged pupils. This includes pupils with SEND. It also includes pupils who meet the criteria for the school to receive pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last 6 years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route. In addition, it includes children in need of help and protection, receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker. Inspectors will give specific attention to the acquisition of knowledge and skills in lessons and on-site separate provision and evidence of learning in off-site alternative provision.

113. Other evidence gathered by inspectors will include: discussions with pupils and staff; listening to pupils read; and looking at examples of pupils' work for evidence of progress in knowledge, understanding and skills towards defined endpoints. Inspectors will also scrutinise the school's records and documentation relating, for example, to the welfare and safety of pupils in alternative provision

Evaluating different approaches to teaching

114. Ofsted does not advocate that any particular approach should be used exclusively in teaching. Different approaches to teaching can be effective. What is appropriate will depend on the aims of a particular lesson or activity, and its place in the sequence of teaching a particular topic. Nevertheless, any approach used has features that must be present to ensure that it is delivered effectively. Our research commentary sets out our understanding of those factors.

Newly qualified teachers and trainees working in schools during section 5 inspections

115. When the lead inspector requests a copy of the current staff list, they must ask whether this includes:

- any newly qualified teachers (NQTs)
- any trainees on placement, including those on School Direct or School Direct (salaried) training routes

116. Inspectors will meet NQTs where possible and may wish to visit lessons given by NQTs. In doing so, inspectors should take into account the fact that NQTs have less experience than other teachers, but must assess the effectiveness of the support and professional development put in place for NQTs and early career teachers (ECTs), particularly in dealing with pupils' behaviour. This must include the quality of mentoring and what the school has done to support their development in areas for improvement identified by initial teacher training providers. Inspectors should discuss how NQTs are supported by the school in managing pupils' behaviour.

117. Inspectors will meet any trainees employed by the school on the School Direct (salaried) route to assess their support, mentoring and induction. Inspectors will not observe lessons given by trainees.

118. The teachers' standards state that providers will assess trainees against the standards in a way that is consistent with what could reasonably be expected of a trainee teacher before the awarding of qualified teacher status (QTS). Inspectors will not take trainees' performance into account when assessing the quality of education.

Overarching approach to inspection

119. This EIF seeks to put a single, joined-up educational conversation at the heart of inspection. It is built around the connectedness of curriculum, teaching, assessment and standards within the 'quality of education' judgement. As a result, the inspection methodology for this judgement is structured to ensure that inspectors are able to gather evidence of how a school's activities to deliver a high-quality education for its pupils connect and work together to achieve the highest possible standards.

120. As set out in the 'preparation' section (paragraphs 80 to 81), inspections under the EIF always begin with in-depth discussions with school leaders and curriculum leaders about the school's curriculum. Inspectors ask about what leaders intend pupils to learn. What are the end points they wish them to reach, what are the key concepts that they need to understand, and in what order will they learn them? They will also ask about pupils' behaviour and attitudes and personal development.

121. During inspection, inspectors will probe leaders' understanding further but, most importantly, they will focus on gathering first-hand evidence. Inspectors will visit lessons, talk to individual teachers and pupils, and look at pupils' work (in its widest sense) together with curriculum leaders to see whether it matches leaders' intentions. Inspectors will then draw all this evidence together from different pupils, classes and year groups.

122. The crucial element here is the connection between different pieces of evidence. Inspectors will not emphasise one specific type of evidence above all others. Instead, inspectors will focus on gathering evidence that is balanced and connected. Our research on work scrutiny and lesson visits has shown that having a variety of types of connected evidence strengthens the conclusions that inspectors are able to reach.

123. This evidence will always lead inspectors back to the overall quality of education on offer. The focus will not be on one particular lesson, book or pupil. Rather, the focus will be on the interconnection of all of these pieces of evidence and what they tell inspectors and leaders about whether pupils are learning the curriculum and making progress in the sense of knowing more, remembering more and being able to do more. The evidence the first inspections under the EIF is that this approach enables inspectors and leaders to build up a clear picture of whether the school is meeting the criteria set out in the 'quality of education' judgement.

Joint visits to lessons

124. One element of the inspection will be visits to lessons. The lead inspector will invite the headteacher, curriculum leaders and other leaders to take part in joint visits to lessons.

125. Inspectors will not take a random sample of lessons to visit. Instead, they will connect lesson visits to other evidence, such as discussions with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils, and work scrutiny. Inspectors will visit several lessons in which the same subject is being taught, wherever possible including lessons to different year groups. Lesson visits are not about evaluating individual teachers or their teaching; there will be no grading of the teaching observed by inspectors. Instead, inspectors will view lessons across a faculty, department, subject, key stage or year group and then aggregate insights as to how what is going on in lessons contributes to the school's curriculum intentions. This will then provide part of the evidence for an overall view of quality of education or behaviour and attitudes.

126. In summary, lesson visits are primarily useful for gathering evidence about how lessons contribute to the quality of education. Inspectors can use these visits to gather evidence about how well the curriculum is implemented. They do this by looking at what is going on in lessons for one or more subjects or themes, triangulating this with evidence collected through discussions with the staff and pupils involved, and scrutinising the pupils' work, wherever possible derived from the lessons visited and the relevant sequence of lessons (see below).

127. Lesson visits are also useful for gathering evidence that contributes to the 'behaviour and attitudes' judgement by providing direct evidence about how behaviour is managed within individual classrooms and how pupils respond. This evidence will complement the other evidence that inspectors gather about behaviour during inspection.

Work scrutiny

128. Another element of the inspection approach will be scrutinising pupils' work. The lead inspector will invite curriculum leaders and teachers to take part in joint scrutiny of pupils' work.

129. Inspectors will not take a random sample of exercise books/folders/sketchbooks/electronic files and so on (which we refer to as 'pupils' books and other work'). Instead, they will scrutinise pupils' books and other work across a faculty, department, subject, key stage or year group and aggregate insights to provide part of the evidence for an overall view of the quality of education. Inspectors will not evaluate individual workbooks or teachers. Inspectors will not use work scrutiny to evaluate teachers' marking. Inspectors will connect work scrutiny to lesson visits and, where at all possible, conversations with pupils and staff.

130. Inspectors can use work scrutiny to contribute to an evaluation of whether the work that pupils do over time reflects the intended curriculum. Work scrutiny will help inspectors to form a view of whether pupils 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 a faculty, department, subject, key stage or year group.

Talking to and observing pupils outside lessons

131. Inspectors will ensure that they talk to and observe pupils in a range of situations outside normal lessons to evaluate other aspects of personal development, behaviour and attitudes, for example:

- at the start and finish of the school day
- during lunchtime, including in the dining hall, and breaktimes or playtimes
- during assemblies and tutor periods
- when moving between lessons
- during enrichment activities (including clubs and activities outside of the normal timetabled curriculum)

132. Inspectors will take advantage of opportunities to gather evidence from a wide range of pupils, both formally and informally.[footnote 40] During informal conversations with pupils, inspectors must ask them about their experiences of teaching, learning and behaviour in the school, including the prevention of bullying and how the school deals with any form of harassment and violence, discrimination and prejudiced behaviour, if they happen. Inspectors will ensure that all questions are appropriate. They would not expect any adult to be present.

133. During the inspection, it is important that pupils are able to express their views freely to inspectors. Therefore, inspectors must have the opportunity to speak to pupils with no other adults present. This is particularly important when inspectors ask pupils questions around safeguarding. Inspectors will also try to ensure that they speak to at least some single-sex pupil groups to provide the opportunity for pupils to speak more freely about issues such as peer-on-peer abuse. See 'Inspectors talking to pupils on inspection'.

Meeting those responsible for governance

134. Inspectors will always seek to meet those responsible for governance during the inspection.

135. In a maintained school or standalone academy, this will usually include maintained school governors or academy trustees and sponsors (including sponsor representatives, where they exist).[footnote 41]

136. In a school that is part of a MAT, the board of trustees is the governance body. Often, local governing bodies can appear responsible for governance, when in reality it is trustees who are accountable for the academy trust. Local governing bodies are committees to which trustees have often chosen to delegate some specific responsibilities, but in some cases they may act purely as advisory bodies and engage with the community. Their responsibilities will normally be set out in the trust's scheme of delegation. Sometimes, their powers are delegated from the managers of the MAT; in this case, they are part of the school's management, not its governance. Inspectors will therefore need to be careful to establish who has overall responsibility for governance. Inspectors will also ensure that meetings are with those who are directly responsible for exercising governance of the school and for overseeing its performance.

137. The role that governors and trustees play in the school's performance is evaluated as part of the judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management, and each report will contain a separate paragraph that addresses the governance of the school.

138. As with the meetings between inspectors and pupils, parents and staff, meetings or telephone discussions with those responsible for governance should take place without the headteacher or other senior staff being present.

Meeting leaders

139. The lead inspector will meet the headteacher regularly throughout the inspection to:

- provide updates on emerging issues, including initial general findings about the quality of education and to enable further evidence to be provided
- allow the headteacher to raise concerns, including those related to the conduct of the inspection or of individual inspectors
- alert the headteacher to any serious concerns

140. The inspection team will meet at different points during the course of the inspection. In particular, the team should:

- meet briefly in the middle of day 1
- meet at the end of day 1 to discuss and record emerging findings; the headteacher should be invited
- meet at the end of day 2 to finalise judgements and identify areas for improvement
- draw together the key inspection findings and write up the evaluation for team meetings

141. The lead inspector will invite the headteacher to the final team meeting at the end of day 2. It is important that the lead inspector makes it clear that observers who are invited to attend the final team meeting are there to listen to the scrutiny of evidence and agreed judgements made by the inspection team. As appropriate, the lead inspector may request that observers clarify key points during the meeting.

142. In a MAT, the headteacher (or equivalent) may report to a CEO (or equivalent) who is, in turn, accountable to the board of trustees. The CEO is part of the executive staff (and may be a trustee). They should be invited to the final meeting or be allowed to send a delegate.

143. If, by the end of day 1 or during day 2, there is evidence that the school might be judged as inadequate or requires improvement, the lead inspector will alert the headteacher to this possibility. The inspector must emphasise that they do not make final judgements until the final team meeting at the end of day 2.

Reaching final judgements

144. Inspection activity, including lesson visits, will continue during day 2. The team will also ensure that time is set aside to prepare for the final team meeting and the final feedback. During the final team meeting, an evaluation card will be completed. The main points for feedback to the school will be recorded as the meeting progresses.

Providing feedback

145. The on-site inspection ends with a final feedback meeting with the school. Those connected with the school who may attend include:

- the headteacher and other senior leaders, as agreed by the lead inspector and headteacher
- for maintained schools, the chair of the school's governing body and as many governors as possible; the clerk to governors (or equivalent), or their delegate, may also attend to take notes
- for academies, including academies that are part of a MAT, the chair of the board of trustees and as many trustees as possible; the clerk to governors or the board (or equivalent), or their delegate, may also attend to take notes
- in an academy that is part of a MAT, the CEO or their delegate or equivalent
- a representative from the local authority (for maintained schools) sponsor and/or the designated responsible body
- in an aligned or integrated inspection, social care regulatory inspectors and education inspectors will feed back together to both education and residential staff

Due to the diverse nature of school governance, in some schools a single individual may have more than one of the above roles.

146. During this meeting, the lead inspector will ensure that the headteacher, those responsible for governance and all attendees are clear:

- about the provisional grades awarded for each key judgement.
- about the key findings from the inspection, as summarised in the final summary evaluation. The lead inspector must give sufficient detail to enable all attendees to understand how judgements have been reached and for those responsible for the governance of the school to play a part in beginning to plan how to tackle any areas for improvement
- that the grades are provisional and so may be subject to change as a result of quality assurance procedures or moderation and must, therefore, be treated as restricted and confidential to the relevant senior personnel (as determined by the school). They may be shared with all those responsible for the governance of the school, irrespective of whether they attended the meeting, so long as they are clearly marked as provisional, confidential and subject to quality assurance. Information about the inspection outcomes should be shared more widely only when the school receives a copy of the final inspection report
- that the main findings of the inspection and the main points provided orally in the feedback, subject to any change, will be referred to in the text of the report, although the text of the report may differ slightly from the oral feedback
- about any recommendations for improvement
- that, on receipt of the draft report, they must ensure that the report is not shared with anyone other than those outlined above, or published under any circumstances
- that the headteacher is invited and encouraged to complete the post-inspection survey
- about the implications of the school being placed in a category of concern if the school is judged to be inadequate
- when a school requires special measures, whether it may appoint NQTs[footnote 42]
- about the procedure for making a complaint about the inspection
- if the school is being placed in a category of concern, that they may make comments on the judgements in the draft report during quality assurance (that is, they are not limited to factual accuracy comments)

147. Regulations state that a maintained school that has been judged to require special measures may not appoint NQTs unless HMCI has given permission in writing. When the lead inspector has informed a maintained school that it may not appoint NQTs, the school must seek approval if it later wishes to appoint NQTs, by writing to the relevant Ofsted regional director, giving supporting reasons. The restriction on appointing NQTs does not extend to trainee teachers who joined employment-based training programmes at the school prior to the notice.[footnote 43]

Schools that are judged as requires improvement

148. A school that is judged as requires improvement (overall effectiveness grade 3) is a school that is not good but overall provides an acceptable standard of education. The judgement of requires improvement is not a formal category of concern, but the school may be subject to monitoring by Ofsted. This will not normally apply to a school that has been judged as requires improvement for the first time. We will inspect the school again under section 5, usually within 30 months of the publication of the previous section 5 report.

149. When the school is judged as requires improvement, inspectors will direct the school to Ofsted's section 8 handbook.

150. If, at the next section 5 inspection, the school has not demonstrated that it has improved to good, the lead inspector will need to consider whether the school continues to require improvement or may be inadequate. If the school has demonstrated improvement in some areas and there is a general upward trend, but key aspects of performance remain less than good, the school may be judged as requires improvement again. In that case, there will normally be monitoring before another section 5 inspection takes place within 30 months of the publication of the previous section 5 report. These considerations will be made at each section 5 re-inspection of a school that was previously judged as requires improvement.

Schools causing concern

151. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be inadequate (grade 4) will be deemed to be in a formal category of concern.

Procedures for judging a school as inadequate

152. If, by the end of the first day of the inspection or during day 2, the lead inspector thinks it is possible that the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate and that it might be judged to have serious weaknesses or to require special measures, they must ring Ofsted's regional duty desk.[footnote 44]

153. The lead inspector will be asked for their name and the name and URN of the school. They will then be put through to one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) on duty. In this call, the lead inspector must talk through the evidence used by inspector(s) in reaching an emerging provisional judgement of inadequate. The overall effectiveness judgement is not confirmed at this point. The lead inspector must record the main points of the conversation on an evidence form.

154. During the second day of the inspection, the lead inspector may contact the regional duty desk again to discuss emerging findings. If the inspection team has made the provisional judgement that the school is inadequate and has serious weaknesses or requires special measures, the lead inspector must telephone the regional duty desk before the final oral feedback meeting with the school. The lead inspector will be prepared to explain briefly the reasons and underpinning evidence for the inadequate judgement.

Special measures

155. A school requires special measures if both of the following apply:

- it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education
- the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school[footnote 45]

156. If inspectors judge that the evidence shows that the overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate, they must consider whether the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. If the key judgement either for quality of education or for personal development is 'inadequate', inspectors must conclude that the school is failing to give an acceptable standard of education.[footnote 46]

157. Inspectors must then consider whether leaders, managers and governors are demonstrating the capacity to improve the school.

158. If inspectors find that the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and find that leaders, managers and governors are not demonstrating the capacity to improve the school, then they must find that the school requires special measures. In any case, where inspectors find that leaders, managers and governors are not demonstrating the capacity to improve the school, the leadership and management will be judged inadequate.

Serious weaknesses

159. If inspectors consider that the evidence shows that the overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate, but do not find that the school requires special measures in line with the above paragraph, they will instead judge the school to have serious weaknesses. A school with serious weaknesses will have one or more of the key judgements graded inadequate (grade 4) and/or have important weaknesses in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Informing a school that it is deemed to be causing concern

160. If a school is provisionally judged to require special measures or to have serious weaknesses, inspectors must use the following words during the final feedback to the school, indicating that the overall effectiveness judgement is subject to moderation by HMIs and, in the case of special measures, agreement by HMCI.

When the school has serious weaknesses:

> "In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is likely to be of the opinion that this school has serious weaknesses[footnote 47] because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform."

When the school requires special measures:

> "In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is likely to be of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school."

Implications for a school causing concern

161. If a school is judged to be causing concern, the timescale for publishing the report is extended so that the school can make comments on the inspection judgements. Judgements can be moderated in light of those comments and, in the case of schools judged to require special measures, confirmed either by HMCI or a regional director on HMCI's behalf.

162. Maintained schools and PRUs that are judged to be causing concern will be subject to an academy order. The Secretary of State has a duty to make an academy order for all maintained schools judged to have serious weaknesses ('requiring significant improvement') and those that require special measures. This includes maintained special schools, but excludes maintained nursery schools and non-maintained special schools. For academies that are causing concern, the Secretary of State has a power to terminate the funding agreement, and the academy may become part of a trust or be 'rebrokered'[footnote 48] to another trust.

163. Maintained schools or PRUs that have been issued with an academy order and academies that are being brokered or rebrokered to new sponsors following termination of their funding agreements will normally receive monitoring inspections if they have not been brokered or rebrokered after 9 months.

164. There is still a requirement for the local authority, proprietor or trust to prepare a statement of action, even though these schools will become new sponsored academies once the new funding agreements are in place. However, with the exception of any safeguarding concerns, which the statement of action must address, the purpose of the statement will be to set out how the relevant authority and the school will support the transition to the new academy or trust.

165. Whether becoming a new academy or being brokered or rebrokered, these schools will become new sponsored academies. We will then inspect them as new schools within 3 years of operation and normally in the third year. However, in exceptional circumstances, schools that are becoming new academies or being rebrokered may receive a section 8 inspection before their next section 5 inspection.

166. Academies judged to have serious weaknesses, and which are not brokered or rebrokered, will be subject to monitoring by Ofsted.[footnote 49] They will normally be re-inspected within 30 months of the publication of the inspection report in which they were judged to have serious weaknesses.

167. Academies judged to require special measures, and which are not rebrokered, will be subject to monitoring by Ofsted. The timing of the next section 5 inspection will be determined by the academy's rate of improvement. However, it will normally take place within 30 months of the publication of the inspection report that judged it to require special measures.

168. Maintained nursery schools and non-maintained special schools judged inadequate are not subject to academy orders. We will monitor them as set out in the section 8 handbook.

Taking a school out of a category of concern

169. When an inspection team judges that a school that has been subject to special measures no longer requires special measures, inspectors must use the following words during the final feedback to the school:

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

170. When an inspection team judges that a school previously judged to have serious weaknesses no longer has serious weaknesses, inspectors must use the following words during the final feedback to the school:

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

After the inspection

Arrangements for publishing the report[footnote 50]

171. 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 school at the end of day 2.

172. Inspection reports will be quality assured before we send a draft to the school. In most circumstances, the school will receive the draft report within 18 working days after the end of the inspection. The draft report is restricted and confidential to the relevant personnel (as determined by the school), including those responsible for governance, and should not be shared more widely or published. We may also share the draft report to the DfE and other bodies as necessary. This will only take place following moderation or quality assurance.

173. The school will have 5 working days to comment on the draft report, inspection process and findings. We will consider all comments. We will respond to them when we share the final report with the school within 30 working days after the inspection.

174. If the school wishes to make a formal complaint, it has 5 working days after we have shared the final report with the school (not necessarily the same as 5 school days) in which to do so. If a complaint is not submitted, we will normally publish the report on our reports website 3 working days later. If a complaint has been submitted, the publication of the report may be delayed.

175. Once a school has received its final report, it is required to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that every parent of a registered pupil at the school receives a copy of the report within 5 working days.[footnote 51] After that time, the report will normally be published on Ofsted's website. However, we may publish the report any time after the school has received it.

176. In all cases, the inspection process should not be treated as complete until all inspection activity has been carried out and the final version of the inspection report has been sent to the school.

177. The evidence base for the inspection must be retained in line with Ofsted's retention and disposal policy. This is normally for 6 years from when the report is published. We may decide that retaining it for longer is warranted for research purposes.

Quality assurance and complaints

Quality assurance

178. 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.

179. We monitor the quality of inspections through a range of formal processes and HMI/Senior HMI visit some schools or monitor remotely to quality assure inspections. We may also evaluate the quality of an inspection evidence base. The lead inspector will be responsible for giving team inspectors feedback about the quality of their work and their conduct.

180. All schools are invited to take part in a voluntary post-inspection survey in order to contribute to inspection development. The link to this survey is provided when the school receives the final copy of its inspection report.

Handling concerns and complaints

181. The great majority of our work is carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns do arise during the inspection, they should be raised with the lead inspector as soon as possible, in order to resolve issues before the inspection is completed. Any concerns raised, and actions taken, will be recorded in the inspection evidence.

182. If it is not possible to resolve concerns during the inspection or through submitting comments in response to the draft report, the school may wish to lodge a formal complaint on receipt of the final report. The lead inspector will ensure that the school is informed that it is able to make a formal complaint and that information about how to complain is available on GOV.UK.

Part 2. The evaluation schedule – how we will judge schools

183. The evaluation schedule is not exhaustive. It does not replace the professional judgement of inspectors. Inspectors must interpret the way that grades are described according to pupils' age, stage and phase of education.

184. Inspectors will make judgements on the following:

- overall effectiveness

and the 4 key judgements:

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

and, where relevant, judgements on the quality of provision in:

- early years education
- the sixth form

185. Inspectors use the following 4-point scale to make all judgements:

- grade 1: outstanding
- grade 2: good
- grade 3: requires improvement
- grade 4: inadequate

Reaching a judgement of outstanding

186. Outstanding is a challenging and exacting judgement. In order to reach this standard, inspectors will determine whether the school meets all the criteria for good under that judgement, and does so securely and consistently. In other words, it is not enough that the school is strong against some aspects of the judgement and not against others, but it must meet each and every good criterion. In addition, there are further criteria set out under the outstanding judgement, which the school will also need to meet. Our aim in making this change is that schools should only be judged outstanding in a particular area if they are performing exceptionally, and this exceptional performance in that area is consistent and secure across the whole school.

Reaching a judgement of good, requires improvement or inadequate

187. When considering a judgement of good or requires improvement, inspectors will look at whether the overall quality of the school is most closely aligned to the descriptors set out. A school will be inadequate under a particular judgement if one or more of the inadequate criteria applies, unless that inadequate criteria applies solely due to the impact of COVID-19.

Overall effectiveness

188. Inspectors must use all their evidence to evaluate what it is like to attend the school. In making their judgements about a school's overall effectiveness, inspectors will consider whether the standard of education is good or whether it exceeds good and is outstanding. If it is not good, then inspectors will consider whether it requires improvement or is inadequate.

189. In judging the overall effectiveness, inspectors will take account of the 4 key judgements.

190. In coming to each of these key judgements, inspectors will also draw on evidence from the inspection of any early years provision and sixth-form provision and consider its impact in the wider context of the school.

191. Inspectors will judge the effectiveness of any early years provision or sixth-form provision. For either case or both, inspectors must give a grade, summarise the key findings and explain the effectiveness grading in the inspection report. However, inspectors may decide not to give a grade and not to report on the early years or sixth-form provision if there is the risk that it is possible to identify individual pupils because numbers are so small. Typically, this will be when there are fewer than 5 pupils.

192. The grade for early years and/or the grade for the sixth-form provision may be the same as, or higher or lower than, the overall effectiveness grade. Inspectors will take into account the size of the early years and sixth-form provision in relation to the size of the school when considering the impact of these judgements on the overall effectiveness grade. Inspectors will explain any difference between the early years and/or sixth-form provision grade(s) and the overall effectiveness grade in the report.

193. Inspectors will always make a written judgement about the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

194. Before making the final judgement on overall effectiveness, inspectors will always consider the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school, and evaluate the extent to which the school's education provision meets different pupils' needs, including pupils with SEND.

Grade descriptors for overall effectiveness

Outstanding (1)

- The quality of education is outstanding.
- All other 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 school is improving this area sustainably and securely towards outstanding. Typically this will mean meeting each and every one of the good criteria but falling short on the outstanding for that key judgement.
- Safeguarding is effective.

Good (2)

- The quality of education is at least 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 school is improving this area sustainably and securely towards good.
- Safeguarding is effective.

Requires improvement (3)

- Other than in exceptional circumstances, it is likely that, when the school is judged as requires improvement in any of the key judgements, the school's overall effectiveness will also be requires improvement.
- Safeguarding is effective. If there are any weaknesses in safeguarding, they are easily rectified and there are no serious failings that leave pupils either being harmed or at risk of harm.

Inadequate (4)

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

The quality of education

195. Inspectors will take a rounded view of the quality of education that a school provides to all its pupils, including the most disadvantaged pupils (see definition in paragraph 112) and pupils with SEND. Inspectors will consider the school's curriculum, which is the substance of what is taught with a specific plan of what pupils need to know in total and in each subject.

196. Inspectors will consider the extent to which the school's curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills that pupils will gain at each stage (we call this 'intent'). They will also consider the way that the curriculum developed or adopted by the school is taught and assessed in order to support pupils to build their knowledge and to apply that knowledge as skills (we call this 'implementation'). Finally, inspectors will consider the outcomes that pupils achieve as a result of the education they have received (we call this the 'impact').

Intent

197. In evaluating the school's educational intent, inspectors will primarily consider the curriculum leadership provided by school, subject and curriculum leaders.

198. The judgement focuses on factors that both research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to an effective education in which pupils achieve highly. These factors are listed below.

- The school's curriculum is rooted in the solid consensus of the school's leaders about the knowledge and skills that pupils need in order to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. In this way, it can powerfully address social disadvantage.
- It is clear what end points the curriculum is building towards and what pupils need to know and be able to do to reach those end points.
- The school's curriculum is planned and sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and towards its clearly defined end points.
- The curriculum reflects the school's local context by addressing typical gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Curriculum planning accounts for delays and gaps in learning that arise as a result of the pandemic.
- The curriculum remains as broad as possible for as long as possible, including when delivered remotely. Pupils are able to study a strong academic core of subjects, such as those offered by the EBacc.
- There is high academic/vocational/technical ambition for all pupils, and the school does not offer disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND a reduced curriculum.

Curriculum flexibility

199. The curriculum sets out the aims of a programme of education. It also sets out the structure for those aims to be implemented, including the knowledge and skills to be gained at each stage. It enables the evaluation of pupils' knowledge and skills against those expectations.

200. All pupils in maintained schools are expected to study the basic curriculum, which includes national curriculum, religious education and age-appropriate relationships and sex education.[footnote 52] Academies are expected to offer all pupils a broad curriculum that should be similar in breadth and ambition.[footnote 53]

201. We will judge schools taking radically different approaches to the curriculum fairly. We recognise the importance of schools' autonomy to choose their own curriculum approaches. If leaders are able to show that they have thought carefully, that they have built a curriculum with appropriate coverage, content, structure and sequencing, and that it has been implemented effectively, then inspectors will assess a school's curriculum favourably.

Curriculum narrowing

202. Our research has shown that some schools narrow the curriculum available to pupils, particularly in key stages 2 and 3. Our research also shows that this has a disproportionately negative effect on the most disadvantaged pupils. In key stage 1, inspectors need to check that pupils are able to read, write and use mathematical knowledge, ideas and operations so they are able to access a broad and balanced curriculum at key stage 2.[footnote 54] In secondary education, inspectors will expect to see a broad, rich curriculum. Inspectors will be particularly alert to signs of narrowing in the key stage 2 and 3 curriculums. If a school has shortened key stage 3, inspectors will look to see that the school has made provision to ensure that pupils still have the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects, commensurate with the national curriculum, in Years 7 to 9.

203. At the heart of an effective key stage 4 curriculum is a strong academic core: the EBacc. The government's response to its EBacc consultation, published in July 2017, confirmed that the large majority of pupils should be expected to study the EBacc. It is therefore the government's national ambition that 75% of Year 10 pupils in state-funded mainstream schools should be starting to study EBacc GCSE courses nationally by 2022 (taking their examinations in 2024), rising to 90% by 2025 (taking their examinations in 2027). This is an ambition, and not a target for any individual school. Inspectors will not make a judgement about the quality of education based solely or primarily on its progress towards the EBacc ambition. Nevertheless, it is an important factor in understanding a school's level of ambition for its pupils. It is, therefore, important that inspectors understand what schools are doing to prepare for this to be achieved, and they should take those preparations into consideration when evaluating the intent of the school's curriculum.

Cultural capital

204. As part of making the judgement about the quality of education, inspectors will consider the extent to which schools are equipping pupils with the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. Our understanding of 'knowledge and cultural capital' is derived from the following wording in the national curriculum:[footnote 55]

> " It is the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement."

Sources of evidence specific to curriculum intent

205. Inspectors will draw evidence about leaders' curriculum intent principally from discussion with senior and subject leaders. Inspectors will explore:

- whether leaders are following the national curriculum and basic curriculum or, in academies, a curriculum of similar breadth and ambition
- how carefully leaders have thought about what end points the curriculum is building towards, what pupils will be able to know and do at those end points, and how leaders have planned the curriculum accordingly. This includes considering how the intended curriculum will address social disadvantage by addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills
- how leaders have sequenced the curriculum to enable pupils to build their knowledge and skills towards the agreed end points
- how leaders have ensured that the subject curriculum contains content that has been identified as most useful, and ensured that this content is taught in a logical progression, systematically and explicitly enough for all pupils to acquire the intended knowledge and skills; this includes understanding how the pandemic may have led to gaps in pupils' knowledge, learning delays and a wider range of starting points
- how the curriculum has been designed and taught so that pupils read at an age-appropriate level

206. Inspectors will bear in mind that developing and embedding an effective curriculum takes time, and that leaders may only be partway through the process of adopting or redeveloping a curriculum. If leaders have an accurate evaluative understanding of current curriculum practice in their school and have identified appropriate next steps (taking into account any impact of COVID-19) to improve curriculum quality and develop curriculum expertise across the school, inspectors will evaluate 'intent' favourably when making the holistic quality of education judgement. They will recognise that the criteria for a judgement of good are the best fit.

207. Inspectors will also consider any documents that leaders normally use in their curriculum planning, but will not request materials to be produced or provided in any specific format for inspection.

Implementation

208. In evaluating the implementation of the curriculum, inspectors will primarily evaluate how the curriculum is taught at subject and classroom level.

209. Research and inspection evidence suggest that the most important factors in how, and how effectively, the curriculum is taught and assessed are the following:

- Teachers have expert knowledge of the subjects that they teach. If they do not, they are supported to address gaps in their knowledge so that pupils are not disadvantaged by ineffective teaching.
- Teachers enable pupils to understand key concepts, presenting information clearly and encourage appropriate discussion.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding effectively, and identify and correct misunderstandings.
- Teachers ensure that pupils embed key concepts in their long-term memory and apply them fluently.
- The subject curriculum is designed and delivered in a way that allows pupils to transfer key knowledge to long-term memory. It is sequenced so that new knowledge and skills build on what has been taught before and pupils can work towards clearly defined end points.
- Teachers use assessment to check pupils' understanding in order to inform teaching, and to help pupils embed and use knowledge fluently and develop their understanding, and not simply memorise disconnected facts
- Where remote education is in place, it is well integrated within course(s) of study, and is well-designed to support the wider implementation of the school's curriculum.
- Their approach to teaching remains rooted in evidence and the key elements of effective teaching. Teachers consider the most important knowledge or concepts pupils need to know and focus on these. Feedback, retrieval practice and assessment are prioritised. The medium for remote education enables all pupils to access lessons and learn. Teachers monitor pupils' engagement and communicate effectively with parents and colleagues if there are concerns.[footnote 56]

Developing understanding, not memorising disconnected facts

210. Learning can be defined as an alteration in long-term memory. If nothing has altered in long-term memory, nothing has been learned. However, transfer to long-term memory depends on the rich processes described above. In order to develop understanding, pupils connect new knowledge with existing knowledge. Pupils also need to develop fluency and unconsciously apply their knowledge as skills. This must not be reduced to, or confused with, simply memorising facts. Inspectors should be alert to unnecessary or excessive attempts to simply prompt pupils to learn glossaries or long lists of disconnected facts.

The school's use of assessment

211. When used effectively, assessment helps pupils to embed knowledge and use it fluently, and assists teachers in producing clear next steps for pupils. However, assessment is too often carried out in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for staff and pupils. It is therefore important that leaders and teachers understand its limitations and avoid misuse and overuse.

212. Inspectors will therefore evaluate how assessment is used in the school to support the teaching of the curriculum, but not substantially increase teachers' workloads by necessitating too much one-to-one teaching or overly demanding programmes that are almost impossible to deliver without lowering expectations of some pupils. This will include considering how the school responds to any gaps in learning that have arisen from the pandemic.

213. The collection of data can also create an additional workload for leaders and staff. Inspectors will look at whether schools' collections of attainment or progress data are proportionate, represent an efficient use of school resources, and are sustainable for staff. The Teacher Workload Advisory Group's report, 'Making data work', recommends that school leaders should not have more than 2 or 3 data collection points a year, and that these should be used to inform clear actions.

214. Schools choosing to use more than 2 or 3 data collection points a year should have clear reasoning for what interpretations and actions are informed by the frequency of collection; the time taken to set assessments, collate, analyse and interpret the data; and the time taken to then act on the findings. We understand that assessment arrangements may have been altered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspectors will seek to understand how staff are supported and the steps that are being taken to remove the risk of additional workload. If a school's system for data collection is disproportionate, inefficient or unsustainable for staff, inspectors will reflect this in their reporting on the school.

Sources of evidence specific to curriculum implementation

215. The following activities will provide inspectors with evidence about the school's implementation of its intended curriculum:

- discussions with curriculum and subject leaders and teachers about the programme of study that classes are following for particular subjects or topics, the intended end points towards which those pupils are working, and their view of how those pupils are progressing through the curriculum
- discussions with subject specialists and leaders about the content and pedagogical content knowledge of teachers and what is done to support teachers, including with remote teaching
- discussions with classroom teachers about how often they are expected to record, upload and review data
- observations of and interviews with pupils or classes who are following this curriculum in lessons, including scrutinising the pupils' work[footnote 57]
- where relevant, discussions with subject leaders and teachers about how the school curriculum has been delivered remotely, reviews of pupils' work completed remotely
- reviews of schemes of work or other long-term planning (in whatever form subject leaders normally use them), usually in discussion with curriculum leaders

216. Inspectors should refer to the 'Lesson visits and work scrutiny' section in Part 1 of this handbook for guidance about what constitutes an appropriate sample of pupils.

217. In order to triangulate evidence effectively, inspectors will ensure that they gather a variety of these types of evidence in relation to the same sample of pupils. Inspectors will also ensure that the samples of pupils they choose are sufficient to allow them to reach a valid and reliable judgement on the quality of education offered by the school overall. Guidance on how to ensure that this evidence is both sufficiently valid and reliable is set out under 'Overarching approach to inspection' in Part 1 of this handbook.

Impact

218. When inspectors evaluate the impact of the education provided by the school, their focus will primarily be on what pupils have learned.

219. Inspection experience and research show that the most important factors to consider are the following:

- A well-constructed, well-taught curriculum will lead to pupils learning more and so achieving good results. Therefore, such a curriculum contributes to evidence of impact. There need be no conflict between teaching a broad, rich curriculum and achieving success in examinations and tests.
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- Pupils are making progress in that they know more, remember more and are able to do more. They are learning what is intended in the curriculum.
- All learning builds towards an end point. Pupils are being prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment at each stage of their learning. Inspectors will consider whether pupils are ready for the next stage by the point they leave the school or provision that they attend.
- Pupils in sixth form are ready for the next stage and are going on to appropriate, high-quality destinations. Inspectors will also consider this.
- If pupils are not able to read to an age-appropriate level and fluency, they will be incapable of accessing the rest of the curriculum, and they will rapidly fall behind their peers (see paragraphs 334 to 336).

National assessments and examinations are useful indicators of pupils' outcomes, but they only represent a sample of what pupils have learned. Inspectors will consider any outcomes data, where this is available in published national data, but it does not constitute a substitute for inspectors' first-hand inspection activities.

Inspectors will not use schools' internal assessment data as evidence

220. Inspectors will not look at non-statutory internal progress and attainment data[footnote 58] on section 5 and section 8 inspections of schools.[footnote 59] That does not mean that schools cannot use data if they consider it appropriate. Inspectors will, however, put more focus on the curriculum and less on schools' generation, analysis and interpretation of data. Teachers have told us that they believe this will help us play our part in reducing unnecessary workload. Inspectors will be interested in the conclusions drawn and actions taken from any internal assessment information, but they will not examine or verify that information first hand. Inspectors will use published national performance data as a starting point on inspection, where it is available.

221. Inspectors will use the official IDSR as a starting point and get to see first hand the quality of education as experienced by pupils and understand how well leaders know what it is like to be a pupil at the school.

222. Inspectors will ask schools to explain why they have decided to collect whatever assessment data they collect, what they are drawing from their data and how that informs their curriculum and teaching.

Sources of evidence specific to curriculum impact

223. Evidence of impact should be drawn together from a combination of inspection activities. None of these on their own is sufficient to make an assessment of the impact. Inspectors will gather evidence of the impact of the quality of education offered by the school from the following sources:

- the progress that pupils are making in terms of knowing more, remembering more and being able to do more
- the nationally generated performance information about pupils' progress and attainment, where it is available (if available in published national data). This information is available in the IDSR, which is available to schools and inspectors, and will be analysed for its statistical significance in advance by Ofsted's data and insight team. Inspectors will only use performance information published since the previous section 5 report or the previous monitoring inspection
- first-hand evidence of how pupils are doing, drawing together evidence from the interviews, lesson visits, work scrutinies and documentary review described above (see 'Implementation – sources of evidence')
- nationally published information about the destinations to which its pupils progress when they leave the school (see 'Destinations of key stage 4 and 16 to 18 (KS5) students')
- in primary schools, listening to a range of pupils read
- discussions with pupils about what they have remembered about the content they have studied
- how well pupils with SEND are prepared for the next stage of education and their adult lives[footnote 60]

224. Inspectors will recognise that some schools are in turn-around, including when they have been brokered into a MAT or rebrokered from one to another. In these schools, the quality of education may have been poor and may now be showing significant and sustained improvement. In these situations, nationally generated performance data may lag behind the current quality of education in the school and so inspectors will view the national data in this context.

Reaching a single quality of education judgement, drawing together intent, implementation and impact

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

Grade descriptors for the quality of education

Note: Some sections of the criteria appear in [square brackets] below. This is to mark that they are transitional only, because we recognise that not all schools will have had the opportunity to complete the process of adopting or constructing their curriculum fully. We will keep our handbooks and methodology under review as circumstances change and we continue to emerge from the pandemic.

Outstanding (1)

- The school meets all the criteria for a good quality of education securely and consistently.
- The quality of education provided is exceptional.

In addition, the following apply.

- The school's curriculum intent and implementation are embedded securely and consistently across the school. It is evident from what teachers do that they have a firm and common understanding of the school's curriculum intent and what it means for their practice. Across all parts of the school, series of lessons contribute well to delivering the curriculum intent.
- The work given to pupils, over time and across the school, consistently matches the aims of the curriculum. It is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.
- Pupils' work across the curriculum is consistently of a high quality.
- Pupils consistently achieve highly, particularly the most disadvantaged. Pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well.

226. In order to judge whether a school is good or requires improvement, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Good (2)

Intent

- Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and including pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. This is either the national curriculum or a curriculum of comparable breadth and ambition. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about, and are making any necessary amendments in response to the pandemic.]
- The school's 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, and are making any necessary amendments in response to the pandemic.]
- The curriculum is successfully adapted, designed or developed to be ambitious and meet the needs of pupils with SEND, developing their knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]
- Pupils study the full curriculum; it is not narrowed. In primary schools, a broad range of subjects (exemplified by the national curriculum) is taught in key stage 2 throughout each and all of Years 3 to 6. In secondary schools, the school teaches a broad range of subjects (exemplified by the national curriculum) throughout Years 7 to 9. [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 school's aim is to have the EBacc at the heart of its curriculum, in line with the DfE's ambition where this applies, and good progress has been made towards this ambition.

Implementation

- Teachers have good knowledge of the subject(s) and courses they teach. Leaders provide effective support for those teaching outside their main areas of expertise.
- Teachers present subject matter clearly, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter being taught. They check pupils' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback. In so doing, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary without unnecessarily elaborate or individualised approaches.
- Over the course of study, teaching is designed to help pupils to remember long term the content they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger ideas.
- Any remote education is well integrated within course(s) of study, and is well designed to support the wider implementation of the school's curriculum.
- Teachers and leaders use assessment well. For example, they use it to help pupils embed and use knowledge fluently, or to check understanding and inform teaching, or to understand different starting points and gaps as a result of the pandemic. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens on staff or pupils.
- Teachers create an environment that focuses on pupils. The textbooks and other teaching materials that teachers select – in a way that does not create unnecessary workload for staff – reflect the school's ambitious intentions for the course of study. These materials clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment.
- The work given to pupils is demanding and matches the aims of the curriculum in being coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge.
- Reading is prioritised to allow pupils to access the full curriculum offer.
- A rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading. At all stages, reading attainment is assessed and gaps are addressed quickly and effectively for all pupils. Reading books connect closely to the phonics knowledge pupils are taught when they are learning to read.
- The sharp focus on ensuring that younger children gain phonics knowledge and language comprehension necessary to read, and the skills to communicate, gives them the foundations for future learning.
- Teachers ensure that their own speaking, listening, writing and reading of English support pupils in developing their language and vocabulary well.

Impact

- Pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well. This is reflected in the work pupils produce.
- Where available, impact is reflected in results from national tests and examinations that meet government expectations, or in the qualifications obtained. Teacher assessed grades from 2020 and 2021 will not be used to assess impact.
- Pupils are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They have the knowledge and skills they need and, where relevant, they gain qualifications that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests and aspirations and the intention of their course of study. Pupils with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Pupils read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age. They are able to apply mathematical knowledge, concepts and procedures appropriately for their age.

Requires improvement (3)

- The quality of education provided by the school is not good.

Inadequate (4)

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

- The school's curriculum has little or no structure or coherence, and leaders have not appropriately considered sequencing. Pupils experience a jumbled, disconnected series of lessons that do not build their knowledge, skills or understanding.
- The pupils' experiences in lessons contribute weakly to their learning of the intended curriculum.
- The range of subjects is narrow and does not prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.
- Pupils cannot communicate, read, write or apply mathematics sufficiently well for their age and are therefore unable to succeed in the next year or stage of education, or in training or employment. (This does not apply for some pupils with SEND.)
- The progress that disadvantaged pupils make is consistently well below that of other pupils nationally and shows little or no improvement.
- Pupils with SEND do not benefit from a good-quality education. Expectations of them are low, and their needs are not accurately identified, assessed or met.
- Pupils have not attained the qualifications appropriate for them to progress to their next stages of education, training or employment.

Behaviour and attitudes

227. The behaviour and attitudes judgement considers how leaders and staff create a safe, calm, orderly and positive environment in the school and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of pupils.

228. The judgement focuses on the factors that research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes (see HMCI's commentary on curriculum and the education inspection framework), thereby giving them the greatest possible opportunity to achieve positive outcomes. These factors are:

- a calm and orderly environment in the school and the classroom, as this is essential for pupils to be able to learn
- the setting of clear routines and expectations for the behaviour of pupils across all aspects of school life, not just in the classroom
- a strong focus on attendance and punctuality so that disruption is minimised
- clear and effective behaviour and attendance policies with clearly defined consequences that are applied consistently and fairly by all staff. Children, and particularly adolescents, often have particularly strong concepts of fairness that may be challenged by different treatment by different teachers or of different pupils
- pupils' motivation and positive attitudes to learning as important predictors of attainment. The development of positive attitudes can also have a longer-term impact on how pupils approach learning tasks in later stages of education
- a positive and respectful school culture in which staff know and care about pupils
- an environment in which pupils feel safe, and in which bullying, discrimination and peer-on-peer abuse – online or offline – are not accepted and are dealt with quickly, consistently and effectively whenever they occur

229. Our evidence for the importance of each of these factors comes from our inspection experience, areas of agreement in academic research and our own research. A full note of how the criteria relate to the available research can be found in our research commentary.

Pupils who have particular needs

230. The school may be working with pupils with particular needs in order to improve their behaviour or their attendance. When this is the case, 'behaviour and conduct that reflects the school's high expectations and their consistent, fair implementation' are likely to include demonstrable improvement in the attendance and behaviour of these pupils, taking account of the individual circumstances of the school.

Pupils who are not in the school during the inspection

231. Inspectors will gather evidence about the typical behaviour of all the pupils who attend the school, including those who are not present on the day of inspection. If there is evidence that a school has deliberately removed pupils from the school site on the day of inspection or has arranged for them to be absent, and inspectors reasonably believe that this was done in order to have an impact on the inspection, then inspectors are likely to judge both behaviour and attitudes and leadership and management to be inadequate.

Exclusions

232. Headteachers have the right to exclude pupils when there are legitimate reasons for them to do so. Used correctly, exclusion is a vital measure for headteachers to use. Exclusions must be legal and justified. Permanent exclusions should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, and when allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

233. If a school uses fixed-term and internal exclusions, inspectors will evaluate their effectiveness, including the rates, patterns and reasons for exclusion and whether any pupils are repeatedly excluded. Schools should have a strategy for reintegrating a pupil who returns to school following a fixed-term exclusion and for managing their future behaviour. Inspectors will consider how well the school is recognising and acting to address any patterns that exist, because disruptive behaviour or sudden changes in behaviour can be an indication of unmet needs or a change in another aspect of a young person's life.

234. Inspectors will consider whether the school is developing the use of alternative strategies to exclusion and taking account of any safeguarding risks to pupils who may be excluded. Inspectors will recognise when schools are doing all that they can to support pupils at risk of exclusion, including through tenacious attempts to engage local support services.

Sources of evidence specific to behaviour and attitudes

235. Inspectors will hold discussions with pupils and staff to gather evidence about school culture and practice in relation to pupils' behaviour, support for staff and other systems. In setting up discussions, inspectors will select a sample of staff who research suggests are most affected by pupils' challenging behaviour. These are trainees, supply staff, NQTs, administrative support staff and catering staff, as well as other members of staff. The discussions will provide inspectors with valuable information that includes the views of those who most urgently require the school's support in managing pupils' behaviour. Where practically possible, inspectors should carry out discussions with individuals, not groups, to allow members of staff to give clear evidence without being influenced by the views or expectations of others in the group when talking about a sensitive issue.

236. Inspectors will speak to pupils from a range of different backgrounds and who have different experiences of the school's approach to behaviour. This should include pupils who have experienced sanctions under the school's behaviour policy. Inspectors will take into account the views of these pupils, their experiences of others' behaviour and attitudes towards them, and their understanding of the importance of positive behaviour in school and beyond school.

237. Inspectors will evaluate the experience of particular individuals and groups, such as pupils for whom referrals have been made to the local authority (and check, for a small sample of these pupils, how the referral was made and the thoroughness of the follow-up), pupils with SEND, children looked after, those with medical needs and those with mental health needs. In order to do this, inspectors will look at the experience of a small sample of these pupils and consider the way the school is working with the multi-agency group to ensure that the child receives the support they need. For pupils with SEND, this will include ensuring that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND code of practice.

238. The pupil and staff surveys used in inspection contain questions about safeguarding, behaviour and discipline, bullying, how respondents feel about the school and how well supported and respected they feel they are in the school. Inspectors will meet school leaders to account for the results of the interviews and surveys of pupils and staff.

239. Over the course of inspection, inspectors will carry out evidence-gathering activities. In some cases, inspectors will be able to gather this evidence as part of other activities they are carrying out. The activities are:

- observing pupils' behaviour in a range of different classes at different times of the day
- observing pupils at breaktimes, lunchtimes, between lessons and, if they are led and managed by the school, before- and after-school clubs
- observing pupils' punctuality in arriving at school and at lessons
- observing pupils' respect for, and courtesy and good manners towards, each other and adults, and their pride in themselves and their school
- evaluating the school's analysis of, and response to, pupils' behaviour over time, in whatever format the school already has
- analysing absence and persistent absence rates for all pupils, and for different groups compared with national averages for all pupils; this includes the extent to which low attenders are improving their attendance over time and whether attendance is consistently low
- evaluating the prevalence of permanent exclusion, the procedures surrounding this

and the reasons for it, and the support given to make sure that it is a last resort
- evaluating the effectiveness of fixed-term and internal exclusions, including the rates and reasons for exclusion
- assessing the school's work to follow up and support fixed-term excluded pupils
- gathering the views of parents, staff, those with responsibility for governance and other stakeholders
- gathering evidence about the typical behaviour of pupils who are not in school during the inspection, for example whether they have had fixed-term or internal exclusions in the 2 years before inspection
- balancing evidence seen during the inspection and evidence of trends over time
- visiting any off-site unit that the school runs (on its own or in partnership with other schools) for pupils whose behaviour is poor or who have low attendance. Inspectors will assess safeguarding procedures, the quality of education and how effectively the unit helps to improve pupils' behaviour, learning and attendance. For more information, see 'Off-site provision' (paragraphs 277 to 283)

Grade descriptors for behaviour and attitudes

240. In order for behaviour and attitudes to be judged outstanding, it must meet all of the good criteria securely and consistently and it must also meet the additional outstanding criteria.

Outstanding (1)

- The school meets all the criteria for good in behaviour and attitudes securely and consistently.
- Behaviour and attitudes are exceptional.

In addition, the following apply:

- Pupils behave with consistently high levels of respect for others. They play a highly positive role in creating a school environment in which commonalities are identified and celebrated, difference is valued and nurtured, and bullying, harassment and violence are never tolerated.
- Pupils consistently have highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education. They are highly motivated and persistent in the face of difficulties. Pupils make a highly positive, tangible contribution to the life of the school and/or the wider community. Pupils actively support the well-being of other pupils.
- Pupils behave consistently well, demonstrating high levels of self-control and consistently positive attitudes to their education. If pupils struggle with this, the school takes intelligent, fair and highly effective action to support them to succeed in their education.

241. In order to judge whether a school is good or requires improvement, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Good (2)

- The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. These expectations are commonly understood and applied consistently and fairly. This is reflected in pupils' positive behaviour and conduct. Low-level disruption is not tolerated and pupils' behaviour does not disrupt lessons or the day-to-day life of the school. Leaders support all staff well in managing pupils' behaviour. Staff make sure that pupils follow appropriate routines.
- Leaders, staff and pupils create a positive environment in which bullying is not tolerated. If bullying, aggression, discrimination and derogatory language occur, they are dealt with quickly and effectively and are not allowed to spread.
- There is demonstrable improvement in the behaviour and attendance of pupils who have particular needs.
- Pupils' attitudes to their education are positive. They are committed to their learning, know how to study effectively and do so, are resilient to setbacks and take pride in their achievements.
- Pupils have high attendance, within the context of the pandemic. They come to school on time and are punctual to lessons. When this is not the case, the school takes appropriate, swift and effective action.
- Fixed-term and internal exclusions are used appropriately. The school reintegrates excluded pupils on their return and manages their behaviour effectively. Permanent exclusions are used appropriately as a last resort (see statutory guidance on school exclusion).
- Relationships among pupils and staff reflect a positive and respectful culture; pupils are safe and they feel safe.

Requires improvement (3)

- Behaviour and attitudes in the school are not good.
- Pupils are safe and they feel safe.

Inadequate (4)

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

- Leaders are not taking effective steps to secure good behaviour from pupils and a consistent approach to discipline. They do not support staff adequately in managing behaviour.
- Pupils' lack of engagement and persistent low-level and/or high-level wilful disruption contribute to reduced learning and/or disorderly classrooms.
- A significant minority of pupils show a lack of respect for each other and/or staff and a lack of self-discipline. Pupils frequently ignore or rebut requests from teachers to moderate their conduct. This results in poor behaviour around the school.
- Pupils show negative attitudes towards the value of good manners and behaviour as important factors in school life, adult life and work.
- Attendance is consistently low for all pupils or groups of pupils and shows little sign of sustained improvement.
- Incidents of bullying or prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, both direct and indirect, are frequent.
- Pupils have little confidence in the school's ability to tackle harassment, bullying, violence and/or discriminatory behaviour successfully.
- Poor behaviour means that pupils, or particular groups of pupils are not safe or do not feel safe at school and/or at alternative placements.

Personal development

242. The curriculum provided by schools should extend beyond the academic, technical or vocational. Schools support pupils to develop in many diverse aspects of life. The personal development judgement evaluates the school's intent to provide for the personal development of all pupils, and the quality with which the school implements this work. It recognises that the impact of the school's provision for personal development will often not be assessable during pupils' time at school.

243. At the same time as the school is working with pupils, those pupils are also being influenced by other factors in their home environment, their community and elsewhere. Schools can teach pupils how to build their confidence and resilience, for example, but they cannot always determine how well young people draw on this. Schools are crucial in preparing pupils for their adult lives, teaching them to understand how to engage with society and providing them with plentiful opportunities to do so. In this judgement, therefore, inspectors will seek to evaluate the quality and intent of what a school provides (either directly or by drawing on high-quality agencies and providers, for example the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, Cadet Forces and the National Citizenship Service), but will not attempt to measure the impact of the school's work on the lives of individual pupils. Where usual opportunities have been disrupted by the pandemic, inspectors will look at whether the school has found alternative approaches to providing a rich range of personal development opportunities.

244. This judgement focuses on the dimensions of the personal development of pupils that our education system has agreed, either by consensus or statute, are the most significant. These are:

- developing responsible, respectful and active citizens who are able to play their part and become actively involved in public life as adults
- developing and deepening pupils' understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance
- promoting equality of opportunity so that all pupils can thrive together, understanding that difference is a positive, not a negative, and that individual characteristics make people unique
- promoting an inclusive environment that meets the needs of all pupils, irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation
- developing pupils' character, which we define as a set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. This gives pupils the qualities they need to flourish in our society
- developing pupils' confidence, resilience and knowledge so that they can keep themselves mentally healthy
- enabling pupils to recognise online and offline risks to their well-being – for example, risks from criminal and sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, substance misuse, gang activity, radicalisation and extremism – and making them aware of the support available to them
- enabling pupils to recognise the dangers of inappropriate use of mobile technology and social media
- developing pupils' understanding of how to keep physically healthy, eat healthily and maintain an active lifestyle, including giving ample opportunities for pupils to be active during the school day and through extra-curricular activities
- developing pupils' age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships through appropriate relationships and sex education
- providing an effective careers programme in line with the government's statutory guidance on careers advice that offers pupils:
    - unbiased careers advice
    - experience of work, and
    - contact with employers to encourage pupils to aspire, make good choices and understand what they need to do to reach and succeed in the careers to which they aspire[footnote 61]
- supporting readiness for the next phase of education, training or employment so that pupils are equipped to make the transition successfully

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

245. Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.[footnote 62] This is a broad concept that can be seen across the school's activities, but draws together many of the areas covered by the personal development judgement.

246. Provision for the spiritual development of pupils includes developing their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

247. Provision for the moral development of pupils includes developing their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, and to recognise legal boundaries and, in doing so, respect the civil and criminal law of England
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions
- interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues

248. Provision for the social development of pupils includes developing their:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other pupils, including those from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- acceptance of and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. They will develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain

249. Provision for the cultural development of pupils includes developing their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others
- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures in the school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- ability to recognise, and value, the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities
- knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity. This is shown by their respect and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities

Relationships and sex education

250. Relationships education is compulsory for all primary school pupils and relationships and sex education is compulsory for all secondary school pupils. Health education is also compulsory for all state-funded schools only.

251. In light of the disruption to and partial closure of schools caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the DfE has provided further clarification of the legal requirements, and where schools have flexibility, in the 'Schools coronavirus operational guidance'.

252. All schools are required to have taught some of the new curriculum, published a policy and consulted parents on this, during the academic year 2020 to 2021.

253. If a school is failing to meet its obligations, inspectors will consider this when reaching the personal development and leadership and management judgements.

254. Inspectors will be sympathetic to schools that, as a result of the pandemic, have not been able to fully implement the new curriculum, provided that they:

- have had regard to the statutory guidance
- have a good rationale for prioritising what they have implemented
- have clear and effective plans to address any gaps before the end of the 2021 to 2022 academic year

255. See the guidance 'Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics' for more information.

Sources of evidence specific to personal development

256. Inspectors will use a range of evidence to evaluate personal development, including:

- the range, quality and take-up of extra-curricular activities offered by the school[footnote 63]
- how curriculum subjects such as citizenship, RE, and other areas such as personal, social, health and economic education, and relationships and sex education, contribute to pupils' personal development
- how well leaders promote British values through the curriculum, assemblies, wider opportunities, visits, discussions and literature
- how well leaders develop pupils' character through the education that they provide
- where appropriate, the quality of debate and discussions that pupils have
- pupils' understanding of the protected characteristics and how equality and diversity are promoted[footnote 64] (for more information, see the guidance 'Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools')
- the quality of careers information, education, advice and guidance, and how well it benefits pupils in choosing and deciding on their next steps

Grade descriptors for personal development

257. In order for personal development to be judged outstanding, it must meet all of the good criteria securely and consistently, and it must also meet the additional outstanding criteria.

Outstanding (1)

- The school meets all the criteria for good in personal development securely and consistently.
- Personal development is exceptional.

In addition, the following apply:

- The school consistently promotes the extensive personal development of pupils. The school goes well beyond the expected, so that pupils have access to a wide, rich set of experiences. Opportunities for pupils to develop their talents and interests are of exceptional quality.
- There is strong take-up by pupils of the opportunities provided by the school. The most disadvantaged pupils consistently benefit from this excellent work.
- The school provides these rich experiences in a coherently planned way, in the curriculum and through extra-curricular activities, and they considerably strengthen the school's offer.
- The way the school goes about developing pupils' character is exemplary and is worthy of being shared with others.

258. In order to judge whether a school is good or requires improvement, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Good (2)

- The curriculum extends beyond the academic, vocational or technical and provides for pupils' broader development. The school's work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a high quality.
- The curriculum and the school's effective wider work support pupils to be confident, resilient and independent, and to develop strength of character.
- The school provides high-quality pastoral support. Pupils know how to eat healthily, maintain an active lifestyle and keep physically and mentally healthy. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships.
- The school provides a wide range of opportunities to nurture, develop and stretch pupils' talents and interests. Pupils appreciate these and make good use of them.
- The school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain effectively, developing their understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and diversity effectively. As a result, pupils understand, appreciate and respect difference in the world and its people, celebrating the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities.
- Pupils engage with views, beliefs and opinions that are different from their own in considered ways. They show respect for the different protected characteristics as defined in law and no forms of discrimination are tolerated.
- The school provides pupils with meaningful opportunities to understand how to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society. Pupils know how to discuss and debate issues and ideas in a considered way.
- Secondary schools prepare pupils for future success in education, employment or training. They use the Gatsby Benchmarks, a framework that defines the best careers provision in schools and colleges, 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.

Requires improvement (3)

- Personal development in the school is not good.

Inadequate (4)

Personal development is likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies.

- A significant minority of pupils do not receive a wide, rich set of experiences.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance, through their words, actions or influence, directly and/or indirectly, undermine or fail to promote equality of opportunity in the school.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance are not protecting pupils from radicalisation and extremist views. Policy and practice are poor, which means that pupils are at risk.
- Leaders and those responsible for governance are actively undermining fundamental British values and are not protecting pupils from radicalisation and extremist views.
- Pupils or groups of pupils are discriminated against, and the school is not taking effective action to address this.
- Pupils are unprepared for life in modern Britain.

Leadership and management

259. The leadership and management judgement is about how leaders, managers and those responsible for governance ensure that the education that the school provides has a positive impact on all its pupils. It focuses on the areas where inspection and research indicate that leaders and managers can have the strongest effect on the quality of the education provided by the school. Important factors include:

- leaders' high expectations of all pupils in the school, and the extent to which these are embodied in leaders' and staff's day-to-day interactions with pupils
- the extent to which leaders focus their attention on the education provided by the school. There are many demands on leaders, but a greater focus on this area is associated with better outcomes for pupils
- whether continuing professional development for teachers and staff is aligned with the curriculum, and the extent to which this develops teachers' content knowledge and teaching content knowledge over time, so that they are able to deliver better teaching for pupils
- the extent to which leaders create coherence and consistency across the school so that pupils benefit from effective teaching and consistent expectations, wherever they are in the school
- whether leaders seek to engage parents and their community thoughtfully and positively in a way that supports pupils' education. Also, whether leaders are thoughtful in drawing boundaries and resisting inappropriate attempts to influence what is taught and the day-to-day life of the school
- the extent to which leaders take into account the workload and well-being of their staff, while also developing and strengthening the quality of the workforce
- the extent to which leaders' and managers' high ambitions are for all pupils, including those who are harder to reach. This includes ensuring that practices such as 'off-rolling' do not take place and that the way the school uses the pupil premium is founded on good evidence
- whether leaders and those responsible for governance all understand their respective roles and perform these in a way that enhances the effectiveness of the school

260. Our evidence for the importance of each of these factors comes from our inspection experience, areas of consensus in academic research and our own research. You can find a full note of how the criteria relate to the available research in our overview of research.

261. Paragraphs 292 to 302 set out the importance and place of safeguarding.

Leadership and management in school

262. Research suggests that leadership and management can be highly effective when they are shared by different individuals and distributed across different levels in a school. Inspectors will look at the work of headteachers, senior leaders, subject leaders and others with leadership and management roles when reaching this judgement.

Leadership and management in multi-academy trusts[footnote 65]

263. When a school is part of a MAT, it is important for inspectors to remember that the trust is one entity, and that leaders and managers of the MAT are responsible for the quality of education provided in all the schools that make up the MAT.

264. It is highly likely that parts of some of the leadership functions described in the grade criteria are performed by MAT leaders (for example, the CEO or an education director) and not solely by individual leaders of the school. School leaders are responsible for giving inspectors accurate and appropriate information about those roles and responsibilities. If leadership functions are performed by MAT leaders, then inspectors will consider whether they need to meet MAT leaders to gather evidence.

265. A MAT CEO or their delegate may request to meet inspectors as a part of the inspection. They may also request to attend key inspection team meetings at the end of each inspection day. These are appropriate requests and should be accommodated. These individuals, however, should abide by the same code of conduct as all others involved in the inspection.

Governance

266. Inspectors will seek evidence of the impact of those responsible for governance.

267. In a maintained school, those responsible for governance are the school governors. In a stand-alone academy, it is the trustees.

268. In a MAT, the trustees are responsible for governance. Inspectors will ask to speak to one or more of the trustees. It may be that, on occasion, the trustees have chosen to delegate some of their powers to the members of the 'academy committee' or 'local governing board' at school level.[footnote 66] If inspectors are informed that a local governing body has delegated responsibilities, they should establish clearly which powers are with the trustees, which are with the leaders of the MAT and which are with the local governing board. They should then ensure that both their inspection activities and the inspection report reflect this.

269. Inspectors will need to bear in mind, when inspecting academies that are part of a MAT, that governance functions can be quite different from those in a maintained school. Some functions that a governing body in a maintained school would carry out may be done by management or executive staff in a trust. If this is the case, it will still be important for inspectors to ascertain the trust board's role in that process and how it ensures that these functions are carried out properly.

270. The governance handbook sets out the purpose of governance, which is to provide confident, strategic leadership, and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.

271. The governance handbook also sets out the statutory functions of all boards, no matter what type of school or how many schools they govern. There are 3 core functions:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure that its money is well spent, including the pupil premium

272. Inspectors will explore how governors carry out each of these functions. For example, the clarity of the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction will have a significant impact on the decisions that leaders make about the curriculum. Inspectors will consider whether the work of governors in this respect is supporting the school to provide a high-quality education for its pupils.

273. In addition, those with governance/oversight are responsible for ensuring that the school fulfils its statutory duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010, and other duties, for example in relation to the 'Prevent' duty and safeguarding. Please note that, when inspectors consider whether governors are fulfilling this responsibility, they are not expected to construct or review a list of duties.

Use of the pupil premium and catch-up funding

274. Inspectors will gather evidence about the use of the pupil premium and catch-up funding, particularly regarding:

- the level of funding received by the school in the current academic year and levels of pupil premium funding received in previous academic years
- how leaders and governors have spent the funding, their rationale for this spending and its intended impact
- the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils, as shown by published outcomes data

Evaluating the impact of external support

275. If the school has received support, for example from the local authority, 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.

276. If a school is part of a MAT and is receiving support from within the MAT, inspectors will be clear that this is internal, not external, support.

Inspecting off-site provision

277. Inspectors must evaluate how well a school continues to take responsibility for its pupils who attend alternative or off-site provision. Inspectors need to be assured that leaders have ensured that the alternative provision is a suitable and safe placement that will meet pupils' academic/vocational/technical needs, pastoral needs and, if appropriate, SEND needs. Inspectors will speak to a selection of pupils who attend off-site provision, where possible, including potentially through video/telephone calls.

278. Inspectors must ask the school about the registration status of any alternative providers that they use. Any provider of alternative provision must be registered as an independent school if it caters full time for 5 or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one pupil who is looked after or has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. If a school uses alternative provision that should be registered but is not, inspectors will carefully consider whether this affects the likelihood that pupils are safeguarded effectively.

279. Inspectors will normally visit a sample of any part-time unregistered alternative providers during the inspection, as directed by the relevant Ofsted region. This may be completed remotely. This is to assess the adequacy of the school's quality assurance process. Inspectors should visit any registered alternative provision site that Ofsted has not yet inspected to assess the adequacy of the school's quality assurance process.

280. Inspectors will consider the quality of registered alternative provision using Ofsted's latest inspection report and assess its impact on the overall quality of education for pupils in a proportionate way.

281. Inspectors will consider:

- the reasons why leaders considered off-site provision to be the best option for the pupils concerned
- whether leaders have made the appropriate checks on the registration status of the provision
- what safeguarding checks leaders have made and continue to make to ensure that the provision is a safe place for their pupils to attend
- the extent to which leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a well-planned and sequenced, well-taught, broad and balanced curriculum
- the attendance and behaviour of pupils who attend the provision
- how well the provision promotes the pupils' personal development

282. If a school uses a provider that is not registered, the inspector must contact the duty desk so that staff can notify Ofsted's unregistered schools team. Following the inspection, the team will determine if we need to take further action because there is reasonable cause to believe that the setting is operating as an unregistered school.

283. A school is likely to be judged inadequate for leadership and management if:

- it is making ineffective or inappropriate use of alternative provision
- it is using inappropriate alternative provision
- leaders have not taken the necessary steps to assure themselves of the suitability of a provision, including its COVID-19 safety arrangements
- leaders are not aware of how many of their pupils attend alternative provision
- leaders are not taking responsibility for their pupils who attend alternative provision

Gaming

284. Inspectors will challenge leaders and managers about unusual patterns of examination entry that appear to 'game the system', for example if they are entering pupils for courses that are not in their educational best interest. The IDSR will provide inspectors with areas to investigate when nationally available data suggests that gaming may be taking place. If inspectors uncover evidence that deliberate gaming is taking place, the leadership and management judgement is likely to be inadequate.

285. Inspectors will also challenge leaders and managers about unusual patterns in the way that the school records attendance, including the use of inaccurate register codes or changes to when the register is taken. For example, if inspectors reasonably believe that a school is inaccurately recording attendance, has changed the timing of session registration to game attendance rates or is using part-time timetables inappropriately, then inspectors are likely to judge leadership and management to be inadequate.

Inclusion and off-rolling

286. Schools should have an inclusive culture that supports arrangements to:

- identify early those pupils who may be disadvantaged or have additional needs or barriers to learning
- meet the needs of those pupils, drawing on more specialist support when necessary, and help those pupils to engage positively with the curriculum
- support those pupils to attend school when it is closed to other pupils due to COVID-19 restrictions, and prioritise those pupils during any wider reopening
- ensure that pupils have a positive experience of learning and achieve positive outcomes
- ensure, during the pandemic, that pupils are returned to school as soon as is appropriate

287. There is no legal definition of 'off-rolling'. However, we define 'off-rolling' as:

> “ The practice of removing a pupil from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil. Off-rolling in these circumstances is a form of 'gaming'.”

288. When an inspection finds evidence of off-rolling taking place by our definition, inspectors should always address this in the inspection report. They may, depending on the scale and impact, need to consider it when reaching the judgement. If the off-rolling is lawful, inspectors must be careful to consider the context of the off-rolling and be clear about what impact the off-rolling has had on pupils involved and on the school. There are many different activities that can constitute off-rolling, so there can be no hard and fast rules as to how it should be addressed. However, if inspectors determine the school to be off-rolling according to our definition, then the leadership and management of the school are likely to be judged inadequate.

289. There are other reasons why a school might remove a pupil from the school roll, such as when a pupil moves house or a parent decides, without encouragement or coercion by the school, to home educate their child. This is not off-rolling. If the pupil transfers to the roll of their alternative provision, and this is genuinely in the best interest of the pupil, this is not off-rolling. If a school appropriately removes a pupil from the roll due to a formal permanent exclusion and follows the proper processes, this is not off-rolling. Headteachers have the right to exclude pupils when there are legitimate reasons for them to do so. Used correctly, exclusion is a vital measure for headteachers to use.

290. Dual-registering or dual-coding a pupil in 2 schools or providers, or using alternative provision while they remain registered at the school, is not off-rolling because the pupil has not left the roll of their school. However, this may still be a form of gaming if it is not in the best interests of the pupil. Managed moves can be an effective tool in breaking a cycle of poor behaviour, but they can also be a form of off-rolling. Managed moves are not off-rolling only when they are genuinely used in a pupil's best interests, within the statutory guidance. If a school uses managed moves, inspectors may ask to see evidence of the ways in which these have been carried out.

291. Inspectors will be interested in high numbers of pupils moving on and off roll, but this may not in itself mean that off-rolling is taking place.

Safeguarding

292. All schools should have a culture of safeguarding. This means they should have effective arrangements to:

- always act in the best interests of children, pupils and students to protect them online and offline, including when they are receiving remote education or self isolating due to COVID-19[footnote 67]
- identify children, pupils and students who may need early help, and who are at risk of harm or have been harmed. This can include, but is not limited to, neglect, abuse (including by their peers), grooming or exploitation
- secure the help that children, pupils and students need, and if required, referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help
- manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to children, pupils, students and vulnerable adults

293. Inspectors will not grade this aspect of a school's work. However, inspectors will always make a written judgement under 'leadership and management' in the report about whether the arrangements for safeguarding children and pupils are effective.

294. Inspectors must go beyond ensuring that schools meet statutory requirements, and beyond simply reviewing documents, to evaluate the safeguarding culture that has been established in the school.

295. As well as understanding Ofsted's inspecting safeguarding policies, inspectors should be familiar with relevant, including statutory, guidance on safeguarding:

- 'Keeping children safe in education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges'
- 'Working together to safeguard children'
- 'Positive environments where children can flourish'

296. On all inspections, inspectors need to determine whether there have been any safeguarding incidents or allegations since the last inspection, and whether the school has taken appropriate action to safeguard the children affected and/or to deal with allegations.[footnote 68]

297. On a very small number of occasions, inspectors may come across, during an inspection, evidence or allegations of child abuse. Inspectors must not attempt to investigate any incident of child abuse but will satisfy themselves that concerns about a child's safety are referred, as appropriate, to the relevant local authority's children's services department. The referral will normally be made by the safeguarding lead for the school (see 'Safeguarding concerns: guidance for inspectors').

298. If a child discloses to an inspector that they are suffering or at risk of abuse, the inspector will stop all other activity and focus on ensuring that the child receives the help they need. Specific guidance on what to do in this situation can be found in 'Safeguarding concerns: guidance for inspectors'.

299. The guidance 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings' explains how incidents will be covered in the inspection report.

300. Safeguarding is ineffective when there are serious or widespread failures in the school's/setting's safeguarding arrangements that give cause for concern because children are not protected and statutory requirements are not being met, or because insufficient action is being taken to remedy weaknesses following a serious failure of safeguarding arrangements.

301. The following are examples of what ineffective safeguarding might include.

- Safeguarding allegations about staff members are not being handled appropriately.
- Children, pupils and students or particular groups of children, pupils and students do not feel safe in school/the setting.
- Children, pupils and students have little confidence that the school/setting will address concerns about their safety, including risk of abuse.
- For schools: pupils are frequently missing from school (including for part of the school day), but this is not addressed appropriately by staff.
- Incidents of bullying or prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour are common.

302. If inspectors cannot corroborate the evidence that they gather about the effectiveness of the school's arrangements to safeguard pupils, by talking to pupils on inspection, then safeguarding will likely be judged ineffective.

The impact of safeguarding on the leadership and management judgement

303. When safeguarding is ineffective, this is likely to lead to an inadequate leadership and management judgement. However, there may be circumstances when it is appropriate to judge a setting as requires improvement, rather than inadequate, if there are minor weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements that are easy to put right and do not leave children either being harmed or at risk of harm.

Separation

304. It is unlawful for schools to separate pupils on the basis of any protected characteristics such as sex, race or faith, while at school, unless permitted by the Equality Act 2010 for:

- positive action to alleviate a disadvantage associated with a certain characteristic. This could, for example, 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 gender for teaching in subjects if the school has evidence that this improves their academic outcomes (section 158)
- competitive sport, games or other competitive activities in which physical strength, stamina or physique are significant factors in determining success or failure. A school is allowed to organise separate events for boys and girls (section 195)

305. If an inspector believes that a school may be separating pupils, they will contact the duty desk. If separation is taking place, inspectors will write about this clearly in the inspection report.

- A school is unlikely to be judged as good or outstanding in leadership and management if it is separating pupils unlawfully.
- If the school has genuine and imminent plans to reintegrate pupils, a judgement of requires improvement will normally be appropriate.
- In other cases, the grade will likely be inadequate for leadership and management.

306. Where appropriate, inspectors will also refer to the following guidance:

- 'Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools'
- 'Separation by sex: implications for the inspections of mixed sex/co-educational schools'

Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics

307. From the start of the summer term 2021, how a school meets the expectations of the DfE's statutory guidance on relationships education, relationships and sex education and health education will contribute to the leadership and management judgement.

308. Inspectors will be sympathetic to schools that, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, have not been able to fully implement the new curriculum, provided that they:

- have had regard to the statutory guidance
- have a good rationale for prioritising what they have implemented
- have clear and effective plans to address any gaps before the end of the 2021 to 2022 academic year

309. If a primary school does not teach about LGBT relationships, this will not have an impact on the leadership and management judgement as long as the school can satisfy inspectors that it has still fulfilled the requirements of the DfE's statutory guidance. If it cannot do this, for example if it has failed to consult with parents, inspectors will consider this when making the leadership and management judgement. The school will not ordinarily receive a judgement for this better than requires improvement.

310. If a secondary school does not teach about LGBT relationships, it will not be meeting the expectations of the DfE's statutory guidance. Inspectors will consider this when making the leadership and management judgement. The school will not ordinarily receive a judgement for this better than requires improvement.

311. See 'Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics' for further guidance.

Sources of evidence specific to leadership and management

312. Evidence used to evaluate the impact of leaders' work, both currently and over time, includes, but is not limited to:

- meetings with leaders, including MAT senior staff if appropriate, to discuss how well they know the school and the quality of education that it provides for pupils
- meetings with those responsible for governance, as appropriate, to evaluate how well they fulfil their statutory duties, including their duties under the Equality Act and in relation to safeguarding
- documentary evidence provided by the school that demonstrates the effectiveness of the school's provision
- interviews with staff and pupils to evidence how well leaders have created a positive culture
- first-hand evidence gathered during the course of inspection
- responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires and Ofsted Parent View; these will be particularly useful for judging the culture that has been established in the school by leaders and managers
- any evidence the school has from regularly surveying its staff and the way in which leaders and managers have responded to concerns raised by staff or parents, for example about how senior leaders support teachers to tackle low-level disruptive behaviour
- if there are unusual patterns of pupil movement, discussions with school leaders, the local authority and (where appropriate) the MAT about those movements

313. Inspectors will always report on the school's activity to gather the views of staff, whether through the school's internal procedures or through it using the Ofsted questionnaire. They will do this in the 'Information about this inspection' section.

Grade descriptors for leadership and management

314. In order for the leadership and management of a school to be judged outstanding, it must meet all of the good criteria securely and consistently, and it must also meet the additional outstanding criteria.

Outstanding (1)

- The school meets all the criteria for good in leadership and management securely and consistently.
- Leadership and management are exceptional.

In addition, the following apply:

- Leaders ensure that teachers receive focused and highly effective professional development. Teachers' subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge consistently build and develop over time. This consistently translates into improvements in the teaching of the curriculum.
- Leaders ensure that highly effective and meaningful engagement takes place with staff at all levels and that issues are identified. When issues are identified, in particular about workload, they are consistently dealt with appropriately and quickly.
- Staff consistently report high levels of support for well-being issues.

315. In order to judge whether a school is good or requires improvement, inspectors will use 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 education to all pupils. This is realised through strong, shared values, policies and practice. This vision has been maintained throughout the pandemic.
- Leaders focus on improving teachers' subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge in order to enhance the teaching of the curriculum and the appropriate use of assessment. The practice and subject knowledge of staff, including newly qualified teachers, build and improve over time. This includes building teachers' expertise in remote education.
- Leaders aim to ensure that all pupils successfully complete their programmes of study. They provide the support for staff to make this possible. They create an inclusive culture and do not allow gaming or off-rolling.
- Leaders engage effectively with pupils and others in their community, including, when relevant, parents, employers and local services. Engagement opportunities are focused and have purpose.
- 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. This includes managing staff workloads proactively in response to COVID-19.
- Leaders protect staff from bullying and harassment.
- Those responsible for governance understand their role and carry this out effectively. Governors/trustees ensure that the school has a clear vision and strategy, that resources are managed well and that leaders are held to account for the quality of education.
- Those with responsibility for governance ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duties, for example under the Equality Act 2010, and other duties, for example in relation to the 'Prevent' duty and safeguarding.
- The school has a culture of safeguarding that supports effective arrangements to: identify pupils who may need early help or who are at risk of neglect, abuse, grooming or exploitation; help pupils reduce their risk of harm by securing the support they need, or referring them in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help; and manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to pupils.

Requires improvement (3)

- Leadership and management are not good.
- Safeguarding is effective, or there are minor weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements that are easy to put right and do not leave children either being harmed or at risk of harm.

Inadequate (4)

Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies.

- The school's capacity to improve the quality of education, pupils' personal development or pupils' behaviour and attitudes is poor, or leaders are overly dependent on external support (MAT support within a trust is not considered external support).
- Leaders are not doing enough to tackle weaknesses in the school.
- The improvements that leaders and those responsible for governance have made are unsustainable or have been implemented too slowly.
- The school is systematically gaming its results, entering pupils for courses that are not in their educational best interest.
- There is evidence that pupils have been removed from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion or by the school encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school roll, and leaders have taken insufficient action to address this.
- Leaders are not aware of, or are not taking effective action to stem, the decline in the attainment or progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- There is a clear breach of one or more of the legal responsibilities of those responsible for governance, and that breach is serious because of the extent of its actual or potential negative impact on pupils. The proprietor/governing body either is unaware of the breach, or has taken insufficient action to correct it and/or to remedy the negative or potential negative impact on pupils and/or to ensure that a suitable system is in place to prevent a similar breach in the future.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet statutory requirements, or they give serious cause for concern, or the school has taken insufficient action to remedy weaknesses following a serious incident.

Evaluating the quality of early years education in schools

316. Paragraphs 29 to 37 outline our approach to evaluating the quality of early years education in schools within the COVID-19 context.

317. Inspectors are required to grade the standards of education and care in any early years provision in schools and to write about its effectiveness in the inspection report.

318. Inspectors must use all their evidence to evaluate what it is like to be a child in the early years provision, taking account of the ages of the children and whether they attend part time or full time.

319. The effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding children is reflected in the main judgement for the school.

320. Inspectors should take account of all the judgements made across the evaluation schedule. In particular, they should consider:

- the extent to which leaders and staff plan, design and implement the curriculum
- the extent to which the curriculum and care practices meet the needs of the range of children who attend, particularly any children with SEND
- the progress all children make in their learning and development relative to their starting points and their readiness for the next stage of their education
- children's personal, social and emotional development, including whether they feel safe and are secure, stimulated and happy

321. Inspectors will particularly consider the intent, implementation and impact of the school's early years curriculum. They will evaluate the impact that the quality of education has on children, particularly the most disadvantaged and those with SEND.

322. Inspectors will look at the children's achievements at the end of Reception over time, by the proportions reaching a good level of development. However, inspectors need to get beyond the data as quickly as possible to ascertain how well the curriculum is meeting children's needs. This will be evident in how well children know and remember more. Inspectors need to make careful inferences about children's current progress by drawing together evidence from a range of sources.

323. Schools that take 2- and 3-year-olds as part of their early years provision do not need to register that provision with Ofsted. We will inspect provision for 2- and 3-year-olds under section 5. Inspectors should ensure that the judgement on the effectiveness of early years provision includes evaluation of the provision for 2- and 3-year-olds. Inspectors should also note if any children receive additional funding.

324. Any care that a school provides for children in the early years age range, before and/or after the school day or during school holidays, is considered as part of the evaluation of early years provision.

325. Inspectors will consider how well:[footnote 69]

- leaders assure themselves that the aims of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) are met and that it is sufficiently challenging for the children it serves. Staff ensure that the content, sequencing and progression in the 7 areas of learning are secured as appropriate
- the content of the EYFS curriculum is taught in a logical progression, systematically and in a way that is explained effectively, so that it gives the children the necessary foundations for the rest of their schooling
- children develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills across all the areas of learning in the EYFS. In Reception, staff teach children to read systematically by using synthetic phonics and books that match the children's phonic knowledge[footnote 70]
- staff develop children's communication and language through singing songs, nursery rhymes and playing games
- staff develop children's love of reading through reading aloud and telling stories and rhymes
- children demonstrate their attitudes and behaviours through the key characteristics of effective learning:
  - playing and exploring
  - active learning
  - creative thinking and thinking critically

Teaching should not be taken to imply a 'top down' or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities, communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment that adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and to monitor their progress.

326. In addition, when observing provision for 2- and 3-year-olds, inspectors will consider the extent to which leaders and staff are:

- knowledgeable about the typical development and characteristics of learning for 2- and 3-year-olds, including their emotional and physical dependence on adults
- aware of the large difference in development between children who are just 2 and those approaching their fourth birthday
- responsive when children need comforting, and provide support appropriate to the individual needs of the child
- attentive to children's care needs and use times caring for them as an opportunity to help children's learning
- giving children time to be in familiar, small groups and opportunities to be in smaller, quieter areas for play
- patient and attentive when allowing 2- and 3-year-olds to express their ideas
- listening to children and responding to their verbal and non-verbal communication, rather than interrupting them

Grade descriptors

Outstanding (1)

- The school meets all the criteria for good in the effectiveness of early years securely and consistently.
- The quality of early years education provided is exceptional.

In addition, the following apply:

- The EYFS curriculum provides no limits or barriers to the children's achievements, regardless of their backgrounds, circumstances or needs. The high ambition it embodies is shared by all staff.
- The impact of the curriculum on what children know, can remember and do is strong. Children demonstrate this through being deeply engaged and sustaining high levels of concentration. Children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, do well. Children with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Children are highly motivated and are eager to join in. They share and cooperate well, demonstrating high levels of self-control and respect for others. Children consistently keep on trying hard, particularly if they encounter difficulties.

327. In order to judge whether a school is good or requires improvement, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Good (2)

Intent

- Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give children, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge, self-belief and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
- The curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced. It builds on what children know and can do, towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for their future learning.
- There is a sharp focus on ensuring that children acquire a wide vocabulary, communicate effectively and, in Reception, secure a knowledge of phonics which gives them the foundations for future learning, especially in preparation for them to become confident and fluent readers.
- The school's approach to teaching early reading and synthetic phonics is systematic and ensures that all children learn to read words and simple sentences accurately by the end of Reception.
- The school has the same academic ambitions for almost all children. For children with particular needs, such as those with SEND, their curriculum is designed to be ambitious and to meet their needs.

Implementation

- Children benefit from meaningful learning across the curriculum.
- Staff are knowledgeable about the areas of learning they teach. They manage the EYFS curriculum and pedagogy in relation to the learning needs of their children. Staff are expert in teaching systematic, synthetic phonics and ensure that children practise their reading from books that match their phonics knowledge.
- Staff present information clearly to children, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter being taught. They communicate well to check children's understanding, identify misconceptions and provide clear explanations to improve their learning. In so doing, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary.
- Staff read to children in a way that excites and engages them, introducing new ideas, concepts and vocabulary.
- Staff are knowledgeable about the teaching of early mathematics. They ensure that children have sufficient practice to be confident in using and understanding numbers. The mathematics curriculum provides a strong basis for more complex learning later on. Over the EYFS, teaching is designed to help children remember long term what they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts. This is checked well by staff and leaders. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and avoid unnecessary burdens on staff or children.
- Staff create an environment that supports the intent of an ambitious, coherently planned and sequenced curriculum. The resources are chosen to meet the children's needs and promote learning.
- The curriculum and care practices promote and support children's emotional security and development of their character. Leaders and staff are particularly attentive to the youngest children's needs.
- Staff give clear messages to children about why it is important to eat, drink, rest, exercise and be kind to each other. They teach children to take managed risks and challenges as they play and learn, supporting them to be active and develop physically.
- Staff provide information for parents about their children's progress, in line with the requirements of the EYFS. They provide information to parents about supporting their child's learning at home, including detail about the school's method of teaching reading and how to help their children learn to read.

Impact

- Children develop detailed knowledge and skills across the 7 areas of learning in an age-appropriate way. Children develop their vocabulary and use it across the EYFS curriculum. By the end of Reception, children use their knowledge of phonics to read accurately and with increasing speed and fluency.
- Children are ready for the next stage of education, especially Year 1 in school, if applicable. They have the knowledge and skills they need to benefit from what school has to offer when it is time to move on. By the end of Reception, children achieve well, particularly those children with lower starting points.
- By the end of Reception, children have the personal, physical and social skills they need to succeed in the next stage of their education. Most children achieve the early learning goals, particularly in mathematics and literacy.
- Children enjoy, listen attentively and respond with comprehension to familiar stories, rhymes and songs that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children develop their vocabulary and understanding of language across the 7 areas of learning.
- Children demonstrate their positive attitudes to learning through high levels

of curiosity, concentration and enjoyment. They listen intently and respond positively to adults and each other. Children are developing their resilience to setbacks and take pride in their achievements.
- Children are beginning to manage their own feelings and behaviour, understanding how these have an impact on others. They are developing a sense of right from wrong.

Requires improvement (3)

- The effectiveness of the early years is not yet good.

Inadequate (4)

The effectiveness of the early years is likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following applies.

- A poorly designed and implemented curriculum does not meet children's needs or provide the necessary foundations for the rest of their schooling.
- Leaders and/or staff have a poor understanding of the areas of learning they teach and the way in which young children learn.
- Assessment is overly burdensome. It is unhelpful in determining what children know, understand and can do.
- By the end of Reception, children cannot communicate, read or spell phonically decodable words as well as they should. They do not have basic fluency in number and shape, space and measure.
- Children are not well prepared for the next stage of their learning, particularly those who receive additional funding or have SEND. Strategies for engaging parents are weak and parents do not know what their child is learning or how to help them improve.
- The attainment and progress of children, particularly those who are disadvantaged, are consistently low and show little or no improvement, indicating that children are underachieving considerably.

Evaluating sixth-form provision in schools

328. Inspectors are required to grade the quality of education in any sixth-form provision in schools and to write about the sixth form in the inspection report. Inspectors must use all their evidence to evaluate what it is like to be a student in the sixth form.

329. The effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding students is reflected in the main judgement for the school.

330. Inspectors should take account of the key judgement areas in the evaluation schedule. They should consider:

- the extent to which leaders and teachers have high expectations for attainment and progress and the effectiveness of the systems they use to monitor and develop the quality of sixth-form programmes for all students, including the most disadvantaged and those with high needs
- how leaders and teachers develop a curriculum that provides progression, stretch, mathematics and English for those young people without GCSE grades 9 to 4 (or legacy grades A* to C), as well as work experience or industry placements and non-qualification activities[footnote 71]
- the effectiveness of high-quality impartial careers guidance in enabling all students to make progress and move on to a higher level of qualification, employment or further training when they are ready to do so

331. Through observing teaching and training activities and by holding discussions with students, teachers and support staff, inspectors will consider how well:

- students develop personal, social and independent learning skills
- students achieve high levels of punctuality and attendance
- students' conduct and attitudes, including in non-qualification or enrichment activities and/or work experience, prepare them for employment or progress to higher levels of study

332. Inspection of apprenticeships training and T level technical education programmes are not in the scope of section 5 or section 8 inspections of schools.

Grade descriptors

Outstanding (1)

- The school meets all the criteria for good in the effectiveness of sixth-form provision securely and consistently.
- The quality of sixth-form provision provided is exceptional.

In addition, the following apply:

- The work that sixth-form students do over time embodies consistently demanding curriculum goals. It matches the aims of the curriculum in being coherently planned and sequenced towards building sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and destinations.
- The impact of the taught curriculum is strong. Students acquire and develop high-quality skills and produce work of a consistently high standard.
- Sixth-form students demonstrate consistently highly positive attitudes and commitment to their education. They have consistently high levels of respect for others.
- The sixth form consistently and extensively promotes learners' personal development. The sixth form goes beyond the expected, so that learners have access to a wide, 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 sixth form's offer.

333. In order to judge whether a school is good or requires improvement, inspectors will use a 'best fit' approach, relying on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

Good (2)

- Leaders adopt or construct study programmes that are ambitious, appropriately relevant to local and regional employment and training priorities and designed to give sixth-form students, particularly those with high needs and 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, and are making any necessary amendments in response to the pandemic.]
- 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, and are making any necessary amendments in response to the pandemic.]
- The school is ambitious for all its sixth-form students, including those with SEND and those who have high needs. 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.]
- Sixth-form students study the intended curriculum. The school ensures this by teaching all components of the full programmes of study. Any remote education is integrated into course(s) of study, and is well designed to support the wider implementation of the school's curriculum.
- 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. When relevant, teachers have extensive and up-to-date vocational expertise.
- Teachers present information and/or demonstrate skills clearly, promoting appropriate consideration of the subject matter being taught. They check students' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions and provide clear, direct feedback. In doing this, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary without recourse to unnecessary, time-consuming, individualised approaches to subject matter.
- The work that teachers give to sixth-form students is demanding. It ensures that students build knowledge and acquire skills, improving and extending what they already know and can do.
- Teachers encourage students to use subject-specific, professional and technical vocabulary well.
- Over the course of study, teachers design and use activities to help students to 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, they use it to help students embed and use knowledge fluently and flexibly, to evaluate the application of skills, or to check understanding and inform teaching or to understand different starting points and gaps as a result of the pandemic. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens on staff or students.
- Teachers create an environment that allows sixth-form students to focus on learning. The resources and materials that teachers select and produce – in a way that does not create unnecessary workload for staff – reflect the school's ambitious intentions for the course of study. These materials clearly support the intent of a coherently planned curriculum, sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning, independent living and employment.
- Students develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well in their study programmes. Students make substantial and sustained progress from their identified and recorded starting points in their study programmes. Where appropriate, this is reflected in results in national examinations that meet government expectations, or in the qualifications obtained.
- Students are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They have gained qualifications or met the standards that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests, aspirations and intended course of study. Students with high needs have greater independence in making decisions about their lives.
- Students have high attendance and are punctual. Their attitudes to their education are positive. Where relevant, attitudes improve over time.
- The sixth form prepares its students for future success in education, employment or training. It does this through providing: unbiased information to all about potential next steps; high-quality, up-to-date and locally relevant careers guidance, and opportunities for good quality, meaningful encounters with the world of work.

Requires improvement (3)

- The quality of education in the sixth form 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 students.
- The curriculum does not prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.
- Weak assessment practice means that teaching fails to meet students' needs.
- The attainment and progress of students are consistently low and show little or no improvement over time, indicating that students are underachieving considerably.
- Students 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.
- Students have not attained the qualifications, skills or behaviours appropriate for them to progress to their next stage of education, training or employment.
- Students' attendance is consistently low and shows little sign of sustained improvement. Their lack of engagement, motivation or enthusiasm inhibits their progress and development.
- The school does not ensure that sixth-form students get access to unbiased information about potential next steps, high-quality careers guidance, or opportunities for encounters with the world of work.

Part 3. Applying the EIF in different contexts

Applying the EIF to the teaching of early reading in infant, junior, primary and lower-middle schools

334. During all inspections of infant, junior, primary and lower-middle schools, inspectors must focus on how well pupils are taught to read as a main inspection activity. They will pay particular attention to pupils who are reading below age-related expectations (the lowest 20%) to assess how well the school is teaching phonics and supporting all children to become confident, fluent readers. This will include understanding how reading is taught remotely, where applicable.

335. Inspectors will listen to several low-attaining pupils in Years 1 to 3 read from unseen books appropriate to their stage of progress.[footnote 72] They should also draw on information from the school's policy for teaching reading, phonics assessments, phonics screening check results and lesson visits.

336. In reaching an evaluation against the 'quality of education' judgement, inspectors will consider whether:

- the school is determined that every pupil will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities. All pupils, including the weakest readers, make sufficient progress to meet or exceed age-related expectations
- stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction are chosen for reading to develop pupils' vocabulary, language comprehension and love of reading. Pupils are familiar with and enjoy listening to a wide range of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction
- the school's phonics programme matches or exceeds the expectations of the national curriculum and the early learning goals. The school has clear expectations of pupils' phonics progress term-by-term, from Reception to Year 2
- the sequence of reading books shows a cumulative progression in phonics knowledge that is matched closely to the school's phonics programme. Teachers give pupils sufficient practice in reading and re-reading books that match the grapheme-phoneme correspondences they know, both at school and at home
- reading, including the teaching of systematic, synthetic phonics, is taught from the beginning of Reception
- the ongoing assessment of pupils' phonics progress is sufficiently frequent and detailed to identify any pupil who is falling behind the programme's pace. If they do fall behind, targeted support is given immediately
- the school has developed sufficient expertise in the teaching of phonics and reading

Applying the EIF to the teaching of mathematics

337. When inspectors look at mathematics, they will evaluate the quality of a school's mathematics education through lesson visits, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work, reviewing curriculum plans, discussions with curriculum leaders, and examining any published data. This will include understanding how mathematics is taught remotely, where applicable.

338. Inspectors will consider what steps the school has taken to ensure that:

- pupils understand and remember the mathematical knowledge, concepts and procedures appropriate for their starting points, including knowledge of efficient algorithms. This should also ensure that pupils are ready for the next stage, whether that is the next lesson, unit of work, year or key stage, including post-16 mathematics
- the school's curriculum planning for mathematics carefully sequences knowledge, concepts and procedures to build mathematical knowledge and skills systematically and, over time, the curriculum draws connections across different ways of looking at mathematical ideas
- the curriculum divides new material into manageable steps lesson by lesson
- the school's curriculum identifies opportunities when mathematical reasoning and solving problems will allow pupils to make useful connections between identified mathematical ideas or to anticipate practical problems they are likely to encounter in adult life. Pupils have sufficient understanding of, and unconscious competence in, prerequisite mathematical knowledge, concepts and procedures that are necessary to succeed in the specific tasks set
- within the curriculum, there are sufficient opportunities planned to revisit previously learned knowledge, concepts and procedures; this is to ensure that, once learned, mathematical knowledge becomes deeply embedded in pupils' memories. This then allows rapid and accurate recall and frees pupils' attention so they can work with increasing independence, apply their mathematical knowledge to more complex concepts and procedures, and gain enjoyment through a growing self-confidence in their ability
- there is flexibility in curriculum planning so that the school can address identified gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge that hinder their capacity to learn and apply new content. Those pupils behind age-related expectations are provided with the opportunities to learn the mathematical knowledge and skills necessary to catch up with their peers
- there are objective assessments that can identify when all pupils have gained the intended understanding and unconscious competence in knowledge, concepts and procedures necessary before they move on to new or more complex content
- teaching models new procedures and uses resources and approaches that enable pupils to understand the mathematics they are learning
- all teachers of mathematics, including non-specialist teachers of mathematics, have sufficient mathematical and teaching content knowledge to deliver topics effectively
- pupils' mathematical knowledge is developed and used, where appropriate, across the curriculum

Applying the EIF in maintained nursery schools

339. Paragraphs 29 to 37 outline our approach to evaluating the quality of early years education in maintained nursery schools within the COVID-19 context.

340. Maintained nursery schools are early education providers that are legally constituted as schools. This is why we inspect them using the school inspection handbook. Like maintained schools, they normally have a headteacher, governing body, delegated budget and at least one teacher with qualified teacher status (QTS).

341. Maintained nursery schools tend to have more disadvantaged children on roll than other early education providers. These schools are also likely to have a higher proportion of children already identified as having SEND.[footnote 73]

342. All parts of the EIF apply to maintained nursery schools and to early years provision in mainstream schools. However, as with all provision, maintained nursery schools have some specific factors that should be taken into account. Inspectors will gather and evaluate evidence about:

- how well leaders identify children's early starting points, particularly those children with SEND
- how well leaders develop and adapt the early years foundation stage (EYFS) curriculum so that it is coherently sequenced to meet all children's needs and starting points
- how successfully leaders involve parents, carers and, as necessary, other professionals/specialist services in deciding how best to support children
- whether leaders are ambitious for all children and consider their cultural capital when preparing them for the next stage in their education
- how well leaders include disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND in all aspects of school life
- how well children's learning and development are shared with parents as required by the EYFS, and the extent to which parents are supported to help their child to learn
- the extent to which staff use the 7 areas of learning to introduce children to new ideas, vocabulary and syntax, and to develop children's love of stories, poems, songs and rhymes
- relevant findings from any inspection of the local area's arrangements for identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of young children with SEND (LA SEND inspection)

343. Inspectors will use all their evidence to evaluate what it is like to be a child in the provision.

344. Inspectors will spend most of the inspection time gathering first-hand evidence by observing the quality of the daily routines and activities of children and staff. Inspectors will also discuss children's development with staff. Much of this will be through incidental conversations prompted by observing the children at play and the interactions between them and adults.

345. The choice of teaching methods is a decision for providers. The inspector will judge the quality of the provision in relation to the impact it has on children's learning, development and well-being.

Applying the EIF in junior, middle and studio schools, and university technical colleges

346. There are some schools that start and stop at non-standard ages for pupils, so we take into account national expectations differently.

347. Pupils at junior schools, on average, have higher attainment scores at the end of key stage 2 than pupils at all other primary schools. However, on average, they also have lower progress scores. This may be for a variety of reasons, and inspectors will take this into account when comparing their results with those of pupils in schools that start education from the beginning of key stage 1.

348. Pupils at middle schools, on average, have lower progress scores at the end of key stage 2 than pupils at primary schools. Due to the age range of pupils at middle schools, pupils will have only attended a middle school for a short time before they take their key stage 2 tests and will still have a number of years left at the school. Inspectors will take this into account when comparing pupils' results to those of schools that start educating their pupils from the beginning of key stage 1.

349. The government's ambition for all mainstream secondary schools is for 75% of pupils nationally to be entered for the EBacc by 2022. However, this ambition specifically does not apply to university technical colleges (UTCs) and studio schools because they provide a specialist technical and professional education.

350. The progress 8 accountability measure is not the most appropriate performance indicator for UTCs and studio schools. These establishments typically start educating pupils at age 14 and have a focus on preparing pupils for their future careers. Inspectors will pay attention to other measures, particularly pupils' destinations when they leave the UTC or studio school.

351. In common with all inspections covered by this handbook, when inspectors are evaluating these types of school on either a section 5 or a section 8 inspection, they will not look at non-statutory internal progress and attainment data. Inspectors will be interested in the conclusions drawn and actions taken from any internal assessment information, but they will not examine or verify that information first hand. Inspectors will still use published national performance data as a starting point on inspection. Inspectors will be particularly aware of, and sensitive to, the issues and caveats relating to using nationally published progress data in these types of schools.

Applying the EIF in special schools and in mainstream schools' provision for pupils with SEND

352. Pupils with SEND have a range of different needs and starting points. Some pupils have severe, complex or profound needs that have a significant impact on their cognitive development, especially the way that they are able to make alterations to their long-term memory. Other pupils have starting points at least as high as other pupils of their age, for instance some pupils with sensory impairments.

353. All parts of the EIF apply to state-funded and non-maintained special schools provision and to mainstream schools' provision for pupils with SEND. However, as with all provision, SEND provision has some specific factors that should be taken into account. Inspectors will gather and evaluate evidence about:

- whether leaders are ambitious for all pupils with SEND
- how well leaders identify, assess and meet the needs of pupils with SEND, including when pupils with SEND are self-isolating and/or receiving remote education
- how well leaders develop and adapt the curriculum so that it is coherently sequenced to all pupils' needs, starting points and aspirations for the future
- how successfully leaders involve parents, carers and, as necessary, other professionals/specialist services in deciding how best to support pupils with SEND, including agreeing the approach to remote education
- how well leaders include pupils with SEND in all aspects of school life
- how well the school assesses learning and development of pupils with SEND, and whether pupils' outcomes are improving as a result of the different or additional provision being made for them, including any reasonable adjustments in remote education provision. This covers outcomes in:
  - communication and interaction
  - cognition and learning
  - physical health and development
  - social, emotional and mental health
- how well pupils with SEND are prepared for their next steps in education, employment and training, and their adult lives, including: further/higher education and employment, independent living, participating in society and being as healthy as possible in adult life[footnote 74]

354. Because of the often vastly different types of pupils' needs, inspectors will not compare the outcomes achieved by pupils with SEND with those achieved by other pupils with SEND in the school, locally or nationally.

355. Pupils with SEND often have significant and complex vulnerabilities and can face additional safeguarding challenges. Inspectors will evaluate the ways in which leaders have made appropriate and effective safeguarding arrangements that reflect these additional vulnerabilities, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

356. The government's ambition for all secondary schools is for 75% of pupils to be entered for the EBacc by 2021. This ambition does not apply to special schools with secondary-age pupils. In addition, the progress 8 accountability measure may not always be the most appropriate performance indicator for these schools.

Applying the EIF in pupil referral units and alternative provision in free schools and academies

357. All parts of the EIF apply to PRUs and other alternative provision in free schools and academies. However, in the same way that all school contexts are different, so are PRU and other alternative providers. Inspectors will gather and evaluate evidence about:

- how well leaders identify, assess and meet the needs of pupils when they first begin to attend the PRU or other alternative provider, including pupils with SEND
- how well leaders develop and adapt the curriculum so that it is coherently sequenced and meets all pupils' needs, starting points and aspirations for the future, including through remote education
- how successfully leaders involve parents, carers and, as necessary, other professionals/specialist services in deciding how best to support pupils
- whether leaders are ambitious for all pupils, and the extent to which those responsible for governance understand the particular context of the provision
- how well leaders include pupils in all aspects of school life, giving particular emphasis to how well they are prepared for their next steps in education, employment and training, and adult lives
- how well schools assess pupils' learning and development, and whether pupils' outcomes are improving as a result of the different or additional provision being made for them, including outcomes for pupils with SEND

358. Pupils in PRUs and other alternative providers often have significant, complex vulnerabilities. In the same way as with other schools, inspectors will evaluate the ways in which leaders have made appropriate and effective safeguarding arrangements for pupils in the light of their higher vulnerability to safeguarding risks, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

359. If pupils in PRUs and other alternative providers attend off-site alternative provision, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which these placements are safe and effective in promoting pupils' progress. Inspectors must visit a sample of the alternative providers used.

360. PRUs and other alternative providers may have different objectives in their work related to the reasons why a pupil is placed in alternative provision, the needs of the pupil, the duration of placements and the proportion of time that pupils stay with the provider each week. For instance, in a PRU that provides short-term placements for excluded pupils or those at risk of exclusion, the core work may emphasise specific improvements in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and/or attendance alongside their academic/vocational/technical achievement or be aiming to reintegrate pupils into mainstream schools. Alternative providers may also offer services to schools and other educational settings to help them support children with additional needs in their settings. An alternative provision setting may be the permanent destination for some pupils. Inspectors will evaluate schools' success in these areas, while bearing in mind that we expect high academic/vocational/technical aspirations for all pupils.

361. Inspectors will take the school's official records as a starting point for discussions about attendance. They must evaluate pupils' attendance as a percentage of a full-time timetable, even when temporary part-time arrangements are in place. Leaders may have a range of ways of evaluating pupils' attendance, given that pupils often join and leave the school roll at various times of the year. Inspectors will take into account the turnover of pupils in the provision when considering evidence for attitudes and behaviour.

362. Often, pupils attending PRUs and other alternative providers have had poor attendance in the past. Inspectors will evaluate the improvement in pupils' attendance from their starting points when this is relevant. Inspectors will also evaluate the ways in which leaders take account of pupils' weak attendance in their safeguarding systems and the clarity of their attendance recording. If schools use part-time timetables, and pupils are not attending other provision or placements in addition, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which these are well monitored, aspirational and effective in getting pupils into the education full time, quickly and in line with DfE guidance. These timetables should not be open-ended and should result in swift full-time education for the pupils.

363. Transitions into PRU and alternative providers are often complex, involving dual registration, periods of non-attendance and meetings with a range of services and families. When evaluating pupils' attainment and progress, inspectors will consider the ways in which leaders have identified, assessed and met the needs of pupils. They will evaluate the progress that pupils have made since they began to attend the alternative provision. For pupils have left the PRU or other alternative provider, inspectors will consider how well the progress they made there enabled them to move on to suitable destinations and, post-16, to take courses at an appropriately demanding level. They will also look closely at how effective liaison is with other schools to ensure that there are appropriately high expectations, and as far as reasonably possible, continuity in pupils' education programmes. Inspectors will also look at whether the provider works closely with families, schools and other agencies to ensure a smooth transition to and from alternative provision. They will look at whether it sets expectations that reintegration back into mainstream education is a key component of a placement. Inspectors will look at whether the provider has adapted the approach to securing a good transition for every pupil in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applying the EIF when evaluating the quality of boarding and residential provision in schools

364. When the full inspection of a school's education provision and the full residential inspection are both due at the same time, we usually combine them into one inspection of the whole school. These are integrated inspections and are carried out by one team, leading to one published report.

365. Integrated inspections take place:

- in a boarding or residential special school when both inspections are due during the same year
- when we carry out an emergency or monitoring inspection of both the boarding/residential and education provision
- when we are inspecting the education provision at a boarding/residential school

under section 5

366. In integrated inspections, lead inspectors will consider the timing of team meetings so that the social care regulatory inspector is available to join them. It is important that the findings of the social care regulatory inspector contribute to judgements about the school.

367. Inspectors must work closely together to plan sufficient time to discuss their findings throughout the inspection. The lead education inspector will join the social care regulatory inspector on some inspection activities so that they can gain a full picture of provision at the school. This is particularly important in assessing personal development, behaviour and attitudes and the strength of the links between the day school and boarding provision.

368. The inspection of education in a school that is also registered as a children's home may take place as a stand-alone inspection of the education provision or be aligned with the full inspection of the children's home.[footnote 75] When possible, we will attempt to align both inspections so that inspectors may work together and share evidence.

369. When the education inspection takes place as a stand-alone event, inspectors must read the most recent education and children's home reports on the preparation day. They must make themselves aware of any current issues concerning children's welfare that may affect aspects of the school inspection and ensure that they take these into consideration during the inspection.

370. When the education and children's homes inspections are aligned, the education and social care regulatory inspectors will work together to share evidence.

371. If the school provides boarding or residential provision, inspectors will make the 3 key judgements on that provision. These judgements are made in accordance with the guidance and grade descriptors in the 'Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): boarding schools and residential special schools'.

372. If the provision does not meet one or more of the national minimum standards, this will be set out in the inspection report.

373. Inspectors must consider the impact of the judgements on the boarding/residential provision on the judgements for the whole school. In order to do this, they will need to take account of the proportion of boarders/residential pupils in the school and the seriousness of the issues found.

374. For the effectiveness of leadership and management, the grades for the school and boarding should either be the same as, or within one grade of, each other. The report will clearly state the reasons for any differences.

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1. In this handbook, any reference to the Education Act 2005 includes any amendments made by the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Education and Skills Act 2008, the Academies Act 2010 and the Education Act 2011. ↩
2. See section 3(5)(b) of the Education (Individual Pupil Information) (Prescribed Persons) (England) Regulations 2009 (Amended). ↩
3. For a provider to rely on a disapplication/modification both of the following conditions must be met: there must be government restrictions in place, and the provider must have deemed these restrictions to mean they are unable to deliver the EYFS as required. ↩
4. Staff qualifications and ratios may be the cause of disapplication. See details on disapplying the EYFS as a result of staffing issues. ↩
5. The Secretary of State for Education has decided that the progress check at age 2 will not need to be done during any period of intervention related to COVID-19.

   The Secretary of State for Education has decided that the EYFS profile assessment will not be mandatory for any provider in 2021. However, all providers are required to use their 'best endeavours' to complete it and provide the information to Year 1 teachers and to parents, if this is possible. The EYFS profile will be disapplied and a 'best endeavours' requirement introduced for the academic year 2020 to 2021 only. ↩
6. There is a separate handbook for inspections carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. ↩
7. Paragraph 21 of Schedule 1, Part 1, to the Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Application of Enactments) (England) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/2979) makes Part 1 of the Education Act 2005 (School inspections and other inspections by school inspectors) apply in relation to units as if they were schools. ↩
8. This includes all academy family schools: sponsor-led academies, academy converter schools, academy special schools, free schools, special free schools, alternative provision free schools, university technical colleges and studio schools. The further education and skills inspection handbook applies to 16 to 19 academies. ↩
9. We inspect boarding/residential provision under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools or residential special schools, as appropriate. These inspection follow the 'Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): boarding schools and residential special schools'. ↩
10. Schools that work in partnership with other schools, through federations, managed groups, chains or other collaborative activities, but that have a separate URN will be inspected as individual schools and separate inspection reports will be published. ↩
11. Under section 5(1) of the Education Act 2005. ↩
12. Education (School Inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 as amended by Regulation 2(3) of the Education (School Inspection) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/170). ↩
13. Ofsted will use what data is available from the DfE, in the appropriate context, for example age. ↩
14. From now on in this handbook, 'parents' will refer to mothers, fathers and/or carers. ↩
15. We have specific powers (under section 11A–C of the Education Act 2005) to investigate certain complaints about schools, known as qualifying complaints. ↩
16. This measures the amount of pupils leaving the school before the normal leaving age, or joining after the normal joining age, for that school. ↩
17. Academy converter schools are schools that have been approved by the Secretary of State to convert to become an academy. ↩
18. Immediate conversion happens in only a very small percentage of cases, where inspectors believe a section 5 inspection may find the school to be inadequate in one or more of the graded judgements or where there are serious concerns about safeguarding, pupils' behaviour or the quality of education. ↩
19. Section 9 of the Education Act 2005 states that these section 8 inspections can be treated as section 5 inspections. ↩
20. Some of these good schools will automatically receive a section 5 inspection instead of a section 8 inspection when evidence indicates that the quality of provision may have deteriorated significantly. ↩
21. The term 'governing body' is used to define the accountable authority for the school. In the case of an academy, including schools within a MAT, this will be the board of trustees. ↩
22. A school with religious character – often called a faith school – is designated under section 69(3) of the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998. In a faith school, pupils are educated in the context of the principle of a religion. It is normal for there to be a formal link with a religious organisation. ↩
23. See Regulation 9 of The Education (School Inspection) (England) Regulations 2005. ↩
24. See Regulation 4 of The Education (School Inspection) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2009. Section 48 inspections have been suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, but are expected to restart in September 2021. ↩
25. Protocol between Ofsted and signatory faith group inspectorates. ↩
26. This period will be extended by about one year due to the suspension of routine inspections during the COVID-19 pandemic. ↩
27. This will not apply if an existing academy is re-brokered and receives a new URN. ↩
28. See 'Registering school-based childcare provision'. ↩
29. This must be checked with the headteacher as part of the call. If MATs have delegated responsibility to local governing bodies, this should be set out in a scheme of delegation. Academies should also set out their governance structure in their annual financial statements, which can generally be found through the DfE performance tables site. Inspectors should clarify where responsibility lies and who they should talk to during the inspection, especially where a school is part of a MAT. ↩
30. Further internal guidance is available to inspectors about getting information on complaints in preparation for inspections. ↩
31. The provider information portal (PIP) provides a high-level view for Ofsted inspectors of information about providers that Ofsted inspects and regulates. ↩
32. See 'Framework, evaluation criteria and inspector guidance for the inspections of local authority children's services'. ↩
33. See 'The handbook for the inspection of local areas' effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities'. ↩
34. See guidance for schools about information required on a maintained school's website and non-statutory guidance for academies and free schools about information on their websites. ↩
35. As set out, for example, in a funding agreement. ↩
36. We will consider inspection without notice when there are serious concerns about one or more of the following: the breadth and balance of the curriculum; rapidly declining standards; safeguarding; a decline in standards of pupils' behaviour and the ability of staff to maintain discipline; and standards of leadership or governance. ↩
37. Under section 6(1) of the Education Act 2005. ↩
38. Under regulation 4 of the Education (School Inspection) (England) Regulations 2005. ↩
39. Prescribed under section 7 of the Education Act 2005. ↩
40. Inspectors will respect COVID-19 safety measures agreed with the school leadership when engaging with pupils, formally and informally. ↩
41. Inspectors should take account of the specific context of the school in deciding who to include in the invitation. For example, this may include inviting diocesan representatives for a multi-academy company. ↩
42. In the case of an academy made subject to special measures, the lead inspector will make a recommendation on whether the academy may appoint NQTs. ↩
43. A scheme established, or having effect as if established, by the Secretary of State for the purposes of paragraph 10 of Schedule 2 to the Qualifications Regulations 2003. ↩
44. In law, this is referred to as 'requiring significant improvement'. ↩
45. As set out under section 44 of the Education Act 2005. ↩
46. If neither quality of education nor personal development is 'inadequate', inspectors must conclude that the school is giving an acceptable standard of education. ↩
47. Described in the section as 'requires significant improvement'. ↩
48. Rebrokerage takes place when the Secretary of State terminates academy arrangements using the powers in sections 2A to 2D of the Academies Act 2010 and enters into new academy arrangements for the same school or schools under section 1 of the Academies Act. ↩
49. As set out in the school inspection handbook: Section 8. ↩
50. The term 'report' is used to describe the formal written outcome from the inspection. ↩
51. Under section 14(4)(c) of the Education Act 2005. ↩
52. The national curriculum sets out requirements for English, mathematics, science, physical education and computing in key stages 1–4; for art and design, design and technology, geography, history and music in key stages 1–3; for languages in key stages 2–3; and for citizenship in key stages 3–4. Schools will be required to teach relationships education (key stages 1 and 2), relationships and sex education (key stage 3 and 4) and health education (all key stages 1-4) from September 2020. ↩
53. Under The Education Act 2002 for state-funded schools and section 1A of the Academies Act 2010 for academies, state-funded schools are also required to teach basic curriculum; promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. Maintained schools must teach the national curriculum. Academies must include English, mathematics, science and religious education in their curriculum. ↩
54. Some schools are exempt from the learning and development requirements of the EYFS, where this is the case, the expectation would be that pupils are able to read and write fluently by Years 5 to 6. ↩
55. See sections 3.1 and 3.2, 'National curriculum in England: framework for key stages 1 to 4'. ↩
56. You can find more information about Ofsted's interpretation of remote education in 'What's working well in remote education'. ↩
57. Work for some pupils, such as those who have profound or multiple learning difficulties, includes relevant assessment information such as photographs, video and records of observations made by teachers and teaching assistants. ↩
58. This does not include relevant assessment information (such as photographs, video and records of observations) made by teachers and teaching assistants for pupils who have profound or multiple learning difficulties. ↩
59. Although they will consider the school's use of assessment. ↩
60. See Chapter 8: Preparing for adulthood from the earliest years, 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'. ↩
61. See the government's statutory careers guidance: 'Careers guidance and access for education and training providers'. ↩
62. As per section 5 of the Education Act 2005. ↩
63. Inspectors will consider how successfully the curriculum is enriched and extended for pupils in special schools, taking into account specific factors such as the local area's arrangements for providing home to school transport for children with SEND. ↩
64. Under the Equality Act 2010. ↩
65. In this handbook, a reference to a MAT includes multi-academy companies. ↩
66. All MATs should have, and publish, a scheme of delegation clearly setting out everything that has been delegated by the board of trustees to the local governing board or any other person or body. Advice on how this this should work can be found in the DfE guidance Multi-academy trusts: establishing and developing your trust. ↩
67. See: 'Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)'. ↩
68. See section 5.6 of 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings'. ↩
69. Taking into account any exemptions from the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. ↩
70. Synthetic phonics teach children to recognise the sounds that individual letters and combinations of letters make. Pupils learn to blend these sounds together to read words. They go on to use this knowledge when writing. A systematic approach starts with the easiest sounds, progressing to the most complex. ↩
71. Non-qualification activities may include tutorials, work to develop study, leadership teamwork, self-management skills and volunteering. ↩
72. Wherever possible, inspectors should listen to children read in a classroom or in an open area with which pupils are familiar. The length of time a pupil has attended the school should be taken into consideration. ↩
73. Maintained nursery schools in the early years sector: role and contribution. DFE-RR895 February 2019 ↩
74. See 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years', DfE and Department of Health, January 2015, section 8, preparing for adulthood from the earliest years. ↩
75. All registered children's homes will undergo at least one inspection in a year. Every children's home receives a full inspection, and some children's homes will also be subject to an interim inspection. All inspections are carried out in line with the 'Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): children's homes, including secure children's homes'. ↩

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