



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

# Draft Area Inspection Framework For consultation

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Published January 2003

A supplement to the *Common Inspection Framework*

HMI 1366



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Document reference number: HMI 1366

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## Introduction

1. This *Area Inspection Framework* (the framework) is effective from 1 September 2003 and meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 as amended by the Education Act 2002 (the Act). It sets out principles that apply to the inspections of the provision of non-higher education and training made by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), local education authorities (LEAs) and their partners within an area. Inspections are carried out under section 65 of the Learning and Skills Act by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI).
2. Under section 178(3) of the Education Act 2002, the extension of the range of area inspections to 14–19 commences with effect from January 2003. Thereafter, the duty in section 65(1) of Learning and Skills Act 2000 as amended by section 178(3) of the Education Act 2002 (and the power under section 65(2)) is in respect of a **'specified description of education and training'** that could extend to any age group or type of education within that age-range.
3. This framework is a supplement to the *Common Inspection Framework* (CIF). It is also intended to be compatible and consistent with the existing frameworks specifically applicable to the inspection of particular types of provider or of other aspects of education and training. These include the frameworks for inspecting schools, LEAs and Connexions partnerships. This framework includes the more specific evaluation requirements that apply to inspection across an area of the quality of provision for education and training for 14–19 year olds. The framework reflects the principles and the general requirements of the Act for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) to be informed about:
  - the quality of education and training
  - the standards achieved by those receiving that education and training
  - whether financial resources made available to those providing that education and training are managed efficiently and used in a way which provides value for money.

## Purposes and principles of inspection

### Main purposes of inspection

- to give an independent public account of the standards achieved, the quality of provision and the efficiency and effectiveness with which education and training are planned and managed across an area to meet the needs of learners and employers
- to keep the Secretary of State for Education and Skills informed of the standards and quality of education and training, of the effectiveness of strategic planning across an area and of whether the provision made provides value for money
- to identify key issues for action and evaluate the effectiveness of measures to bring about improvement.

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## Principles of inspection

- ❑ *Inspection acts in the interests of children, young people and adult learners and, where relevant, their parents, to encourage high quality provision that meets diverse needs and promotes equality.*
- ❑ *Inspection is evaluative and diagnostic, assessing quality and compliance and providing a clear basis for improvement.*
- ❑ *The purpose of inspection and the procedures to be used are communicated clearly to those involved.*
- ❑ *Inspection invites and takes account of any self-evaluation by those inspected.*
- ❑ *Inspection informs those responsible for taking decisions about provision.*
- ❑ *Inspection is carried out by those who have sufficient and relevant professional expertise and training.*
- ❑ *Evidence is recorded, and is of sufficient range and quality to secure and justify judgements.*
- ❑ *Judgements are based on systematic evaluation requirements and criteria, are reached corporately, where more than one inspector is involved, and reflect a common understanding in Ofsted about quality.*
- ❑ *Effectiveness is central to judging the quality of provision and processes.*
- ❑ *Inspection includes clear and helpful oral feedback and leads to written reporting that evaluates performance and quality and identifies strengths and areas for improvement.*
- ❑ *The work of all inspectors reflects Ofsted's Values and Code of Conduct.*
- ❑ *Quality assurance is built into all inspection activities to ensure that these principles are met and inspection is improved.*

4. The above principles apply to all inspection activities carried out by or on behalf of Ofsted. They are intended to ensure that:
  - the findings of inspection contribute to improvement
  - the process of inspection promotes inclusion
  - inspection is carried out openly with those being inspected
  - the findings of inspection are valid, reliable and consistent.
5. Area inspections carried out under section 65 of the Act will take account of these principles. The application of these principles as described in this framework is concerned with:
  - what is evaluated and reported
  - how inspections are carried out.

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## What is evaluated and reported

6. Inspections will focus on the quality of education and training for young people aged 14–19 years and will evaluate and report on:
  - the effectiveness of strategic planning in meeting the needs of learners and employers
  - the extent to which the provision of education and training for 14–19 year olds is responsive to their needs and supports access and coherent progression to further and higher education, training and employment
  - the extent to which the provision supports social inclusion
  - the quality and reliability of information, guidance and support provided to young people
  - the effectiveness and efficiency with which the provision is managed and its quality assured
  - the quality of education and training and the standards achieved
  - the effectiveness of measures to bring about improvement, particularly where provision is unsatisfactory
  - the value for money provided.

To summarise judgements, Ofsted and the ALI use the agreed common grading scale and grade descriptions that are applied in the *Common Inspection Framework*.

## How inspections are carried out

### Inspectors

7. Inspectors accredited by Ofsted or the ALI are trained in the use of the framework and are competent to inspect. In most cases, inspectors work as part of a team led by an inspector who is responsible for planning and managing the inspection and its reporting. Members of an inspection team collectively have the expertise and experience to inspect effectively all aspects of the provision covered by the inspection.

### Process of inspection

8. Inspections are to be carried out in a way that secures the co-operation and confidence of those being inspected. A climate should be created in which the inspection makes a valuable contribution to improvement. This requires that:
  - inspectors are well prepared for the inspections they undertake
  - before inspection, those concerned are briefed so that the inspection process and their involvement in it are fully understood
  - the inspection should be conducted in a way that keeps the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), LEA and partners informed of emerging issues and findings.

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Ofsted and the ALI will keep to a realistic minimum the demands that they make for information and other materials.

9. Ofsted will give at least eight weeks' notice of inspection to the LSC and LEA, which will be responsible for informing their partner organisations, and providers, of the timing and arrangements for inspection. The scope of an 'area' will be determined through discussion with local partners, in particular the local LSC and relevant LEAs. The criteria for determining the size of an area will include 'travel to learn' patterns of individuals, LEA and LSC boundaries. Some area inspections will cover more than one LEA area, or only part of one LEA area. In some inspections, LSC boundaries may be crossed to take account of geographical and economic factors affecting the provision of education and training. Inspection will be completed in at least a part of each LSC area within a three-year cycle. The evidence and findings from earlier inspections evaluating the quality of provision for learners within the 14–19 age range will be drawn upon. These will include inspections conducted by Ofsted and/or the ALI of schools, colleges and other providers, the Connexions service, and LEAs, within the area. Inspectors will ensure that the views of learners about their education and training, and about the support and guidance they receive, are sought and considered as part of the evidence of inspection. Ofsted and the ALI will seek to co-ordinate inspections within an area to minimise, as far as possible, the burden on providers and strategic partners.

### **Conduct of inspectors**

10. Inspectors will uphold high professional standards in their work. They must:
  - be impartial and objective; this requires that they have no connection with the statutory bodies or the providers within the area that could undermine their objectivity
  - report honestly and fairly
  - be open and transparent in the way they work, providing as much feedback as possible on the inspection
  - carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy and sensitivity, and reflecting the principles of equality of opportunity in all they do
  - act with the best interests of learners as a priority.

In return, inspectors should be afforded professional courtesy.

### **Quality of inspection**

11. Inspections should be conducted in such a way that:
  - the evidence gathered from young people and their parents or carers, from providers, LSC, LEA staff and others, from observations, and from documentation is sufficient to sustain secure judgements
  - judgements are consistent with the inspection evidence, and findings reflect the balance of evidence and the collective view of the inspection team



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- the communication of findings, orally and in writing, is clear, well-argued and based convincingly on evidence gathered before and during the inspection.

### **Follow-up to inspections**

12. Following inspections, there will be an opportunity for full and open feedback of the inspection findings from the lead inspector, and discussion of them. The composition of the feedback meeting will vary from inspection to inspection, but in most circumstances it will include the senior staff of the local learning and skills council (LLSC) and LEA(s).
13. The report following any inspection must be factually accurate. The LLSC and LEA(s) will be offered the opportunity to check the factual accuracy of an inspection report before it is published. The inspection report will include an assessment of the overall effectiveness of the LLSC, LEA(s) and partners.

### **Post-inspection action plans**

14. Inspections will identify issues for improvement that will form the basis of action plans, prepared by the LLSC and LEA(s) and partner organisations responsible for the provision, to address weaknesses and build on strengths. Action plans to address weaknesses identified by inspection will be submitted for approval to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. When called upon to do so by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, these plans will be assessed by Ofsted, which will advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on the adequacy of the plans to bring about improvement within an appropriate time-scale. Where necessary, further inspection will be conducted to ensure appropriate progress is made in improving the quality of provision.

### **Reinspection**

15. Where inspection identifies that the provision made in the area does not reach a satisfactory standard, the report will indicate the time-scale in which weaknesses are to be addressed. A further inspection of the area will be conducted, at a date specified by Ofsted, normally within two years of the publication of the report, and will also assess the progress made in bringing about improvements.

### **Complaints**

16. The statutory bodies and providers will have recourse to a published complaints procedure that will be made known to them in advance of their inspections.

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## **Evaluation schedule**

This part of the framework sets out the evaluation requirements that apply to the inspection of education and training in an area. They are based on the principles set out earlier in the framework.

The evaluation requirements apply to the area as a whole and, wherever applicable, to the provision of education and training by the different providers within the area.

Inspection should answer the question:

*How effective and efficient is the provision of education and training across the area in meeting the needs of learners, employers and the community?*

The following questions set out under each broad heading will guide inspection.

### **Strategy for education and training (14–19) in the area**

1. How effective are the strategies for education (14–19) in raising achievement and increasing participation in education and training?

#### **Achievement**

2. How well do learners achieve?

#### **Access to and participation in education and training**

3. How effective is the current configuration of provision in meeting learners' needs?

4. How effectively does the curriculum support progression to further and higher education, training and employment?

#### **Quality of education and training 14–19**

5. How effective are teaching, learning and training?

6. How do resources affect achievement and the quality of education, training, guidance and support?

#### **Guidance and support**

7. How well are learners guided and supported?

#### **Leadership and management**

8. How effective are the leadership and management of the strategic partnerships in raising achievement and increasing participation in education and training?

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## Strategy for education and training (14–19) in the area

### 1. How effective are the strategies for education (14–19) in raising achievement and increasing participation in education and training?

To answer this question, inspectors will evaluate:

- How effectively the strategies set a clear direction leading to high quality education and training.*
- The extent to which local and national targets for the standards achieved by different groups of learners are met.*
- How well strategic plans encourage high levels of access and participation in education, training and employment.*
- How effectively strategies lead to improvements in the quality of provision and raising standards.*

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- there are effective structures and partnerships which support strategies for widening opportunities for 14–19-year-old learners and for raising standards of achievement across the area
- the strategies for raising standards and improving opportunities for 14–19 year olds across the area are understood and supported by education and training providers, parents, employers and others
- the strategic and operational plans of key partners and providers are consistent with the overall strategy for the area and contribute to the achievement of demanding targets for participation, retention, attainment and progression of learners at all levels
- the strategies include explicit aims relating to equality of opportunity which are reflected in the nature of the education and training opportunities available across the area
- the strategies take account of the cost effectiveness of provision including the educational value added to individual learners and different groups.

## Achievement

### 2. How well do learners achieve?

To answer this question, inspectors will evaluate:

- The standards of attainment of learners by age 16 and 19.*
- The progress made by learners and their success in achieving their learning goals.*
- The progression rates of young people to higher education, and training and employment.*
- How well the standards achieved meet the needs of employers, and government targets.*

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In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- local and national targets for course completion and progression to further and higher education are met
- achievements meet appropriate targets in relation to learners' abilities and previous attainment
- the attainment of particular groups meets their needs and the needs of employers
- learners achieve the skills of literacy and numeracy that enable them to progress and participate effectively in employment
- learners make appropriate progress in relation to their prior attainments
- learners, parents, employers and community leaders are satisfied that the achievements of learners reflects their ability and prepares them well for further study, training or employment.

### **Access to and participation in education and training**

#### **3. How effective is the current configuration of provision in meeting the needs of all learners, employers and the community?**

To answer this question, inspectors will evaluate:

- How successfully the configuration of providers meets the needs of learners and employers and avoids unnecessary duplication of resources.*
- How well the pattern of further education and training responds to the needs of the local and wider labour market.*
- How well providers collaborate to increase access and participation and ensure a comprehensive range of learning opportunities at a suitable range of levels.*

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- the LLSC, LEA, schools, colleges and other providers and partnerships effectively assess the needs of the community, employers and learners within the area
- schools, colleges and other providers ensure that learners are informed about the full range of progression opportunities that are available to them
- schools, colleges and other providers effectively collaborate to increase access and participation particularly by vulnerable and disaffected young people
- there is sufficient provision at appropriate levels and locations across the area to meet the needs of employers and learners.

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#### 4. How effectively does the curriculum support progression to further and higher education, training and employment?

To answer this question, inspectors will evaluate:

- The suitability of and access to pathways that enable all young people, including those with low attainment or learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to progress to further education, training and employment.*
- The levels of post-16 participation in education and training.*
- The appropriateness of progression opportunities.*
- How well the curriculum supports educational and social inclusion.*
- The extent to which the curricula provided meet the needs of individual learners, the local community and employers.*
- How effectively the provision supports access to higher education.*

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- LLSC, LEA, schools, colleges and other providers respond to the needs of young people by ensuring an appropriate range of academic and vocational courses at suitable levels
- schools, colleges and other providers offer coherent programmes of study which support continued participation and progression
- appropriate targets for progression to participation in post-16 education, training and employment are met for all groups of learners
- the curriculum enables students to explore personal, social and ethical issues, and to take part in a suitable range of activities including the opportunity to participate in work experience
- the curriculum meets the needs of learners in particular by developing the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT
- work-based training meets the expectations of trainees and provides effective preparation for their further careers
- levels of progression to higher education meet appropriate targets
- the provision satisfies legal requirements, where applicable, to religious education.

#### Quality of education and training 14–19

#### 5. How effective are teaching, learning and training?

To answer this question inspectors will evaluate

- The quality of teaching and training across the range of providers.*
- How well teaching and training promote progress and achievement.*

- 
- How well learners develop their skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT.*
  - The extent to which the teaching and training supports educational inclusion.*
  - The progress and destinations of young people in relation to their prior achievement and learning programmes.*

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- teaching and training promote the achievement of local and national targets for course completion and progression
- teaching encourages good attendance, behaviour, motivation and course completion
- teaching and training enhance the personal development of individual learners
- learners' needs for additional support are assessed, planned for and met by the range of institutions and training organisations
- teaching and training meet course and programme requirements

## **6. How do resources affect achievement and the quality of education, training, guidance and support?**

To answer this question inspectors will evaluate:

- The extent to which the funding available meets the needs of all young people.*
  - The adequacy of resources and accommodation to support teaching, training and learning.*
  - The adequacy and suitability of staff across the range of providers.*

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- the resources provided across the area meet the education, training, guidance and support needs of all learners and their teachers
- equality of opportunity is promoted through the distribution of resources to support education, training, guidance and support
- there are sufficient trained and knowledgeable staff to meet the needs of all learners.

## **Guidance and support**

### **7. How well are learners guided and supported?**

To answer this question, inspectors will evaluate:

- The effectiveness of guidance and support for young people across all types of education and training provision.*

- 
- The quality of information, advice and guidance to young people in relation to their needs and the opportunities for education and training.*
  - The effectiveness with which young people's learning and support needs are assessed.*
  - The monitoring of young people's progress, particularly through key points of transition.*
  - The access young people have to relevant and effective support on personal issues.*

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- there is a coherent framework for the assessment and reporting of young people's learning and support needs
- young people follow appropriate courses and programmes to enable them to achieve their goals for progression to further study or employment
- young people have access to impartial information, advice and guidance appropriate to their needs
- data on the destinations of young people are comprehensive and used effectively to enable them to make appropriate decisions regarding further education, training or employment
- arrangements for referral and support help young people to participate fully in education, training and employment
- the arrangements for transition to further education, training and employment ensure continuity of support and guidance for young people and assist and encourage learners at all levels to progress
- young people are assisted in overcoming barriers to progression to further education, training and employment.

## **Leadership and management**

### **8. How effective are the leadership and management of the strategic partnerships in raising achievement and increasing participation in education and training?**

To answer this question inspectors will evaluate:

- How well leaders and managers set a clear direction leading to high quality education and training.*
- The quality and effectiveness of strategic planning.*
- The arrangements to support effective partnership and collaboration.*
- The effectiveness of initiatives in the area to raise standards and improve achievement.*

- 
- ❑ *How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money.*
  - ❑ *How well equality of opportunity is promoted.*

In making judgements, inspectors will consider, where applicable, the extent to which:

- arrangements are in place to support effective and continuing partnership between statutory bodies, providers and employer and community organisations
- the strategies for improvement are implemented effectively to the benefit of learners
- partners collaborate effectively to ensure resources are secured, and used efficiently and effectively, to support the achievement of value for money and the strategic priorities and targets for the area
- management and the assessment of performance are based on accurate data and the systematic monitoring and analysis of young people's achievements, learning and support needs
- quality assurance at all levels contributes to the assessment of the overall effectiveness of the strategy and leads to clearly identified priorities and challenging targets for improvement
- aims and measures relating to equality especially regarding discrimination against race and disability are successfully implemented at all levels.



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# Annexes

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## Annex A: Report schedule

The report will include:

1. An **introduction** setting out the statutory powers under which the inspection was conducted, by whom it was conducted and by what means.

2. An **executive summary** comprising:

*Main findings stating briefly:*

- the main targets set for 14–19 provision in the area
- the extent to which the strategy and provision meet the needs of learners, employers and the community
- the extent to which national targets are being met and priorities delivered
- the extent to which the strategies adopted lead to improvements in the quality of provision and raising standards

*Recommendations:*

- key recommendations for action

3. The **context of the area** setting out:

- the main socio-economic characteristics of the area
- the bodies responsible for 14–19 education, including any relevant details of political control, structure, etc
- the number and nature of organisations providing 14–19 education
- the characteristics of the student/learner population
- the funding available for education 14–19.

4. The **strategy for education and training 14–19** that will:

- summarise the priorities for education 14–19 set out by the main responsible bodies, and evaluate the extent to which they meet the needs of learners, employers and the community
- assess the effectiveness of the strategy in raising achievement and increasing participation in education and training.

5. **Leadership and management** that will:

- evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of the strategy
- assess the effectiveness of leadership and management in enhancing collaboration and partnership
- evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership and collaboration between planning bodies, and between institutions providing education 14–19 in securing increased access and participation in education and training

- 
- assess the extent to which the framework for planning provision is supported by effective evaluation and assessment of the needs of learners, employers and the community
  - evaluate the extent to which improvement has been achieved in the quality of provision
  - the extent to which national and local targets are met
  - assess the efficiency with which provision is made and value for money provided.

**6. Access to and participation in education and training** that will assess the extent to which:

- the current configuration of provision meets learners', employers' and community needs
- the curriculum supports progression (14–19) to further and higher education, training and employment
- social inclusion is supported through effective provision for: children in public care; children and young people with special educational needs; children and young people who have been excluded from school; ethnic and social diversity.

**7. The quality of education and training 14–19** that summarises the evidence set out above, with particular reference to improvement trends, and assesses the extent to which:

- the standards achieved 14–19 are as high as they should be
- teaching and training meet the need of learners and employers
- the resources provided support teaching and learning and ensure equality of opportunity across providers in the area and for all learners
- the guidance provided to young people enables them to progress coherently through education and training to employment and higher education.

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## Annex B: Consultation

Ofsted and the ALI wish to consult all those with an interest in the inspection of an area on the appropriateness and applicability of the inspection framework. The framework will be published widely and will be on the Ofsted web site with a link to the ALI web site.

<p><b>Name of organisation or institution:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Contact officer for queries:</b> .....</p> <p><b>Telephone:</b> .....</p> <p><b>E-mail:</b> .....</p>
--

Responses to the following questions would be welcomed:

**1. Do you agree that the evaluation schedule provides a sufficient basis for assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the strategic development of provision for education and training for 14–19 year olds in an area?**

- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree

<p><i>Comment:</i></p>
------------------------

**2. Do you agree that the reporting requirements (square bullets in the evaluation schedule) provide a sufficient basis to support identification of action needed to bring about improvement?**

- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree

<p><i>Comment:</i></p>
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**3. An evaluation of the provision as unsatisfactory will result in reinspection. Do you agree that the criteria for and timing of reinspection are appropriate?**

- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree

*Comment:*

Ofsted and ALI would also particularly welcome views on the following:

**4. What should be the role of self-evaluation in supporting the documentation for inspection?**

**5. It is proposed that much of the evidence regarding the quality of education and training is retrieved from the inspection of providers before an area inspection takes place. How should account be taken of changes that have occurred since such inspections took place?**

**6. Inspectors will assign a grade to summarise the evaluation relating to each key question. Should these grades be published?**

**7. Are there additional aspects that you would wish to see included in the framework?**

Please return your comments to:

**Mazeda Alam  
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West Point  
501 Chester Road  
Manchester M16 8HH**

