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Guidance

School inspection handbook: section 8

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Contents

Introduction
Part 1. Inspection policy and principles for inspection carried out under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005
Part 2. Inspections carried out under section 8
Section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools
Monitoring inspections for schools judged 'requires improvement'
Monitoring inspections for schools judged inadequate
Inspections with no formal designation
Unannounced behaviour inspections
Annex – Inspection activities relating to behaviour

Print this page

Introduction

1. This handbook brings together guidance for inspectors and schools about inspections carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.[footnote 1] Section 8 enables Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) to carry out inspections for a range of purposes, including monitoring visits by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) to schools that are in a category of concern following a section 5 inspection. HMI may also visit schools to aid HMCI in keeping the Secretary of State informed or to contribute to reports on, for example, teaching in a curriculum subject or a particular aspect of the work of schools. Section 8 is also used to enable HMCI, where she has concerns, to carry out an inspection of any school at any time.

2. Section 8 also provides the statutory basis for the Secretary of State to request an inspection. Section 8(1) of the Education Act 2005 requires HMCI to inspect and report on any school or class of school in England, when requested to do so by the Secretary of State.

3. Part 1 of this handbook covers the general policy and principles that apply to inspections carried out under section 8.

4. Part 2 of this handbook sets out the arrangements for carrying out inspections under section 8 in the following circumstances:

- section 8 inspections of schools judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent section 5 inspection
- monitoring inspections of schools judged as requires improvement
- monitoring inspections of schools judged to have serious weaknesses
- monitoring inspections of schools judged to require special measures
- any inspection that is carried out in other circumstances where the inspection has no specific designation, known as 'section 8 no formal designation inspection'
- unannounced behaviour inspections

5. Please refer to the 'Inspection during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic' section of the school inspection handbook – section 5 for information and guidance on inspection during this period.

Privacy notice

6. During inspection, inspectors will collect information about staff and children at the school by looking at school records, responses to the pupil survey and responses to 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).

7. 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]

8. In the vast majority of settings, 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.

Part 1. Inspection policy and principles for inspection carried out under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005

9. The handbook is primarily a guide for inspectors on how to carry out inspections in the circumstances described in the introduction under HMCI's discretionary power to inspect. However, it is made available to schools and other organisations to ensure that they are informed about the policy and procedures for using the section 8 inspection power in particular situations. It applies to school inspections carried out from September 2019 under the education inspection framework (EIF).

Before the inspection

Requests for deferrals

10. A school may request a deferral of its inspection. It may make a request to the inspection support administrator at the time 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 make us aware by contacting the relevant regional duty desk. We will decide whether a deferral should be granted in accordance with our policy.

11. 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 will aim to let the school know whether a request is granted on the same day it is made, but in some cases it may happen by 8am the next morning.

12. If a school is within 6 months of confirmed closure,[footnote 3] but does not request a cancellation when the inspector 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 on a case-by-case basis.

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

During the inspection

14. On arrival at the school, each inspector will show their identity badge and ask to see the headteacher. The headteacher should be advised that they may telephone the applications, regulatory and contact (ARC) team (telephone: 0300 123 4234) to check on the identity of the inspectors if they wish to do so.

Safeguarding

15. Inspectors will always consider how well children, pupils and learners are helped and protected so that they are kept safe. Section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools will always report on the effectiveness of safeguarding.

16. For all other section 8 inspections, inspectors are not required to report specifically on the effectiveness of safeguarding, unless it is a specified focus of the inspection. In these cases, the judgement that will be reported in the letter, where safeguarding is judged to be effective, will be: 'safeguarding is effective'.

17. If safeguarding is not effective or if pupils are considered to be at risk, the lead inspector will convert the inspection to a section 5 inspection (unless the school is already inadequate).

18. Alongside this handbook, inspectors should follow the guidance on inspecting safeguarding in all the settings covered by the EIF:'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings'

19. It is also essential that inspectors are familiar with the following guidance in relation to safeguarding:

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

20. In the event of concerns or queries about safeguarding, inspectors should contact their regional duty desk.

21. In the event of a current or ongoing incident coming to light during the inspection, inspectors should refer to 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings', which contains guidance on what to include in the inspection report.

22. When evaluating the effectiveness of a school's safeguarding procedures, inspectors should also ask whether there have been any safeguarding incidents since the previous inspection of the school. Inspectors must record the school's response as part of the evidence gathered.

23. On a very small number of occasions, inspectors may come across evidence of child abuse, or allegations of child abuse that are currently being investigated, within a school. Inspectors should consult all relevant guidance referred to above and seek advice where appropriate. Inspectors must not attempt to investigate any incident of child abuse but will ensure 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.

Providing feedback

24. At the end of all section 8 inspections, feedback will be provided to the school by the lead inspector. The final feedback meeting will be chaired by the lead inspector and she or he will agree with the headteacher who should attend.

25. Normally, the final feedback meeting will be attended by:

- the headteacher/principal 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 multi-academy trust (MAT), the chair of the board of trustees, and as many governors or 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 chief executive officer (CEO)/their delegate or equivalent
- a representative from the local authority (for maintained schools), or the academy sponsor.

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

- about the judgements made
- that the main findings of the inspection and the main points provided orally in the feedback, subject to any change, will be reflected in the text of the report
- about any recommendations 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 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
- about the procedure for making a complaint about the inspection

After the inspection

Arrangements for publishing the report[footnote 4]

27. The process for the writing, quality assurance and publication of reports from all types of inspections outlined in this handbook mirrors that for section 5 inspections.

28. The lead inspector is responsible for writing the inspection report and submitting the evidence to us 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 the inspection.

29. 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 send the draft report to the DfE and other bodies as necessary. This will only take place following moderation or quality assurance.

30. 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.

31. 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.

32. If a section 8 inspection has been deemed to be a section 5 inspection and the judgement is that the school has serious weaknesses or requires special measures, the Secretary of State must be informed.[footnote 5]

33. 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.

The inspection evidence base

34. The evidence base for the inspection must be retained in line with Ofsted's retention and disposal policy. This is normally 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

35. 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.

36. 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.

37. All schools are invited to take part in a voluntary post-inspection survey in order to contribute to inspection development. The link for this survey is provided with the final inspection report to the school.

Handling concerns and complaints

38. 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.

39. 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. Inspections carried out under section 8

40. This section sets out in more detail the approach inspectors should take when carrying out section 8 inspections in a variety of different contexts.

Section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools

Introduction

41. This section explains how we will carry out section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools that have not been otherwise selected for a section 5 inspection following risk assessment.

42. The EIF provides for inspection to be proportionate to the performance and circumstances of schools. Consequently, good and outstanding schools will normally receive a 2-day section 8 inspection approximately every 4 years.

43. However, some good and outstanding schools will be subject to a section 5 inspection instead of a section 8 inspection. This will happen, for example, when:

- the risk assessment process identifies that the quality of provision may have deteriorated significantly
- the school has undergone significant change, such as in its age range, or through merging with another school

44. The purpose of a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school is to confirm whether the school remains good or outstanding under the definition of overall effectiveness set out in the school inspection handbook.

45. In order to confirm whether the school remains good or outstanding, inspectors will refer closely to the criteria below (from paragraph 55). They will not be expected to carry out a full section 5 inspection within a reduced timeframe. Instead, they will focus on particular aspects of the school's provision. These aspects are drawn principally from the 'quality of education' judgement, but also include specific elements of pupil behaviour, personal development, potential gaming and off-rolling, and safeguarding.

46. A section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school 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 (see paragraph 87 for the circumstances in which this may happen), then inspectors will make the full set of graded judgements using the 4-point grading scale required under section 5.

47. After the first section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, we will normally carry out further section 8 inspections at approximately 4-year intervals.[footnote 6]

Outstanding schools that were formerly exempt from routine inspections

48. 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[footnote 7] that were formerly exempt because the overall effectiveness of their predecessor school was outstanding at its most recent section 5 inspection.

49. 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 section 5 inspection handbook, under 'Section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools'.

Days allocated to inspection and inspection team members

50. In almost all cases, a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school will last for 2 days. However, a section 8 inspection of any good primary school or a good/outstanding maintained nursery school that has fewer than 150 pupils or children on its roll will last for one day.

51. Regardless of number on roll, section 8 inspections of special schools and PRUs will last for 2 days, given the often complex nature of the provision.

52. HMI or Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) will lead section 8 inspections of good or outstanding schools. Section 8 inspections of all of these secondary schools and large primary schools (600 pupils or more on roll), will be led by an HMI or OI, normally accompanied by one team inspector. In secondary schools of more than 1,100 pupils, there will normally be 2 team inspectors. In primary schools with fewer than 600 pupils on roll, the inspection will normally be carried out by one inspector. For PRUs and special schools (including maintained residential special schools and non-maintained special schools with residential provision), the inspection will be led by an HMI or OI, who will usually be accompanied by one team inspector. Depending on the complexity of the provision, size and number of sites in use, up to 2 more inspectors may be assigned as a team for the inspection.

53. The lead inspector will be on site for both inspection days, unless the school is a maintained nursery school, primary, first, infant or junior school and there are fewer than 150 pupils on roll. Any team inspectors will normally be on site for the first inspection day only.

54. If the lead inspector decides to convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection, the size of the inspection team may increase.

Quality of education

55. Inspectors will focus primarily on the 'quality of education' during a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school. Inspectors will form a secure view of whether the quality of education as defined in the school inspection handbook remains good or outstanding. In order to do this, inspectors will focus on key aspects of the school's provision. They will:

- always consider and evaluate all aspects of the aims of the school's curriculum, including the degree to which the school's overall curriculum is coherently sequenced and structured
- consider the extent to which teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach, present subject matter clearly, check pupils' understanding systematically, identify misconceptions accurately and provide clear, direct feedback to pupils, including remotely where applicable
- consider the extent to which pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well and are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training
- always consider whether there is any evidence that the school's curriculum has been narrowed inappropriately (taking account of the context, including any remote education and wider COVID-19 impact)
- observe, where it exists, provision for 2- and 3-year-olds, and assess whether staff are knowledgeable about the typical development and characteristics of 2- and 3-year-olds, are focused on teaching children through the 3 prime areas of learning and are attentive to children's needs
- in primary schools, always consider how well reading and early mathematics are taught in early years foundation stage and key stage 1 as part of a wide-ranging curriculum that prepares children well for the next stage in their education
- in primary schools, explore how well a broad range of subjects (exemplified by the national curriculum) is taught in key stage 2. Inspectors will focus first and foremost on the teaching of reading, particularly on how children gain access to the whole of the national curriculum through learning to read fluently and with comprehension

- in secondary schools, explore how well the school teaches a broad range of subjects (exemplified by the national curriculum) throughout years 7 to 9, or whether the school is in the process of bringing this about. Inspectors will also explore whether the school is aware of the DfE's national EBacc ambition and what it is doing to prepare to achieve this through its key stage 4 curriculum

56. Inspectors will gather evidence about the implementation of the curriculum so that they can form a view about the degree to which series of lessons follow the curriculum intent of the school. They will also look at the degree to which these series of lessons are well sequenced within the intended curriculum and how well they provide purposeful opportunities for pupils' progression through it.

57. If the school is not performing well against these criteria, this could be considered evidence that the school would no longer receive a 'good' judgement at a section 5 inspection. If the lead inspector has serious concerns about the quality of education, the inspection will be converted to a section 5 inspection.

Inspectors will not look at internal progress or attainment data

58. Inspectors will review nationally published performance information about pupils' progress and attainment, where available from the DfE. They will ask school leaders to set out their understanding of pupils' educational performance. However, inspectors will not themselves look directly at schools' internal progress or attainment data in relation to current pupils as evidence. For full guidance on this see the school inspection handbook.

59. Evidence of curriculum impact should be drawn together from a combination of inspection activities. No one piece of evidence or data on its own is sufficient to make an assessment of impact.

Behaviour

60. Inspectors will not make a judgement on all the criteria contained in the 'behaviour and attitudes' judgement. Nevertheless, they will consider 2 key factors:

- whether the school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct and applies these expectations consistently and fairly. Inspectors will also consider whether this is reflected in pupils' positive behaviour and conduct. They will consider whether staff make sure that pupils follow appropriate routines, whether low-level disruption is not tolerated and whether pupils' behaviour does not disrupt lessons or the day-to-day life of the school
- whether leaders, staff and pupils create an environment in which bullying is not tolerated. When harassment (including sexual harassment), violence (including sexual violence), bullying, aggression, discrimination and use of derogatory language occur, inspectors will consider whether they are dealt with quickly, in line with statutory guidance, effectively and are not allowed to spread

61. Where behaviour is not being managed well, this could be evidence that the school would no longer receive a 'good' judgement if it received a section 5 inspection. Where the lead inspector has serious concerns about behaviour, the inspection will be converted to a section 5 inspection.

Gaming and off-rolling

62. When carrying out these inspection activities, inspectors will be particularly alert to any evidence that suggests that the school may be:

- gaming – entering pupils for courses or qualifications that are not in their educational best interest in order to achieve apparently better performance for the school
- off-rolling – removing a pupil or pupils from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil. Please refer to the school inspection handbook for further explanation

63. Where inspectors uncover any evidence that gaming or off-rolling may be taking place, this could be evidence that the school would no longer receive a 'good' judgement if it received a section 5 inspection. Where the lead inspector has serious concerns about gaming or off-rolling, the inspection will be converted to a section 5 inspection.

Pupils' wider development

64. Inspectors will consider the extent to which the curriculum goes beyond the academic, vocational or technical, whether the school provides effectively for pupils' broader development and whether the school's work to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a high quality.

65. 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 since the school reopened to all pupils in March 2020

66. Inspectors will not make a judgement on the criteria contained in the 'personal development' judgement.

Workload

67. Inspectors will consider the extent to which leaders engage with staff and are aware and take account of the main pressures on them, engaging with them realistically and constructively. They will consider the extent to which staff are free from bullying and harassment. Inspectors will also consider whether leaders and staff understand the limitations of assessment and use it in a way that will avoid creating unnecessary burdens.

68. 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.

69. If these issues are not being managed well, this could be considered as evidence that the school would no longer receive a 'good' judgement if it received a section 5 inspection. Where the lead inspector has serious concerns about workload or the bullying or harassment of staff, the inspection will be converted to a section 5 inspection.

Safeguarding

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

- always act in the best interests of pupils to protect them online and offline;
- identify pupils who may need early help and those who are at risk of harm or have been harmed. This harm can include, but is not limited to, neglect, abuse (including by their peers, in school or outside school), grooming or exploitation
- secure the help that pupils need, and, if required, refer pupils 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

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

72. Inspectors must go beyond simply reviewing documents in order to evaluate the safeguarding culture of the school.

73. In addition to understanding Ofsted's inspecting safeguarding policies, inspectors should be familiar with relevant, including statutory, guidance in relation to

safeguarding:

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

74. For a full explanation of the methodology inspectors will adopt in relation to safeguarding, see the school inspection handbook.

Methodology for gathering evidence

75. Inspectors will normally adopt the same methodology for inspecting the quality of education and safeguarding as that used on a section 5 inspection. However, in all other areas they will not gather the same depth of evidence on a section 8 inspection as a full team carrying out a section 5 inspection, as this would not be possible.

76. For a full explanation of the methodology inspectors will adopt, see the school inspection handbook.

Potential inspection outcomes

77. There are 4 possible outcomes for a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school.

- Outcome 1 – the school continues to be a good/outstanding school. This is the most common outcome
- Outcome 2 – the school was previously judged to be good and it remains so and there is sufficient evidence of improved performance to suggest that it might be judged outstanding if it received a section 5 inspection at the time of the section 8 inspection. The school will be informed that its next inspection will be a section 5 inspection, which will typically take place within 1 to 2 years of the publication of the section 8 inspection report
- Outcome 3 – the lead inspector is not satisfied that the school would receive at least its current grade if a section 5 inspection were carried out at the time of the section 8 inspection. The school will be informed that its next inspection will be a section 5 inspection within the statutory timeframe, which will typically take place within 1 to 2 years of the publication of the section 8 inspection report, depending on how near to the end of the statutory timeframe the section 8 inspection has taken place
- Outcome 4 – the lead inspector has gathered evidence that suggests that the good or outstanding school may now be inadequate in one or more of the graded judgements under a section 5 inspection, and there are serious concerns about the quality of education, pupils' behaviour or safeguarding. The section 8 inspection will usually be converted to a section 5 inspection, usually within 48 hours. Alternatively, for outstanding schools only, there are concerns that the performance of the school could be declining to 'requires improvement'. Again, the section 8 inspection will usually be converted to a section 5 inspection, usually within 48 hours

78. Inspectors will always report on whether safeguarding is effective. If there is evidence that safeguarding may be ineffective, the lead inspector will always convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection.

Schools that remain good/outstanding (outcome 1)

79. Where the lead inspector judges that a school remains good/outstanding, they will confirm this judgement in the final feedback to the school at the end of the section 8 inspection. The lead inspector will notify their Ofsted regional support team as soon as this decision is made.

Schools that remain good, with marked improvement (outcome 2)

80. Where the lead inspector considers that, based on the evidence seen, a school remains good and inspectors have reason to believe that the quality of education might be better than good if it received a section 5 inspection at the time of the section 8 inspection, the lead inspector will indicate that this is likely to be their conclusion (subject to quality assurance of the inspection). The lead inspector will then discuss with the school which subjects, topics or areas of provision may usefully serve as the focus of a subsequent section 5 inspection, and record this in their summary evidence.

81. The school will then receive a report that makes clear that its next inspection will be

carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The report will confirm that the school remains good and will highlight the reasons why inspectors believe that the quality of education is better than good.

82. The section 5 inspection will usually take place within 1 to 2 years after the publication of the section 8 inspection report, giving the school time for the strong practice and marked improvements to be consolidated. The decision on the timing of the full section 5 inspection will be for the relevant Ofsted regional director to determine. Schools may request an early inspection and these requests will be considered by the relevant Ofsted region.

Schools that may no longer be good/outstanding (outcome 3)

83. Where the lead inspector is not satisfied that the school would receive its current grade if a section 5 inspection were carried out at the time of the section 8 inspection, the lead inspector will indicate that this is likely to be their conclusion (subject to quality assurance of the inspection). The lead inspector will then discuss with the school which subjects, topics or areas of provision may usefully serve as the focus of a subsequent section 5 inspection, and record this in their summary evidence.

84. The school will then receive a letter setting out what the school is doing well and what it needs to improve. The school's current overall effectiveness judgement will not change as a result of this inspection. The school will subsequently receive a section 5 inspection within the prescribed statutory timeframe.[footnote 8]

85. In line with regulations, the prescribed timeframe will not be reset by the section 8 inspection because the essential test of those regulations has not been met.[footnote 9] The section 5 inspection will typically take place within 1 to 2 years of the publication of the section 8 inspection report, although this could be sooner if the section 8 inspection has been carried out nearer to the end of the statutory timeframe.

86. For outcomes 2 and 3, if a maintained school converts to become an academy before the section 5 inspection has been carried out, the school's first inspection as an academy will be a section 5 inspection at least one year after the school becomes an academy.

Section 8 inspection is converted to a section 5 inspection (outcome 4)

87. The section 8 inspection will be converted to a section 5 inspection, usually within 48 hours, if there are serious concerns about the quality of education, behaviour, potential gaming (including off-rolling) or safeguarding. This will occur if inspectors:

- find evidence that suggests that the 'quality of education' might be judged to be inadequate were a full section 5 inspection to take place at the time of the section 8 inspection. This may include a situation where the range of subjects being taught is very narrow (taking any COVID-19 catch up factors into consideration)
- find evidence relating to behaviour that suggests that 'behaviour and attitudes' might be judged to be inadequate were a full section 5 inspection to be taking place at the time of the section 8 inspection[footnote 10]
- find evidence that suggests that the school has removed pupils from the school roll without a formal, permanent exclusion, or encouraged parents 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
- find evidence that deliberate, gaming is taking place
- find evidence indicating that safeguarding may be ineffective

88. The section 8 inspection will also be converted when the lead inspector has gathered evidence that suggests the school may be inadequate in one or more of the graded judgements were a section 5 inspection carried out at the time of the section 8 inspection.[footnote 11]

89. A decision to convert the inspection does not predetermine the outcome of the section 5 inspection. At the end of the section 5 inspection, the school may receive any grade along the 4-point grading scale.

90. If inspectors gather evidence that suggests an outstanding school's performance may have declined so that, were a section 5 inspection to be carried out at the time of the section 8 inspection, the school would be likely to be judged as requires improvement, inspectors will convert the section 8 inspection, usually within 48 hours.

91. Where the section 8 inspection is HMI-led and converts to a section 5 inspection, the HMI will remain the lead inspector for the full inspection. However, where the section 8 inspection has been led by an OI, the OI may either remain as the lead inspector for the full inspection or an HMI may lead the full inspection. More inspectors may join the lead inspector. The section 8 inspection will become a section 5 inspection

and the team will gather and evaluate evidence in order to make a full set of graded judgements.

92. A section 8 inspection report will not be produced when the section 8 inspection converts to a section 5 inspection. Instead, the school will receive a section 5 inspection report.

Principles for working with the headteacher, senior leaders and governors

93. Section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools are designed to promote constructive, challenging, professional dialogue between the lead inspector and school leaders. The lead inspector will start the section 8 inspection on the assumption that the school remains good/outstanding. They will test this over the course of the inspection through their inspection activities and ongoing discussion with leaders and governors.

94. Section 8 inspections provide schools with the opportunity to share with the lead inspector how they are sustaining and continuing to improve the overall good quality of education for pupils. Section 8 inspections also provide leaders and governors with the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity for driving further improvement in their school. The lead inspector will test whether leaders and governors have identified weaknesses or areas needing development at the school.

95. The lead inspector will plan the inspection so that leaders and governors have time to present evidence about key improvements at the school, their assessment of the current performance of the school and action planning that supports improvement. During the pre-inspection call between the lead inspector and the headteacher and/or other senior leaders, school leaders will summarise their evaluation of the school's current performance and the lead inspector will discuss the key issues to be considered during the inspection. They will include these issues in the schedule for the inspection.

96. Leaders and governors are not required to:

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

Seeking the views of registered parents, pupils and other stakeholders

97. When a school is notified of the section 8 inspection, leaders and those responsible for governance should take steps that are reasonably practicable to inform all registered parents of registered pupils at the school, including those who are on fixed-term or internal exclusion, those who attend alternative provision or those who are away from school. Schools should also be invited to notify relevant bodies of the inspection, including providers of alternative provision.

98. The views of staff and pupils in schools will usually be gathered through an online questionnaire. The inspection support administrator sends online links to the school along with the formal notification of inspection. The school is asked to encourage staff and pupils to complete the online questionnaire, with the exception of those in any boarding provision (whose views will have already been sought through the point-in-time survey). Staff and pupils should complete and submit their questionnaires by 3pm on the first[footnote 12] day of the inspection.

99. Our email confirming the inspection includes a letter that can be used to notify parents formally. It explains how to use Ofsted Parent View and how parents can contact inspectors. Schools should actively encourage parents to complete Ofsted Parent View as early as possible by placing a link on their website to the Ofsted Parent View website. Inspectors should encourage the school to notify parents using its own systems (such as text messages) where these are available.

100. The lead inspector will review the evidence from Ofsted Parent View throughout the section 8 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 further steps during the inspection to gather parents' views.

101. The lead inspector will also take into account any other evidence from parents, including the results of any past surveys that the school has carried out or commissioned. If individual parents raise serious issues, inspectors should follow these up with the school and record its response as part of the evidence gathered during the inspection. Inspectors will not investigate complaints.

Before the inspection

Notification and introduction

102. For maintained schools and academies (including PRUs, special schools and maintained nursery schools), Ofsted will normally contact the school by telephone to announce the inspection between 10.30am and 2pm on the school day before the section 8 inspection.

103. Requests for a deferral will be handled in accordance with our deferral policy. During a notification call, if the headteacher is unavailable, we will ask to speak to the next most senior member of staff. Once it has been confirmed that the section 8 inspection will take place, we will send confirmation to the school by email.

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

104. 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 newly qualified teachers (NQTs)) and times of 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
- records and analysis of sexual harassment and/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

Preparation

105. 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 context and challenges and progress made since the last inspection, including how COVID-19 has affected this
- a shorter inspection planning conversation that focuses on practical and logistical issues, including how the inspection team will work within the school's COVID-19 protective measures

106. 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 mutually agreed by the lead inspector and the headteacher. In total, these conversations are likely to last around 90 minutes.

Discussing the school's progress since the last inspection

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

108. Inspectors will hold an introductory telephone conversation with school leaders on the day before the inspection begins. Inspectors should give 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.

109. 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 in areas for improvement that were identified at previous inspections and 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 will be focused on during inspection

110. 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 to form an initial understanding of the leaders' view of the school's progress and also help them to shape the inspection plan. Our experience from piloting the EIF 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

111. 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 Parent View is the main method for gathering the views of parents at the point of inspection. Inspectors will remind the school that Ofsted's 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 any SEND resource base, where applicable
- establish whether the school has any pupils who attend off-site alternative provision, either full time or part time. 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 of compulsory school age who is looked after or has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Where a school uses alternative provision that should be registered but is not, inspectors will carefully consider whether pupils at this provision are effectively safeguarded and may decide to convert the inspection to a section 5 inspection
- visit alternative providers during the inspection as directed by the relevant Ofsted region. Any alternative provision site that has not yet been inspected should be visited during the inspection
- discuss any off-site units that cater for pupils with behaviour or attendance difficulties, run either by the school or in partnership with other schools
- discuss any nursery provision, before- and/or after-school care or holiday clubs led and managed directly by the school, particularly where these take 2- to 8-year-olds (see 'Registering school-based childcare provision'
- invite the headteacher, curriculum leaders and other leaders to take part in joint visits to lessons and to observe the main inspection team meetings, as restrictions allow. These meetings may include a virtual option using video/telephone calls if necessary
- make arrangements for meetings with relevant staff
- provide an opportunity for the school to ask any questions or to raise any concerns, for example perceived conflicts of interest

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

- the single central record for the school
- a list of staff and a note of whether any relevant staff are absent
- a copy of the school timetable
- whether any teachers cannot be observed for any reason (for example, where they are subject to capability procedures)
- whether there is anyone working on site who is normally employed elsewhere in the MAT (where relevant)
- maps and other practical information (see resource bases below)
- access to the school's wifi, where it exists, so that inspectors can connect to the internet

113. It is important that inspectors speak to those responsible for leadership and governance during the 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. 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 13]
- confirm arrangements for meetings with the school and, where appropriate, MAT executive leaders, as well as representatives of those responsible for the governance of the school and anyone else they think is relevant. The lead inspector should be guided by the school on who they need to meet from a MAT
- make arrangements for a meeting with the chair of the governing body or, where 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, as restrictions allow. These meetings may include a virtual option using video/telephone calls if necessary
- 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

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

Further inspection preparation carried out by the lead inspector

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

- 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 14]
  - replies to questionnaires
  - our inspection data summary report (IDSR)
  - information on our provider information portal,[footnote 15] including any warning notices[footnote 16]
  - the most recent inspection report on the relevant local authority's children's services[footnote 17]
  - the main findings from the relevant local area's SEND inspection[footnote 18]
- relevant publicly available information, such as the school's website[footnote 19]
- information published by local authorities, the DfE (including the Education and Skills Funding Agency and regional school commissioners) and the police

Resource bases

116. 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.

117. During the lead inspector's planning conversation with the school, they will obtain 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, where 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

During the inspection

Typical inspection day

118. The lead inspector will devise a timetable for the section 8 inspection based on their pre-inspection analysis and conversations with school leaders. This timetable may be adapted as new evidence becomes available or other issues emerge.

119. Inspectors must always judge whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

120. The section 8 inspection will also focus on evidence of how effectively the school's leaders and managers, including those responsible for governance, are:

- sustaining a good quality of education for pupils
- demonstrating capacity to remedy any weaknesses that are not of sufficient concern for the lead inspector to convert the inspection from a section 8 to a section 5 inspection

Feedback at the end of the section 8 inspection

121. At the end of the section 8 inspection, the lead inspector will provide brief oral feedback that will typically:

- report the range of evidence gathered
- provide the school with a judgement about whether it remains good or outstanding (as relevant)
- report whether safeguarding is effective
- make clear that the text of the section 8 inspection report will differ from the oral feedback as the feedback is for the school and the report is written for parents
- ensure that leaders are clear about the procedures for publishing the report

After the inspection

Reporting on the section 8 inspection

122. The school will receive a report setting out the inspection findings that will be published on the Ofsted reports website. Schools should inform parents that this report has been published.

Monitoring inspections for schools judged 'requires improvement'

123. This section of the handbook sets out Ofsted's approach to challenging and supporting schools that are judged as requires improvement at their last section 5 inspection. The guidance outlines the main activities that may be undertaken by the lead inspector when carrying out a monitoring inspection of a school judged as requires improvement until it is re-inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

124. Schools judged as requires improvement will usually be re-inspected under section 5 within 30 months after the publication of the section 5 report. The timing of the re-inspection will be at the discretion of Ofsted's relevant regional director.[footnote 20]

125. Although not in a formal category of concern, schools judged as requires improvement may be subject to monitoring. This will not normally apply to a school that has been judged as requires improvement for the first time. However, a school that receives 2 or more successive 'overall effectiveness' judgements of requires improvement will normally be monitored for between 12 and 30 months following publication of the report which resulted in the most recent 'requires improvement' judgement.

126. Where a school's most recent 'leadership and management' judgement was good, or where leadership has changed since the last section 5 inspection, the relevant regional director may decide that a school that would otherwise have had a monitoring inspection does not require one. However, these decisions will be by exception, having taken account of all relevant information about the current position in the school. If made, this decision should be recorded for audit trail.

127. Where, following a monitoring inspection, the lead inspector considers that a school is ready for re-inspection because it has made good progress, they may recommend that the next section 5 inspection is brought forward. Conversely, when the lead inspector feels that the school would benefit from further time to improve to a judgement of good, they may recommend that the school is re-inspected later in the 30-month inspection window.

128. If, at the section 5 re-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 whether it is 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, it may be judged as requires improvement again. In these cases, there may be monitoring before another section 5 inspection takes place, which would normally be within 30 months after 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. Where the lead inspector has significant concerns about a school, they may deem the monitoring inspection to be a section 5 inspection.

Before the inspection

Staffing

129. An HMI will normally carry out the monitoring inspection, which lasts one day. On occasion, an OI may lead the monitoring inspection.

130. Where a school that requires improvement has residential or boarding provision, the lead inspector should inform the Senior HMI for social care in the relevant region. [footnote 21]

Planning the first monitoring inspection

131. Schools judged to require improvement are not required to prepare a separate action plan, but are expected to amend their existing plans to address the areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection.

132. The lead inspector will prepare for the monitoring inspection by reviewing the inspection history and other relevant information in order to build a picture of what has been happening to the school over time. This includes:

- the previous section 5 inspection reports, paying particular attention to the areas recommended for further improvement
- any performance information published since the section 5 inspection
- information from Ofsted Parent View
- the school's self-evaluation or brief summary, as appropriate; this should include any specific information about curriculum and governance

133. During this conversation, the lead inspector will discuss with the headteacher how aspects of the quality of education are improving. They will agree the approach to carrying out inspection activities that can test out leaders' assertions. Activities may include: talking to pupils, meeting staff, reviewing documentation, reviewing pupils' work, and lesson visits. The lead inspector and headteacher will also agree inspection activities linked to any other areas for improvement identified during this call that school leaders have been working on, for example attendance or behaviour.

134. During the monitoring inspection, the lead inspector will seek to identify the barriers that appear to be preventing the school from progressing to good. The lead inspector will decide where to focus inspection activities in order to gather evidence about how quickly and effectively leaders, managers and those responsible for governance are tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the most recent

governance are tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the most recent section 5 inspection. Evidence will also be gathered to assess and report on progress made over time since the school was first judged to require improvement and the inspection will report on any barriers that are preventing the school becoming good.

Notification

135. The lead inspector will telephone the school the day before the start of the on-site monitoring inspection.[footnote 22] If the headteacher is unavailable, the lead inspector should ask to speak to the next most senior member of staff and explain the arrangements for the monitoring inspection.

136. This notification period is designed to ensure that those responsible for governance and representatives of the local authority or other appropriate authority are available when the monitoring inspection takes place. In academies that are part of a MAT, the lead inspector should also arrange to speak to the CEO/their delegate or equivalent during the inspection where these roles are part of the structure.[footnote 23]

137. The lead inspector should seek to ensure that the headteacher will be present on the day of the inspection. Once the inspection has been confirmed, the lead inspector will inform the inspection support team at Ofsted, who will send formal notification to the school by email.

138. During the initial telephone call with the school, the lead inspector will:

- confirm the date of the inspection
- explain the purpose of the monitoring inspection
- confirm that the school will inform the governing body and the local authority/proprietor/trust (as relevant) and that the lead inspector will wish to speak to them during the inspection[footnote 24]
- provide the opportunity to discuss any specific issues that the lead inspector should be made aware of before arriving to start the monitoring inspection the next day

During the inspection

Focus of the monitoring inspection

139. The monitoring inspection will focus on:

- examining with school leaders and those responsible for governance whether the fundamental actions needed to improve the school are being taken quickly and robustly. Pupils are unlikely to be served well by a school that has focused on peripheral matters or only on planning, rather than directly on the core issues that need tackling, especially in terms of getting back on track following COVID-19
- examining whether school leaders and those responsible for governance are taking action to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education, and particularly whether they are building or adopting an effective curriculum, including remotely (where applicable)
- considering the impact of the support provided to the school, including any support and challenge provided by any external partners on school improvement
- identifying with the school any barriers to progress towards becoming a good or outstanding school
- reviewing the impact of any support to the school on its improvement
- determining the extent of progress that has been made over time since the school was first judged to require improvement
- where applicable, recommending whether or not the school is ready for a section 5 re-inspection

Monitoring inspection activities

140. During the telephone call with the school, the lead inspector will discuss the inspection activities needed to gather evidence of the impact of leaders', managers' and governors' actions since the last section 5 inspection, as well as the progress that has been made since that inspection, and over time.

141. While the lead inspector will consider the progress made in implementing the school's action plan and the impact of leaders', managers' and governors' actions, lead inspectors are not visiting simply to evaluate action plans, but to challenge and support the school. Through inspection activities, the lead inspector will gather evidence about the pace of improvement and ensure that leaders, managers and governors are making the necessary improvements swiftly and sustainably.

142. It is likely that one or more of the areas for improvement identified at the previous section 5 inspection will be for the school to address specific areas of curriculum weakness. In evaluating the progress that the school is making to address these areas for improvement, inspectors will take account of the 'quality of education' section of the school inspection handbook. Inspectors will also draw on the inspection methodology set out in that handbook in order to support them to form a picture of this area.

143. During the monitoring inspection, the lead inspector will:

- meet the headteacher and other senior leaders (including, where appropriate, the CEO of the MAT/their delegate or equivalent) to establish a purposeful and productive working relationship and focus on discussing the actions taken so far to tackle issues from the section 5 inspection
- hold meetings with representatives of the local authority/proprietor/trust, the chair and members of the governing board, or, where appropriate, the chair of the board of trustees, to establish what action is being taken
- gather any other evidence needed. This may include discussions with staff and pupils, reviewing minutes of governing body meetings, observing learning and pupils' behaviour, and talking to pupils about their work and their progress
- consider views expressed on Ofsted Parent View. Where possible, inspectors will talk to parents about their views about the school
- discuss with the headteacher the next steps
- plan time to reflect on and summarise the evidence, draft the monitoring report and consider what, if any, further challenge or support is required

Arriving at final judgements

144. At the end of the monitoring inspection, the lead inspector will make a single overarching judgement stating:

> " Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school"

or

> " Leaders and those responsible for governance are not taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school"

At the end of the inspection

Final feedback

145. The lead inspector will hold a feedback meeting with key stakeholders, including as many governor representatives as possible, at the end of the monitoring inspection. If there are serious concerns about the lack of urgency in tackling weakness at the school, the lead inspector will expect to speak to the governing board/board of trustees, or as many governors/trustees as possible. If needed, they will arrange to do this after the inspection. The lead inspector should also invite the CEO/their delegate or equivalent of a MAT to the final feedback meeting, as restrictions allow. These meetings may include a virtual option using video/telephone calls if necessary.

146. Where the lead inspector has concerns about the school, the effectiveness of leadership and/or governance or the lack of urgency with which weaknesses are being tackled, they will share the concerns with the school and make specific recommendations for more urgent action or intervention.

147. If a monitoring inspection identifies serious concerns about aspects of the school's performance that were not identified in the previous section 5 inspection or in any earlier monitoring visits, these will be reported to us and may lead to the next section 5 inspection being brought forward.

148. In exceptional circumstances, where the concerns are such that the school requires immediate inspection under section 5, the section 8 inspection may be deemed a section 5 inspection, usually within 48 hours. Where the lead inspector finds that the school's performance appears to be improving, they may also choose to deem that monitoring inspection a section 5 inspection, usually within 4 weeks.[footnote 25] Where this is the case, all the judgements required by the evaluation schedule will be made and a section 5 inspection report will be produced. Where necessary, more inspectors may be deployed to complete the inspection.

Reporting on the monitoring inspection

149. The monitoring report letter which is written at the end of the monitoring inspection will include:

- the date of the inspection
- a summary of the type of evidence gathered during the inspection and the context of the school
- the judgement on whether the areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection are being tackled effectively
- the relevance, speed and impact of the work being carried out to improve the school since the last section 5 inspection, with particular reference to the inspection findings and including, in all cases, the improvement of teaching and learning and the effectiveness of school leadership, management and governance
- a judgement on the effectiveness of the action taken and the progress made by the school over time towards becoming good
- the suitability of the school's plans to tackle the areas requiring improvement that were identified at the recent inspection and any recommendations from a previous monitoring inspection
- an evaluation of whether school leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education, and particularly whether they are building or adopting an effective curriculum
- any additional priorities for improvement arising from the monitoring inspection

Monitoring inspections for schools judged inadequate

150. Schools that are judged inadequate fall into one of two categories, both of which are formally defined in legislation as categories of concern:

- special measures

or

- serious weaknesses (defined in law as 'requires significant improvement')

151. These terms are defined in Section 5 handbook's 'Schools causing concern' section.

152. 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' to another trust.

153. 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.

154. Whether they become a new academy or are brokered or 'rebrokered', these schools will become new sponsored academies and will subsequently be inspected as new schools within 3 years of operation and normally in the third year. However, in exceptional circumstances, schools that become new academies or are 'rebrokered' may receive a section 8 inspection before their next section 5 inspection.

155. Academies judged to have serious weaknesses and which are not brokered or 'rebrokered' will be subject to monitoring by us. 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.

156. Academies judged to require special measures, and which are not 'rebrokered', will be subject to monitoring by us. 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.

157. Maintained nursery schools and non-maintained special schools judged inadequate are not subject to academy orders and will be monitored by Ofsted as set out in this section of the handbook.

Appointment of newly qualified teachers (NQTs)

158. With regard to the appointment of NQTs in maintained schools and PRUs, regulations governing the induction of teachers provide that induction may not be served in a school that has been judged to require special measures, unless HMCI has given permission in writing.

159. Where the lead inspector at the latest section 5 inspection has informed a school that it may not appoint NQTs, and no monitoring inspections are taking place, the school must seek approval in writing from the relevant Ofsted regional director if it later wishes to appoint NQTs, stating the reasons for the request. The restriction on the appointment of NQTs does not extend to trainee teachers on employment-based training programmes.

Exceptions to routine monitoring of inadequate schools

160. Maintained schools or PRUs that have been issued with an academy order and academies that are being 'rebrokered' to new sponsors following termination of their funding agreements will not normally receive monitoring inspections.

161. 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 should be to set out how the relevant local authority and the school will facilitate the transition to the new academy.

162. In the case of schools where serious safeguarding concerns have been identified, it is essential that early action is taken to ensure that pupils are safe. Ofsted may, in some cases, carry out a section 8 inspection within 3 to 6 months after the publication of the section 5 report to ensure that the actions relating to safeguarding that were specified in the statement of action have been implemented. These inspections will not include checks on the extent to which the school and the relevant authority is supporting the transition to sponsored academy status.

163. Once an inadequate maintained school or PRU has become a sponsored academy, or an inadequate academy has been moved to a new sponsor with a new funding agreement, it will be inspected as a new school, with its first inspection being a section 5 inspection. This will usually take place during the third year of operation.[footnote 26] If there is a delay in any school judged inadequate becoming a sponsored academy or being 'rebrokered' to be sponsored by a new trust, Ofsted may initiate monitoring of the school to check on what progress has been made in tackling the areas for improvement.

Notification

164. The lead inspector will telephone the school the day before the start of the on-site monitoring inspection. If the headteacher is unavailable, the lead inspector should ask to speak to the next most senior member of staff and explain the arrangements for the monitoring inspection.

165. This notification period is designed to ensure that those responsible for governance as well as representatives of the local authority or other appropriate authority are available when the monitoring inspection takes place. In academies that are part of a MAT, the lead inspector should also arrange to speak to the CEO/their delegate or equivalent during the inspection where these roles are part of the structure. [footnote 27]

166. During the initial telephone call with the school, the lead inspector will:

- confirm the date of the inspection
- explain the purpose of the monitoring inspection
- confirm that the school will inform the governing body and the local authority/proprietor/trust (as relevant) and that the lead inspector will wish to speak to them during the inspection[footnote 28]
- provide the opportunity to discuss any specific issues that the lead inspector should be made aware of before arriving to start the monitoring inspection the next day

167. During this conversation, the lead inspector will discuss with the headteacher how aspects of the quality of education are improving. They will agree the approach to carrying out inspection activities that can test out leaders' assertions. Activities may include: talking to pupils, meeting staff, reviewing documentation, reviewing pupils' work and lesson visits. The lead inspector and headteacher will also agree inspection activities linked to any other areas for improvement identified during this call that school leaders have been working on, for example attendance or behaviour.

168. Requests for a deferral will be handled in accordance with our policy about the deferral of inspections. If a school requests a deferral, HMI must contact the relevant regional duty desk immediately. The deferral policy makes clear that the absence of the headteacher is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.

Planning the monitoring inspection

169. The lead inspector will prepare for the monitoring inspection by reviewing the inspection history and other relevant information in order to build a picture of what has been happening to the school over time. This includes:

- the previous section 5 inspection report and any subsequent monitoring inspection reports
- any performance information published since the previous section 5 report or the previous monitoring inspection
- information from Ofsted Parent View
- the school's self-evaluation or brief summary, as appropriate. This should include any specific information about curriculum and governance
- the most recent inspection report on the relevant local authority's children's services
- the main findings form the relevant local area's SEND inspection

Guidance for inspecting schools that have serious weaknesses

Introduction

170. Schools are judged to have serious weaknesses where HMCI is of the opinion that:

"The school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform."[footnote 29]

171. Schools judged to have serious weaknesses are not required to prepare a separate action plan. They are expected to amend their existing plans or develop a new plan to tackle the areas for improvement identified by the section 5 inspection. The local authority, the proprietor or the trust board must submit a statement of action to HMCI within 10 working days of the school receiving the final section 5 inspection report.[footnote 30] An inspector will review the statement of action. Inspectors will provide initial feedback in writing on the fitness for purpose of the statement within 10 working days of receiving the statement. If the statement of action is judged to be not fit for purpose, the local authority, the proprietor or the trust will be informed. They will be asked to address the weaknesses urgently and to ensure that the revised version is resubmitted to us. Inspectors will re-evaluate the revised statement of action and confirm its fitness for purpose. This will also be reported in the first monitoring letter.

172. Inspectors will usually carry out the first monitoring inspection within 3 to 9 months of the publication of the section 5 inspection report.

173. During the first monitoring inspection, inspectors will meet with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body or board of trustees, an appropriate representative of the local authority, or the CEO/their delegate or equivalent where an academy is part of a MAT. Inspectors will look for evidence of how well leaders are implementing the statement of action and the school's improvement plan. If any concerns remained following the initial review and feedback of these, inspectors should check to ensure that the current statement of action and improvement plans are fit for purpose and report on this in the first monitoring inspection.

174. If, after a programme of monitoring inspections lasting up to 30 months, the school has not been removed from the serious weaknesses category of concern, it must be re-inspected under section 5.

The monitoring inspection(s)

175. Monitoring inspections will focus on the actions taken by the school's leaders and

those responsible for governance to tackle the areas for improvement identified in the section 5 inspection that judged the school to have serious weaknesses. Monitoring inspections must also focus on the progress that the school has made since being judged as having serious weaknesses.

176. The monitoring inspection report must include an assessment of the effectiveness of the action taken by the school towards removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

177. An overarching judgement will be made stating whether:

- leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

or

- leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation

178. The crucial factor is the anticipated timescale for the removal of the serious weaknesses designation given the current rate of improvement. A school in which leaders and managers are taking effective action is one that will be on course to have the serious weaknesses designation removed within 30 months after the publication of the previous section 5 report. A school that is not taking effective action will be likely to continue to have serious weaknesses, or may require special measures, when the section 5 re-inspection takes place.

179. The purpose of the monitoring inspection(s) is to evaluate how much progress the school has made by considering:

- the school's response to being judged as having serious weaknesses and how well placed it is to secure rapid improvement based on the actions taken since the previous section 5 inspection, taking the COVID-19 pandemic impact into account
- the extent to which the school's actions are rigorously focused on tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection
- how effectively the school is adapting its existing school development or improvement plans to meet the challenge of moving out of the serious weaknesses category
- the impact that governors at the school are having on bringing about the necessary improvements
- whether school leaders and those responsible for governance are taking action to ensure that pupils receive an improved quality of education, and particularly whether they have steps in place towards building or taking up an effective curriculum

180. Monitoring inspections cover aspects of the section 5 evaluation schedule, but are selective and focused sharply on where the school needs to improve in order to come out of its category of concern. In deciding the focus, inspectors will consider the areas for improvement identified by the section 5 inspection that judged the school to have serious weaknesses.

181. The work of those responsible for governance should be evaluated to assess the extent to which they are making an effective contribution to leadership and management and the school's performance.

182. If governance was not identified as an area for improvement at the section 5 inspection but the monitoring inspection raises concerns about weak governance, inspectors must say this in the report. Similarly, where inspectors have concerns about the school's use of the pupil premium, they must highlight this in the report.

183. Inspectors should consider whether the school's leaders continue to demonstrate convincingly that the school's capacity to improve is strengthening. It is important that the school's leaders are having a significant impact on all of the school's areas of weakness and are capable of securing further improvement.

184. There should be clear evidence that leaders and managers are having an impact on accelerating learners' progress and thereby raising attainment, particularly in schools where attainment is low. Inspectors must also consider the impact of the external support provided to the school, with particular reference to the proprietor's or the trust's statement of action and, as appropriate, any support and challenge provided by external partners on school improvement.

185. Not all schools will receive a second or third monitoring inspection. This will depend on the inspectors' evaluation of the quality of leadership and management and the school's rate of improvement towards becoming a good school.

186. If a second or third monitoring inspection is carried out, inspectors will continue to

evaluate the effectiveness of the school's actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation. An overarching judgement will be made in the same format as specified above for the first monitoring inspection.

187. This judgement will be based on the school's progress towards coming out of its category of concern. Although generally this will be informed by the areas for improvement identified by the section 5 inspection, other factors that arise during the monitoring period must not be ignored. Inspectors should make the key judgement about the school's overall progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation by considering the evidence they have gathered and using their professional judgement.

188. Where inspectors are satisfied that the school is taking effective action and making enough progress for the likely removal of the serious weaknesses designation, they will take the decision to deem the section 8 monitoring inspection to be a section 5 inspection. This may result in the school being judged as no longer having serious weaknesses. Where a monitoring inspection identifies significant concerns about aspects of the school's performance that were not identified in the previous section 5 inspection or any earlier monitoring inspections, these must be considered by inspectors and will affect the judgement about the progress made by the school.

189. When the serious weaknesses designation is removed, whether through a section 8 deemed section 5 inspection or when the next section 5 inspection takes place, the lead inspector must, on the final day of the inspection, notify our relevant regional duty desk.

190. Where the section 5 inspection team has reached the judgement that the school no longer has serious weaknesses, the oral feedback and written report must include the formal statement that:

> " 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."

191. The introduction to the report should explain why the school was inspected. For example:

> " When xx school was inspected in xx 20xx, it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Subsequently, the school was inspected on xxx occasions. At the last monitoring inspection, leaders and managers were judged to be taking/not taking effective action."

After the inspection

Feedback at the end of the monitoring inspection(s)

192. The school will receive verbal feedback at the end of each monitoring inspection on the fitness for purpose of the statement of action and of the school's improvement plan. Feedback at the end of any monitoring inspections must:

- report the range of evidence gathered
- include the judgement made about the effectiveness of actions towards the removal of serious weaknesses, describing the progress made against the areas for improvement identified during the section 5 inspection that deemed the school to have serious weaknesses
- comment on the impact of any support on school improvement
- cover any specific issues identified by the lead inspector in the pre-inspection preparation and during the inspection
- make clear that the text of the report may differ from the verbal feedback, but that the judgements will not change unless quality assurance deems that appropriate

193. The lead inspector should identify additional priorities only where they are essential to the school's further development. Progress against these priorities has to be evaluated at the next monitoring inspection and reported in the monitoring report. They are not to be added to the list of judgements to be made as set out in the annex to the covering letter. The priorities should help the school focus on what needs to be done next to improve the quality of education.

The monitoring inspection letter and report

194. For all monitoring inspections, the school will receive a brief covering letter with the judgements included and a monitoring report, both of which will be published on the Ofsted website. The first and possibly the second monitoring letter will need to comment on the fitness for purpose of the statement of action and of the school's improvement plan.

195. When a monitoring inspection focuses on only one or two aspects of provision, this

should be clearly explained in the evidence section.

196. The monitoring letter and report must include:

- a summary of the evidence gathered by inspectors
- a brief summary of any significant changes to the context of the school
- a judgement about the effectiveness of actions towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation
- a judgement about the effectiveness of leadership and management, with specific reference to the impact that governors'/trustees' actions are having on improvements
- an evaluation of whether school leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education, and particularly whether they are building or adopting an effective curriculum
- brief bullet points evaluating the progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement, and brief bullet points setting out:
  - strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement
  - weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement
- reference to the impact of any support provided to the school

Guidance for inspecting schools that are subject to special measures

Introduction

197. Schools are made subject to special measures under section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, where the Chief Inspector is of the opinion that:

> " The school 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."

198. Schools that are subject to special measures are not required to prepare a separate action plan. These schools should review their existing plans to tackle the areas for improvement identified by the section 5 inspection.

199. The local authority, the proprietor or the trust board must submit a statement of action to HMCI within 10 working days of the school receiving the section 5 inspection report.[footnote 31] An inspector will review the statement of action. Inspectors will provide initial feedback in writing on the fitness for purpose of the statement within 10 working days of receiving the statement. If the statement of action is judged to be not fit for purpose, the local authority, proprietor or trust will be informed and asked to address the weaknesses urgently. The revised version is resubmitted to Ofsted. An inspector will re-evaluate the revised statement of action and confirm its fitness for purpose.

The monitoring inspections

200. Inspectors will usually carry out the first monitoring inspection within 3 to 9 months of the publication of the section 5 inspection report.

201. A school may receive up to 5 monitoring inspections over the 30 months following the publication of the section 5 inspection report that placed it in special measures. The focus will be on getting schools out of a category of concern and the expectation is for schools subject to special measures to improve within 18 to 24 months. Re-inspecting such schools at 30 months should be the exception.

202. At the end of a monitoring inspection, inspectors will consider whether the school has made sufficient progress and no longer requires special measures. Where this is the case, the section 8 inspection will be deemed a section 5 inspection. All the

judgements required by the section 5 school inspection handbook will be made and a full inspection report produced.

203. If, after a programme of monitoring lasting up to 30 months, a school continues to be subject to special measures, it must be re-inspected under section 5.

During the inspection

204. During the monitoring inspections, inspectors are required to evaluate the school's progress towards the removal of special measures. Inspectors will make an overarching judgement on whether:

- leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures

or

- leaders and managers are not taking effective action towards the removal of special measures

205. This judgement will be based on the school's progress towards coming out of its category of concern. Although generally this will be informed by the areas for improvement identified by the section 5 inspection, other factors that arise during the monitoring period must not be ignored.

206. The crucial factor is the anticipated timescale for the removal of special measures given the current rate of improvement. A school that is taking effective action will be on course to have special measures removed within 18 to 24 months of the monitoring period following publication of the inspection report that placed the school in special measures. A school that is not taking effective action will be likely to continue to require special measures when the section 5 re-inspection takes place.

207. At the final meeting, the inspection team must:

- judge the progress that the school is making towards the removal of special measures
- decide whether the school should be permitted to appoint NQTs or, in the case of academies, make appropriate recommendations regarding such appointments

Evaluating support

208. During the first monitoring inspection, inspectors will meet with the headteacher, the CEO/their delegate or equivalent in a MAT, the chair of the governing body/board of trustees and as many governors/trustees as possible. Inspectors will look for evidence of how well relevant leaders and those responsible for governance are implementing the statement of action and the school's improvement plan.

209. On subsequent inspections, inspectors will also report on the impact of the trust's support for the school, along with any other external support and challenge on school improvement.

210. At the conclusion of each monitoring inspection, inspectors should consider whether the school continues to require special measures.

211. Whatever the outcome, during the feedback at the end of the inspection inspectors should explain clearly the reasons for the decision to remove or not to remove the special measures judgement.

212. The judgement that special measures are no longer required may involve reference to:

- evidence from previous monitoring inspections
- the best interests of the pupils. This is paramount
- the school's ability to demonstrate that it meets the needs of all pupils and has the capacity for sustained improvement. This determines the timing of removal of special measures
- the extent to which capacity for sustained improvement has been demonstrated by leaders and managers at all levels, rather than through an over-reliance on external support or on one or two individuals in the school
- the overall rate of improvement. Some schools may not be making enough progress for the removal of special measures before the re-inspection

213. When special measures are removed, inspectors must, on the final day of the inspection, notify the relevant Ofsted regional duty desk to log the necessary details.

After the inspection

Feedback at the end of the monitoring inspection

214. At the end of the first monitoring inspection, inspectors will provide oral feedback and make clear whether the judgement or recommendation about the appointment of NQTs should remain.

215. At the end of each monitoring inspection, oral feedback must include the judgement made about the effectiveness of actions and the progress towards the removal of special measures, describing the progress made against the area(s) for improvement that formed the focus for each monitoring inspection.

216. Inspectors should identify additional priorities only where they are essential to the school's further development. Progress against these priorities has to be evaluated and reported on at the next monitoring inspection. They are not to be added to the list of judgements to be made as set out in the report. Any new priorities should help the school focus on what needs to be done next to improve the quality of education.

217. Where the inspection team has reached the judgement that special measures are no longer required, the oral feedback and written report should include the formal statement that:

> " 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."

218. This judgement is not subject to moderation. However, as with all inspections, it should remain confidential until the final report is sent to the school. Where special measures are removed, a full section 5 report must be written.

219. The monitoring letter and report for each of the monitoring inspections must include:

- the judgement about the effectiveness of actions towards the removal of special measures
- a judgement about whether the school should be permitted to employ NQTs
- a brief summary of any significant changes to the context of the school
- an evaluation of the progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement and brief bullet points setting out:
  - strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement
  - weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement
- where applicable, a judgement on the impact of any support provided to the school

220. In addition to the above, the monitoring letter and report for the first monitoring inspection must include:

- a judgement on the fitness for purpose of the statement of action and of the school's improvement plan
- an evaluation of whether school leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education, and particularly whether they are building or adopting an effective curriculum
- when a monitoring inspection focuses on only one or two aspects of provision, this should be clearly explained in the evidence section

221. Progress made on additional priorities for further improvement, identified in previous monitoring inspections, should be reported in the monitoring report. They should not be added as bullet points alongside the original areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection.

222. When it is judged that the school no longer requires special measures, the section 8 monitoring inspection is deemed to be a section 5 inspection. A full inspection report must be written and published in accordance with the section 5 school inspection handbook.

223. The school details page of the report must include the statement:

> " This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act."

224. The introduction to the report should explain why the school was inspected. For example:

> " When xxx School was inspected in xx 20xx, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on xxx occasions. At the previous monitoring inspection, leaders and managers were judged to be taking/not to be taking effective action towards the removal of special measures."

225. A report that removes special measures should include the following statement in

accordance with the section 5 report template guidance:

> “ 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.”

Inspections with no formal designation

226. Under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 (the Act), Ofsted can carry out inspections to follow up concerns about schools that are not in a category of concern but that have been brought to our attention through, for example, a qualifying complaint made to us or by other means.

227. This part of the section 8 handbook provides guidance for school inspections with a specific focus. This could include a focus on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements and/or aspects of:

- quality of education (or, for example, a subject survey visit examining a particular subject through the lens of quality of education)
- personal development
- behaviour and attitudes
- leadership and management (including governance)

228. Inspectors will follow this guidance where Ofsted has concerns that the safety of pupils and/or staff is at risk or where information suggests that there has been a serious breakdown in leadership and management or a decline in standards. This might be raised internally through our risk assessment process, or externally through a complaint or other information we receive. Where we receive information about a school that causes us concern, we will weigh this carefully against all other data and information we hold before making a decision on whether to inspect the school under ‘no formal designation’ procedures. The decision on whether to inspect the school is made by the relevant Ofsted regional director. Where an inspection takes place as a result of a qualifying complaint, inspectors must also take account of guidance issued by the national complaints team.[footnote 32]

229. These inspections are selective and focus sharply on the issues raised that caused the school to be inspected. As a result, inspectors should not make judgements on the overall effectiveness of the school or any of the key judgements within the EIF. Inspection findings must be made based on the areas of focus. Where the inspection focus is on the school’s safeguarding arrangements, inspectors will take account of the guidance on inspecting safeguarding.

230. It is important to note that those leading, managing and governing a school are responsible for the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. Governors in particular must ensure that the school’s arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Concerns about safeguarding may raise wider questions about the effectiveness of leadership and management and governors’ ability to hold the school to account. Therefore, in some cases, inspections with no formal designation will focus on both elements and may be expanded as appropriate. It is the responsibility of the lead inspector, using their professional judgement, to determine the precise focus of the inspection and make sure that leaders are fully aware of this when the inspection begins. An inspection may begin with a specific focus on safeguarding, but its scope may be widened to cover leadership and management or other aspects of the provision where appropriate.

231. If, during the inspection, inspectors are sufficiently concerned about the overall standard of education provided by the school, the inspection may, under section 9 of the Act, be treated as (‘deemed’) a section 5 inspection. In these cases, all the judgements required by the full evaluation schedule will be made and a section 5 inspection report produced and published.

Before the inspection

Staffing and scheduling the inspection

232. These inspections are normally led by an HMI, regardless of the size of the school. However, more inspectors may be required depending on the complexity of the issues that were brought to Ofsted’s attention and that caused the school to be inspected. The inspection will normally last for 2 days. However, it may in some instances be shorter or longer, depending on the circumstances of the school and the nature of the concerns that led to the inspection.

233. Inspections being carried out as a result of a qualifying complaint made to Ofsted will normally be led by an HMI.

234. Inspections that arise from information received by Ofsted should take place as soon as is practicable after the decision to inspect has taken place. The exact timing is, however, at the discretion of the relevant regional director. Inspections arising from our risk assessment process will take place throughout the year.

Notification

235. The notice given to the school of the inspection will be half a day, the same as that for section 5 inspections. However, Ofsted may carry out the inspection without notice. Where this is the case, the HMI will normally telephone the school about 15 minutes before arriving on site.

236. Where notice of inspection is given, the HMI will make the initial telephone call to the school to inform them that an inspection will take place. If required, the HMI may arrange a time for a second longer telephone conversation with the headteacher to discuss the inspection. The HMI will make the purpose of the inspection clear during the initial telephone call with the headteacher. If the inspection is carried out without notice, the HMI must make the focus of the inspection and the reasons that led to it clear to the headteacher at the earliest opportunity after she or he arrives at the school.

237. If the school is being inspected because of a qualifying complaint made to Ofsted about the school under section 11A of the Act, the HMI will inform the school of this, as well as that, as a result of the wider issues raised by the complaint, a decision has been taken to inspect the school.

238. The HMI will explain that the inspection will focus on the wider issues raised by the complaint and will not investigate the complaint itself. If the complainant has requested confidentiality, the HMI must take all practicable steps to ensure that the complainant's identity is not disclosed to the school. At times, the nature of the complaint may mean that the headteacher is able to discern the identity of the complainant. Regardless, HMI should not confirm the complainant's identity.

239. The headteacher, at the end of the telephone conversation, should be in a position to understand the reasons for, and the purpose and focus of, the inspection. There is no mandatory requirement for a school to inform parents about the inspection. The HMI should invite the school to inform parents so that there is an opportunity for parents to contribute their views about the school through Ofsted Parent View.

240. Following the pre-inspection telephone conversation, Ofsted will confirm the arrangements for the inspection by sending a notification letter to the school. Where no prior notice of the inspection is given, formal notification of the inspection by Ofsted will be provided to the school following the arrival of the inspector/s.

241. Schools are not required to provide copies of any information in advance of the inspection, but if these are offered, the HMI should accept them.

Preparing for the inspection

242. The HMI must check the provider information portal (PIP) for information relevant to the inspection. The HMI will brief any team inspectors about the inspection and ensure that the key lines of enquiry and key issues to pursue are understood. Where an inspection is carried out as a result of issues raised in a qualifying complaint made to Ofsted, inspectors must not investigate the complaint itself during the inspection or seek parents' views on the complaint itself. It is the whole-school issues raised in the complaint that will be followed up during inspection.

243. To prepare for the inspection, inspectors will review:

- copies of any qualifying complaint(s) received, other information on the PIP and any response letters
- issues raised by the investigation of any qualifying complaints[footnote 33] about the school
- the previous section 5 inspection report, where one exists, and any section 8 reports from, for example, surveys or monitoring inspections
- Ofsted's IDSR
- information from the pre-inspection telephone conversation with the headteacher
- any documentation emailed to the HMI in advance of the inspection, as agreed between the headteacher and the HMI

During the inspection

Engagement with the school's senior leadership team

244. The meeting at the start of the inspection may or may not involve the whole of the school's senior leadership team. The headteacher may be of the view that a meeting with her or him alone, or with one or two senior leaders, will be sufficient to limit any potential interruption to the school's normal routines.

245. The meeting with school leaders at the start of the inspection will cover pertinent issues about the school and the focus of the inspection. It must give the headteacher and others the opportunity to present an oral summary evaluation of the school's position on the issues, and identify where evidence may be found.

Evidence gathering during the inspection

246. The kinds of activities carried out during these inspections are no different to section 5 inspections. However, where the focus of the inspection is on the school's safeguarding arrangements, activities should focus on safeguarding issues, including but not exclusively:

- a review of the single central record and safeguarding policy
- a review of referrals made to the designated person for safeguarding in the school and those that were subsequently referred to the designated officer, and their resolution
- a review of records of staff training on child protection and the prevention of radicalisation and extremism
- a review of the school's procedures for dealing with relevant staffing issues, for example suspensions or disciplinary investigations/actions over issues of child protection and/or safety. This is not a review of individual cases, but of school procedures in dealing with such issues
- discussions with pupils and staff
- a check of the school's internet safety procedures
- a review of the personal, social and health education curriculum and how it links to issues of safety and pupils' welfare
- a review of persistent absence cases and exclusions data
- consideration of the views of parents and carers through Ofsted Parent View and, where practicable, through discussions/meetings with parents or groups of parents during the inspection
- any relevant issues that appear to be of greatest concern from pre-inspection evidence
- any other issues that affect care, safety or child protection and that do not appear to have been tackled fully
- any issues that relate to poor pupil behaviour

247. The exact structure of the day will depend on the issues to be followed up and is likely to be drawn from the sources of evidence described in the school inspection handbook.

248. During the inspection, the HMI will maintain an ongoing dialogue with the headteacher and senior managers. It is especially important to make sure that the headteacher and senior managers understand any emerging issues. The final feedback to the school, especially when it is challenging, should not be a surprise to the headteacher and senior leaders.

249. Inspectors should not make judgements on the overall effectiveness of the school or any of the key judgements within the EIF; this is only necessary for section 5 inspections. If there are weaknesses in a specific area, inspectors may make specific recommendations about what the school needs to do to tackle the weaknesses in that area.

250. If, however, inspectors have sufficient evidence that some of the core reporting areas for judging a school under section 5 have declined significantly, then they will need to consider whether the effectiveness of the provision as a whole has declined. In such circumstances, it may be necessary for the inspection to be deemed a section 5 inspection, under section 9 of the Act. In these cases, all the judgements required by the evaluation schedule will be made and a section 5 inspection report published.

251. Alternatively, where evidence prompts concerns that overall standards may no longer be as last reported under section 5, but where no serious concerns have been identified, the lead inspector may recommend to the relevant regional director that the next section 5 inspection be brought forward. The timing of any such inspection should not be indicated to the school. If the inspection raises concerns, these concerns should

be reported at the feedback meeting.

252. Where safeguarding is a focus for the inspection or where it becomes a focus during the course the inspection, the lead inspector, having reviewed all the evidence gathered during the inspection, will report in the letter whether safeguarding is effective.

253. If there are relatively minor shortcomings in a school's procedures and the school is able to resolve them on the day of the inspection, then inspectors can make an assessment that safeguarding is effective. If safeguarding is not effective and/or if pupils are considered to be at risk, the lead inspector will convert the inspection to a section 5 inspection.

At the end of the inspection

Final feedback

254. The HMI and headteacher should discuss which other members of staff, if any, will attend the feedback session, especially if the feedback is likely to be challenging or is likely to raise sensitive issues.

255. The oral feedback at the end of the inspection, typically towards the end of the second day of a 2-day inspection, must:

- report the extent of the evidence base
- cover the issues brought to Ofsted's attention that caused the school to be inspected
- be clear about whether the school's safeguarding arrangements are effective
- be clear about the findings being made on the specific areas of focus for the inspection
- identify the school's areas of strength and any aspects that the school needs to improve in relation to safeguarding and child protection, and the specific areas of focus for the inspection
- make clear that the text of the report may differ from the oral feedback

Unannounced behaviour inspections

256. Schools will be selected for a section 8 unannounced behaviour inspection because Ofsted has cause for concern about behaviour and attitudes. Concerns may arise from previous inspection reports, parents' views, complaints, information from the local authority or data about exclusions or attendance.

257. The inspection will focus on the factors that research and inspection evidence indicates contribute most strongly to pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes. 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 to minimise disruption
- clear and effective behaviour and attendance policies with clearly defined consequences that are applied consistently and fairly by all staff
- 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 face-to-face – are not accepted and are dealt with quickly, consistently and effectively whenever they occur

258. The inspection will make a judgement on the effectiveness of the actions taken by leaders and managers, including governors, since the previous inspection (where applicable) to improve behaviour. This will include evaluating how well leaders are securing consistently positive attitudes to learning or maintaining previously high standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning.

259. If the evidence gathered and scrutinised during the inspection indicates that

behaviour, welfare and safety or any other aspects of the school may be inadequate, and pupils are at risk of harm, the lead inspector may, under section 9 of the Act, deem the inspection as a section 5 inspection. If the inspection converts to a section 5 inspection, all of the judgements required by the full evaluation schedule will be made and a section 5 inspection report will be produced and published. In such cases, the lead inspector must contact the regional duty desk to confirm that they are deeming the inspection a section 5 inspection.

260. A monitoring report should be written unless the relevant regional director confirms that the section 8 is deemed a section 5 inspection.

Before the inspection

Staffing and scheduling the inspection

261. Unannounced behaviour inspections will usually be carried out by one inspector for one day. These inspections may be led by HMI or by OIs.

Notification

262. The inspector will contact the school 15 minutes before arriving to announce the inspection to the headteacher or other senior member of staff if the headteacher is unavailable. This notification call is simply to inform the school that the inspection is about to begin and the lead inspector will leave all other arrangements until they arrive at the school.

263. If no one from the school answers the telephone, inspectors will arrive at the school and announce the inspection on arrival.

264. Inspections should begin at around 8.15am and not before 8am.

265. On arrival, the lead inspector will begin their observation of the start of the school day, keeping the initial meeting with the headteacher brief. The lead inspector will agree with the headteacher a time to meet after observing the start of the school day.

266. If the school is being inspected as a result of a qualifying complaint about the school, the lead inspector should inform the headteacher in line with the guidance in paragraphs 226 to 255.

Preparing for the inspection

267. The lead inspector will prepare for the inspection by:

- reading and recording any comments about behaviour and attendance in the school's latest section 5 inspection report and any section 8 inspection reports, for example from survey visits
- evaluating the school's behaviour policy, which should be available on the school's website
- identifying, from the previous section 5 report, whether the school has any pupils who attend alternative provision, and noting any comments about how well these pupils are progressing and behaving
- analysing the most up-to-date information about permanent and fixed-term exclusions available in the IDSR, paying particular attention to the repeated use of fixed-term exclusions and to any groups that are excluded disproportionately[footnote 34]
- analysing the most up-to-date information about overall and persistent absence available in the IDSR, again paying particular attention to groups of pupils[footnote 34]
- checking Ofsted's PIP for information about any complaints about the school

268. From their initial analysis, the lead inspector will arrive at key lines of enquiry and key issues that will be shared with the headteacher and senior leaders at a brief meeting once the inspection begins. The key issues and lines of enquiry that are the focus of the inspection may change as evidence is gathered during the inspection.

During the inspection

269. The majority of the inspection activity must focus on observing short parts of lessons and observing informal times of the school day in order to evaluate pupils' behaviour and attitudes. In addition, inspectors will be guided by the Annex, which sets out in more detail the types of activities that inspectors will typically carry out during

the inspection.

270. The lead inspector will meet with senior staff briefly to inform them of the key issues and lines of enquiry from pre-inspection analysis and then arrange a further meeting to discuss emerging findings and follow up any issues that arise during the day. This meeting must not overlap with lunchtime periods, break times or with the time pupils leave the school, as these times of the day must be observed. The lead inspector may also request that a senior member of staff be present during the scrutiny of documentation in order to answer questions as they arise.

271. As it is important that the lead inspector sees pupils' typical behaviour throughout the day, the lead inspector will not jointly observe short extracts or whole classes with the headteacher, senior leaders or staff.

272. To gather and evaluate evidence about the impact of actions taken by leaders and managers, including governors, to improve behaviour, inspectors will evaluate pupils' behaviour, the management of behaviour and the culture of the school.

273. Inspectors will carry out evidence-gathering activities that include, but are not limited to:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons (including, where relevant, with new, temporary or less experienced teachers). A particular focus will be placed on low-level disruption, for example pupils:
  - calling out without permission
  - being late to lessons or slow to start work or follow instructions
  - showing a lack of respect for each other and staff
  - not bringing the right equipment
  - chatting when they are supposed to be working or listening to the teacher
  - using mobile devices inappropriately in lessons
  - wasting time, through teachers having to deal with inappropriate uniform
  - packing up well before the end of the lesson
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussions with pupils during break times and lunchtimes, arriving and leaving the school
- observation of any system of 'internal exclusion' that the school uses to manage behaviour
- at least one planned discussion with a group of pupils whose behaviour the school has helped to improve over time
- scrutiny of documentary evidence[footnote 35]
- discussions with leaders and staff
- gathering evidence about the typical behaviour of pupils who are not in the school on the day of the inspection
- visiting any off-site unit that the schools runs for pupils whose behaviour is poor, or who have low attendance

274. Inspectors must take account of the following:

- pupils' attitudes to learning and their conduct in lessons
- pupils' conduct around the school, including the way in which they speak to each other and to staff
- how well leaders and staff model good behaviour to pupils
- how well leaders and managers model good behaviour management techniques to staff
- the effectiveness of the management of pupils' behaviour, including how well leaders, managers and governors analyse and use documentary evidence to improve the way behaviour is managed
- if the school uses fixed-term or internal exclusion, the impact of this on improving behaviour

- pupils' views about behaviour and all types of bullying (these views must be gathered from a range of pupils at informal times, not just from a formal discussion)
- any specific issues raised in the previous inspection report about pupils' behaviour and whether these have been tackled effectively and are showing clear and sustainable signs of improvement

Judgement

275. Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of the actions taken by leaders and managers, including governors, since the previous inspection, to improve behaviour. This includes securing consistently positive attitudes to learning, or maintaining previously high standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning.

276. The inspection report will state one of the following:

- For schools where behaviour was judged to require improvement at their previous section 5 inspection:

" Leaders and managers have/have not taken effective action to improve behaviour and secure consistently positive attitudes to learning."

- For schools where behaviour was judged to be good or outstanding at their previous section 5 inspection:

" Leaders and managers have/have not taken effective action to maintain the high standards of behaviour and attitudes identified at the school's previous inspection."

277. The monitoring report should cover the following, with specific examples:

- pupils' conduct around the school during the inspection, including the way in which they move around the school, speak to each other and to staff, conform with the school's dress code; and pupils' typical conduct around the school, evidenced by pupils' views, staff's views, and the school's documentary evidence
- pupils' attitudes to learning during the lessons observed and pupils' typical attitudes to learning, evidenced by pupils' views, staff's views and the school's documentary evidence
- how well pupils' behaviour is managed by leaders and staff on a day-to-day basis
- the extent to which the school's culture promotes and supports good behaviour, including:
  - the way in which staff speak to pupils and to parents and carers
  - how consistently staff reinforce the school's expectations of pupils' behaviour
  - the way in which the headteacher and other leaders model the behaviour that is expected of all staff
  - the way in which the headteacher and other leaders support staff to promote good behaviour

278. The monitoring report will include recommendations that set out what the school needs to do to improve the way it manages pupils' behaviour. How well the school has addressed these recommendations will be followed up during the school's next inspection.

At the end of the inspection

Final feedback

279. Feedback should be offered at the end of the day.[footnote 36] Normally, the final feedback meeting will be attended by:

- the headteacher/principal
- other senior staff as appropriate
- the chair of the school's governing board/academy board of trustees and as many governors/trustees as possible
- in an academy that is part of a MAT, the CEO/their delegate or equivalent
- a representative from the local authority (for maintained schools) or academy sponsor

Annex – Inspection activities relating to behaviour

Observations of behaviour and informal discussions with pupils

1. Inspectors must observe behaviour at the following times:

- pupils' arrival at school
- in lessons
- in between lessons
- break-time
- lunchtime
- as pupils leave the school

2. During these times, inspectors should talk to pupils about behaviour, their welfare and their safety.

Pupils' arrival at school

3. Inspectors will:

- observe interactions between pupils, for example whether they are pleasant and relaxed or aggressive. Consider whether different groups of pupils look comfortable together and whether there are any tensions
- ask different pupils about their journey to and from school, for example how safe they feel; whether they encounter any bullying during that time; what they would do to seek help from the school if they did
- evaluate whether there are sufficient numbers of staff on duty. Consider where staff are situated and whether they are actively supervising
- observe interactions between staff and parents, and between staff and pupils, for example how staff greet pupils and speak to them and whether this provides a good role model
- consider pupils' vulnerability in the playground, for example whether pupils have to wait for a long time before entering the school, whether they are in full view of the school or whether there are areas where pupils might be vulnerable
- in special schools and PRUs, observe pupils as they get out of taxis and minibuses and ask them about their journey. Consider aspects of safety, such as supervision and bullying
- if parents and carers are available, ask them their views about behaviour and safety
- consider how well staff uphold the school's expectations, for example by reminding pupils about how they should treat each other in the playground, move around the school and make sure their uniform is correct
- consider whether pupils are dressed according to the school's uniform or dress code

Pupils' behaviour between lessons and on arrival at lessons

4. Inspectors will:

- consider what interactions are like between pupils, and between staff and pupils, as pupils move from one lesson to the next, for example whether staff remind pupils of expectations, convey a sense of urgency in getting to the next lesson promptly and greet them as they arrive
- evaluate the extent to which pupils are aware of and respect each other's physical space
- consider how well staff model the behaviour expected from pupils
- consider how promptly and calmly pupils enter classrooms and how quickly they respond to staff's instructions

Pupils' behaviour at break time

5. Inspectors will:

- consider how pupils are grouped, and observe whether there are any tensions or if certain pupils are excluded
- seek pupils' views about bullying, for example whether they experience bullying, what they do to seek help, how they feel about break-times, whether there are any 'no go areas' for different year groups. Include any pupils who are by themselves
- evaluate the structure of break-times and how well the structure supports good behaviour. In primary and special schools, consider how well pupils are being taught to play and interact well together. In secondary schools, consider whether the outdoor space allows all groups to be safe

- go to the far reaches of the school site to consider how well supervised these are and whether there are any spaces where bullying could easily occur
- evaluate the appropriateness of the language pupils use towards each other, for example whether it is respectful or includes derogatory language, and evaluate how well staff challenge such language if they hear it[footnote 37]
- consider behaviour in and around the toilets, especially in secondary schools, and how well supervised they are

Pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes

6. Inspectors will:

- observe the same aspects as for break-times, such as interactions, supervision, safety and organisation, and check that pupils have an appropriate place to eat their lunch if they bring their own
- evaluate how well pupils conduct themselves in the dining room and how well staff model desired behaviours to the pupils
- establish whether pupils who are eligible for free school meals have a different payment system to others and whether this marks them out as different
- ask the lunchtime staff about bullying, for example what they see and how they help to prevent it
- ask the lunchtime staff about behaviour in general: what they see and how pupils respond to them, for example when lunchtime staff ask pupils to pick up litter or clear their table

Observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons

7. Inspectors should carry out short visits to a range of lessons. Observations should include some starts and ends of lessons in order to evaluate how well teachers manage transition between lessons, how quickly pupils settle, and whether pupils remain focused to the end of lessons.

8. Evaluations should include consideration of the following:

- whether pupils arrive promptly at lessons and with the equipment they need for the lesson
- how promptly pupils respond to staff's instructions
- how clear the school's expectations of behaviour are, for example through classroom displays
- how well teachers use the school's behaviour management system, including issuing rewards as well as sanctions if these are part of the procedures, and how effective this system is in supporting staff to manage behaviour and helping pupils to behave well
- how well pupils respond to teaching assistants and other support staff
- how well pupils interact with each other, and whether they work cooperatively in groups or pairs as required
- whether pupils are supportive of each other's learning, for example not making derogatory comments about other pupils' answers to questions
- how well staff help pupils to interact positively with each other, for example whether they model appropriate ways to talk to other people, tolerate or ignore put-downs or tackle them, and are explicit about the need to respect others

9. Inspectors should ask pupils questions about typical behaviour in lessons, if it is possible to do so without disturbing learning.

Observation of 'internal exclusion' room, 'remove room' or equivalent

10. If the school uses this type of provision, inspectors should visit this during lesson time to evaluate:

- leaders' intended purpose for the room
- the appropriateness of the room as a place for pupils to learn, considering pupils' age and particular needs
- pupils' behaviour while in the room
- the use of the room, for example how many pupils are present and whether this is typical (through scrutiny of records)
- how well the room is used to improve behaviour, for example whether there is any follow-up action after the pupil has attended the room
- whether the school informs and involves parents and carers when their child has been placed in the room
- whether any patterns shown by the room's use are used to provide appropriate support and challenge to staff

Discussions with pupils

11. Inspectors should hold at least one discussion about behaviour and safety with a group of pupils that the school has worked with to improve their behaviour. These pupils might include those who:

- have previously been excluded more than once
- attend some alternative provision
- have moved from another school on a managed move
- were previously involved in bullying other pupils
- were previously disruptive in lessons but are now 'back on track'

12. During the discussions, inspectors should explore pupils' views about:

- what behaviour is typically like in school and in their lessons
- variations in behaviour from lesson to lesson
- behaviour outside lessons
- the school's reward and sanction system, including what difference this has made to their behaviour
- if they or any of their friends attend an alternative provision for part of the week, why they were selected and how it has helped them
- their understanding of the school's stance on bullying, including what happens if someone bullies or is bullied
- how the school has helped them to improve their behaviour
- how the school is helping them to maintain the improvements
- how well the school has worked with their parents or carers to lead to these improvements
- how often and where they hear derogatory language – including homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, racist, sexist or discriminatory language – and the school's response to this

Scrutiny of documentary evidence

13. Inspectors should scrutinise the school's records of behaviour and the school's analysis of behaviour in order to evaluate how well leaders and managers analyse documentary evidence and then use it to improve the way in which behaviour is managed.

14. Documents should include records and analysis of:

- bullying incidents
- pupils being removed from lessons
- permanent, fixed-term and internal exclusion
- pupils leaving the school roll
- rewards and sanctions, including how senior leaders check that rewards and sanctions are used consistently by all staff

15. Inspectors should consider any patterns shown by such records and analysis, for example pupils being removed more from certain lessons or at a particular time of day, pupils with SEND or pupils from a particular year group or ethnic group receiving more sanctions than others do.

16. Inspectors should use the school's documentation and its analysis to inform their judgements about typical behaviour around the school and in lessons.

Discussion with staff and leaders

17. Inspectors should talk briefly to staff when appropriate, including NQTs where applicable, support staff, cover supervisors, lunchtime supervisors and other non-teaching staff, for example when they are on duty in the playground or in the corridors, to ascertain their views on behaviour. Inspectors must hold a discussion with senior leaders towards the end of the day in order to follow up any issues that have arisen and to discuss leaders' evaluation of behaviour. This discussion should include a focus on how new staff and inexperienced staff are informed of the school's expectations and

how they are supported in the management of behaviour.

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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. As set out, for example, in a funding agreement. ↩
4. The term 'report' is used to describe the formal published outcome of the inspection. For section 8 inspections, except where the inspection is deemed to be a section 5 inspection, the report will take the form of a letter. ↩
5. See the Education Act 2005, Section 13. ↩
6. In certain circumstances, any school may be selected for a section 8 'no formal designation' or section 5 inspection rather than a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school. This might arise if, for example, concerns are raised by a qualifying complaint about the school. A school may be subject to a section 5 inspection if it has undergone significant change, such as in its age range, or where the quality of provision may have deteriorated significantly. ↩
7. Academy converter schools are schools that have been approved by the Secretary of State to convert to become an academy. ↩
8. The timeframe is within 5 school years from the end of the school year in which the previous section 5 inspection (or the previous section 8 inspection) took place. This means that, for a small number of schools, the follow-on section 5 inspection may be carried out sooner than the usual 1 to 2 years after the inspection has taken place, in order to comply with the prescribed interval for section 5 inspections (The Education (School Inspection) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015). See also the section below, 'Outstanding schools that were formerly exempt from routine inspections'. ↩
9. In accordance with the requirements of The Education (School Inspection) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015, in order for the inspection to be a 'relevant inspection' under the regulations, it must be conducted for the purpose of determining that the school remains good or outstanding, and having been so conducted, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is satisfied that the evidence does not suggest that the school would not achieve such a grade if a section 5 inspection were carried out. ↩
10. This statement should not be taken to imply that inspectors are expected to gather a full range of evidence in a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school. They are not. However, if they see evidence of this nature then they should convert the inspection. ↩
11. Section 9 of the Education Act 2005 states that these section 8 inspections can be treated as section 5 inspections. ↩
12. For 1-day inspections, questionnaires should be completed by 11am on the day of inspection. ↩
13. This must be checked with the headteacher as part of the call. Where 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. ↩
14. Further internal guidance is available to inspectors on obtaining information on complaints in preparation for inspections. ↩
15. The provider information portal (PIP) provides a high-level view for Ofsted inspectors of information about providers that Ofsted inspects and regulates. ↩
16. See warning notices for academies. Inspectors should also note that they can locate individual warning notices by carrying out a search on GOV.UK by typing the name of the academy followed by the words 'warning notice' into the search facility. ↩
17. See Ofsted's framework, evaluation criteria and inspector guidance for the inspections of local authority children's services. ↩
18. See Area SEND inspection: guidance for inspectors. ↩
19. 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. ↩
20. Headteachers of schools judged to require improvement who may have concerns about the scheduling of their school's next section 5 inspection may write to the

relevant Ofsted regional director to set out the context of their school's present position. ↩

21. See further guidance for education and social care inspectors on carrying out integrated monitoring inspections. ↩
22. For the second and any subsequent monitoring inspection, HMI will normally inform the school the day before the visit. ↩
23. In larger MATs that have regional accountability structures, it may be appropriate to speak to other relevant intermediate leaders or managers in the delegated structure. ↩
24. The lead inspector may need to explain to the governing board and the local authority/the proprietor/the trust that the monitoring inspection is being carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. ↩
25. A section 8 inspection may be treated as if it were an inspection under section 5, using Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's discretionary power under section 9 of the Education Act 2005. ↩
26. See our policy statement about the inspection of new schools. ↩
27. In larger MATs that have regional accountability structures, it may be appropriate to speak to other relevant intermediate leaders or managers in the delegated structure. ↩
28. The lead inspector may need to explain to the governing board and the local authority/ the proprietor/the trust that the monitoring inspection is being carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. ↩
29. See the Education Act 2005, section 44(2). ↩
30. See sections 15(2)(d) and 15(2)(e) of the Education Act 2005; sections 17(1A)(d) and 17(3)(a) of the Education Act 2005 and schedule 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Statements of action must be sent to QALAstatementsofaction@ofsted.gov.uk. ↩
31. See sections 15(2)(d) and 15(2)(e) of the Education Act 2005; sections 17(1A)(d) and 17(3)(a) of the Education Act 2005 and schedule 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. Statements of action must be sent to QALAstatementsofaction@ofsted.gov.uk. ↩
32. Ofsted does not have the power to investigate individual complaints or incidents of a safeguarding and/or child protection nature. However, such matters may raise whole-school issues, for example about the school's arrangements to keep pupils safe. It is the whole-school issues that will be the focus of these inspections. ↩
33. Under section 11A-C of the Education Act 2005, Ofsted has specific powers to investigate certain complaints known as qualifying complaints. ↩
34. Note: for different groups of pupils, such as pupils with SEND, inspectors must compare the school's figure for that group to the national figure for all pupils, not the national figure for the group. ↩ ↩2
35. This should include records and analysis of bullying incidents, pupils being removed from lessons, the use of rewards and sanctions, exclusion and 'internal exclusion'. ↩
36. The time should be arranged according to when pupils leave the school – this aspect of the school day should be observed so inspectors need to plan accordingly. ↩
37. For example, racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, or sexual language, or language that is derogatory about people with SEND or any other group, or aggressive personal comments about physical appearance or ability. ↩

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