



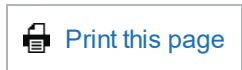
Official Statistics

# Methodology: further education and skills inspections and outcomes as at 31 August 2021

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## Introduction

This document contains methodology and quality information relevant to Ofsted’s 6-monthly release on further education and skills inspections and outcomes data.

You should read this document in conjunction with the background notes contained within the [statistical first release](#) and accompanying tables. Those notes will include helpful information that is not included here.

## Methodology

The statistical first release contains data that has been sourced from inspections carried out by Ofsted for all further education and skills providers in England, wholly or partly funded by:

- the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)

- in the case of adult education, a mayoral or combined authority or the Greater London Authority
- the apprenticeship levy

## Provider types covered

We extract the inspection outcome data from Ofsted’s administrative systems. Included in the table below is the full list of provider types covered by further education and skills inspections, which are therefore included in the release. We have separated provider types and groups to make the underlying data easier for users to aggregate. These groupings are also included within tables and charts in the statistical first release.

National careers service contractors are no longer inspected by us since the introduction of the education inspection framework (EIF).

### All further education and skills providers

| Provider type                         | Provider group  |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| General further education college     | Colleges  |
| Sixth-form college                    | Colleges  |
| Specialist further education college  | Colleges  |
| Independent specialist college        | Independent specialist colleges                               |
| Independent learning provider         | Independent learning providers (including employer providers) |
| Employer provider                     | Independent learning providers (including employer providers) |
| Local authority provider              | Adult community education providers                           |
| Institute of adult learning           | Adult community education providers                           |
| 16 to 19 academy converter            | 16 to 19 academies  |
| 16 to 19 academy sponsor-led          | 16 to 19 academies  |
| 16 to 19 free school                  | 16 to 19 academies  |
| Higher education institution          | Higher education institutions                                 |
| Dance and drama college               | Dance and drama colleges                                      |
| Prison and young offender institution | Prisons and young offender institutions                       |

## What this covers

It reports on the following.

In-year inspection outcomes for inspections carried out between 1 September and 31 August of the latest reporting year.

All the events that took place during the year are included, regardless of whether the provider has since closed, stopped delivering or lost funding. Each event will have its own record in the underlying data.

The in-year tables and charts count the number of inspections that took place. A provider could be counted more than once, depending on the number of times that it was inspected within the year.

We publish in-year statistics each year, with a mid-year picture also published part-way through the year. This information is also published in the (management information – further education and skills)

[<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/further-education-and-skills-inspection-and-outcomes-management-information-from-september-2020-to-august-2021>]. We publish management information monthly from November until September. These are smaller releases, which do not contain a written commentary.

The most recent full inspection outcomes for all providers publicly funded and/or delivering education, training or apprenticeships recorded on Ofsted's systems at a certain point in time.

All providers publicly funded and/or delivering education, training or apprenticeships recorded on Ofsted's systems on the day the snapshot is taken will appear in the underlying data. Each provider has one record in the underlying data. If the provider has been inspected, the underlying data will include its latest new provider monitoring visit, short inspection and/or full inspection outcomes. These are included regardless of when the inspection took place.

The most recent statistics, displayed in the tables and charts, count the number of providers that have been inspected. Providers that have not yet been inspected are excluded from the measure.

We publish statistics about the most recent inspection outcomes for all providers publicly funded and delivering education, training or apprenticeships as at 31 August each year, with a mid-year picture also published part way through the year. This information is also published in the (management information – further

education and skills)[<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/further-education-and-skills-inspection-and-outcomes-management-information-from-september-2020-to-august-2021>]. We publish management information monthly from November until September. These are smaller releases, which do not contain a written commentary.

## Quality of apprenticeship provision

We have included data on the quality of apprenticeship provision. The new statistic was published in the official statistics for the first time in November 2021.

The statistic will be published once a year, in the November/December release of these official statistics.

The most recent type of inspection activity for all providers shown on our systems as publicly funded for and delivering apprenticeships.

If a provider is on our systems as publicly funded for and delivering apprenticeships as at 31 August, they will be included in the total number of providers delivering apprenticeship provision. We then place each provider into one of 3 categories:

- full inspection - received a judgement on the quality of apprenticeship provision at a full inspection. As a short inspection has no graded judgements, the apprenticeship judgement from the provider's previous full inspection is used
- new provider monitoring visit (NPMV) – received an NPMV that judged the progress it was making in delivering apprenticeship provision
- awaiting inspection grade for apprenticeship provision or first NPMV – has either not received a judgement on the quality of apprenticeship at an NPMV or full inspection or is awaiting its first NPMV

A judgement on the quality of apprenticeship provision was first introduced on full inspections from 1 September 2012. Providers that we last inspected before that date or that did not have an apprenticeship judgement made at the time of their inspection will be categorised as awaiting an inspection grade for apprenticeship provision.

The most recent quality of apprenticeship statistic for all providers shown on our systems as publicly funded for and/or delivering apprenticeships.

The statistic includes providers that have had a judgment made on their apprenticeship provision at an NPMV or full inspection.

For NPMVs, we only include the judgements related to the apprenticeship provision in our reporting. If a provider delivers both apprenticeships and adult education, we only include the 2 apprenticeship judgements and safeguarding judgement in the calculation and we exclude the judgement for the adult provision. If a provider has had a follow-up safeguarding NPMV, then we use this judgement in the calculation.

For full inspections, we take the grade that was awarded for the provider's apprenticeship provision at the time of inspection.

We then display the percentage of providers that meet this criteria:

- for providers that have full inspections, we display the outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate apprenticeship provision judgement
- for providers that had an NPMV, we display whether they were judged to be making insufficient progress in one or more themes or were judged to be making at least reasonable progress in all themes

We plan on adding further statistics on the quality of provision for adult education, education programmes for young people and high needs provision in future releases.

## Short inspections

On 1 September 2015, under the [common inspection framework](#), Ofsted first introduced short inspections for providers previously judged good. Short inspections can either confirm that the provider is still good overall or the lead inspector can choose to extend the inspection to a full inspection if:

- there is insufficient evidence to confirm that the provider remains good
- there are concerns that there is evidence that the provider may no longer be good, which may include concerns about safeguarding
- there is sufficient evidence of improved performance to suggest that the provider may be judged outstanding

If a short inspection does not extend, the overall effectiveness of the provider remains unchanged from its previous inspection. No individual or sub-provision judgements are made. For example, this would apply in the case of:

- effectiveness of leadership and management
- quality of education
- behaviour and attitudes
- education programmes for young people

A decision to extend the short inspection does not pre-determine the outcome of the full inspection, which will make the full set of graded judgements using the 4-point grading scale. At the end of the full inspection, a provider could:

- remain good
- improve to outstanding
- decline to requires improvement or inadequate

When reporting on in-year inspections, we have included the following fields and labels in the [‘data, tables and charts’ file](#) to help users identify short inspections:

- we have added an ‘Inspection type group’ to the in-year data tabs to allow users to identify whether a provider received a full or short inspection
- if a short inspection did not extend and the provider remained good, we will record this in the inspection type group as ‘Short inspection’ and we will populate the overall effectiveness column with a ‘9’
- if a short inspection did extend to a full inspection, we will record this in the inspection type group as ‘Full inspection (short converted)’ and we will complete the remaining columns as we would for a full inspection
- we have edited the titles on each tab to identify clearly whether the data shown includes the outcomes from full inspections only or full and short inspections combined

Short inspections have a minimal impact on the most recent inspection outcomes. Within the ‘Most recent inspection data’ tab, the most recent full inspection outcomes are shown for each provider. This includes short inspections that extended to full inspections. Short inspections that did not extend to full inspections do not affect this tab because the provider’s original overall effectiveness judgement remains good. We have included a table within the release to show the volumes of short inspections, the number that extend to full inspections and the resulting inspection outcomes.

## More information

Official statistics on further education and skills inspection outcomes have a time delay between the end of the reporting period and the publication cut-off date of 1 calendar month. This helps to ensure that the majority of inspections carried out within the reporting period have reports that are published and are reflected within the official statistics. The inspection reports for those providers judged inadequate go through additional moderation checks. Therefore, there may be a longer period between the inspection and the publication of the inspection report in these cases.

Under exceptional circumstances, we may withhold or withdraw publication of an inspection report. Outcomes of withheld or withdrawn inspection reports are not included in any of the datasets.

If statements are made about whether inspection outcomes have declined or improved, they are referring to the most recent overall effectiveness outcomes compared with the previous inspection, unless otherwise stated.

We also use data in this release to update [Ofsted's DataView tool](#).

## Relevance

Ofsted regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. We release official statistics to promote reform and improvement across government through increasing the transparency of the work that Ofsted does.

Data in this official statistics series is from inspections carried out under part 8 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).

## Communicating with users

The aggregation of data for official statistics allows us to communicate to users the key data and messages from inspection outcomes, for example at different geographical levels and within sub-types of provider. The official statistics draw out the important messages and communicate these in an understandable way appropriate for a wide range of different users. Users are able to interpret and manipulate the data published for their own purposes.

Specific users and uses of the data include:

- media outlets using the key findings from our statistical release to inform the public about the quality of further education and skills providers across the country
- allowing users to track movement in the further education and skills sector and monitor the quality of provision available at a national level and across provider types
- helping identify areas of weak performance. This informs policy development within the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, the ESFA and the Department for Education to address issues and implement strategies to mitigate them
- Ofsted staff using inspection profiles to inform inspection framework development and underpin policies to improve standards. The important

messages within the official statistics contribute towards the findings in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector's Annual Report to Parliament

You can find more contextual information about further education and skills in England and Ofsted's inspection activity within the release.

We generate the [data included in the release](#) through Ofsted's inspection process and it is therefore administrative data.

## Meeting user needs

We have compiled these statistics in line with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

In November 2020, we published '[a consultation on changes to the publication of statistics on further education and skills inspections and outcomes](#)'. We proposed to carry out a one-time data cleanse to remove the inspection history for around 50 providers that came back in to funding and started delivering again after a period of not being in scope for an Ofsted inspection. This proposal was welcomed by the majority of respondents and has now been implemented.

We also proposed the following changes to provider types and groups:

- remove 'not-for-profit organisation' as a provider type and re-classify those 66 providers as 'independent learning providers'
- include specialist designated institutions in the colleges group
- remove community learning and skills as a provider group
- change 'local authority provider' from a provider type to a provider group

The majority of respondents agreed with the proposal to reclassify 'not-for-profit organisations' as 'independent learning providers' and this has been implemented. However, following feedback from our users, we did not proceed with the other 3 proposed changes. Instead, we have renamed the provider type 'specialist designation institution' to 'adult learning institution' and included it in a new 'adult community education providers' provider group. This new group also includes the provider type 'local authority provider'. A full list of the provider types and groups is shown above.

We welcome feedback about our statistical releases. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, contact the Further Education and Skills, Data and Analysis team at [FEandSkillsData@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:FEandSkillsData@ofsted.gov.uk).

## Coherence and compatibility

The tables and charts within the release compare inspection outcomes over the



past few years. There have been a number of framework changes since the first release of statistics and we have reflected these in the publications. The overall effectiveness grade has remained comparable across the different frameworks. Other sub-judgements and provision judgements are, if possible, mapped across frameworks when changes occur. This is explained in more detail below.

When these changes have happened, we have alerted users through updates in the official statistics introduction and methodology sections of the main findings document. When we have implemented changes to inspection frameworks or methodological changes to improve the output, we have added guidance to footnotes and in the main findings for easy access.

Inspection outcomes data presented in provisional official statistics releases will match the data shown in [DataView](#). If we publish inspection reports after the final publication date included within a release, we will reflect the inspection outcomes within the next provisional official statistics release. If we have published all inspections within the reporting period, we will mark the statistics as final.

There is no comparable data published by other producers of official or national statistics for further education and skills inspections in England.

Inspections are carried out:

- in Scotland by [Education Scotland](#)
- in Wales by [Estyn](#)
- in Northern Ireland by the [Education and Training Inspectorate](#)

Ofsted also produces regular management information on the outcomes of further education and skills inspections. The management information is not directly comparable with the official statistics due to a difference in methodology. The official statistics allow an additional month after the reporting period has ended for inspection reports to be published.

Several third parties provide interactive tools displaying publicly available Ofsted inspection judgements. Third parties appear to collate these by using advanced computer techniques to harvest information from published inspection reports. Ofsted cannot comment on the quality of these datasets.

Framework changes have an impact on the comparability of data and reporting over time. The change in judgements and considering the effects of these mean that between frameworks there may be breaks or changes in the way we report certain judgements.

## **Education inspection framework**

We introduced the [EIF](#) in September 2019 following a consultation.

The framework is accompanied by an [inspection handbook](#). This sets out how inspectors made each of the inspection judgements and reflected the needs and expectations for each type of setting.

The impact of the EIF's changes to the judgements are as follows:

- overall effectiveness: this judgement is broadly comparable across all frameworks from September 2005 to date
- effectiveness of leadership and management: this judgement is broadly comparable across all frameworks from September 2005 to date
- quality of education: this judgement was introduced in September 2019 and is not comparable with earlier frameworks. As a result, analysis of this judgement will only represent inspections since September 2019 and will not provide a comprehensive view of the quality of provision nationally
- behaviour and attitudes: this judgement was introduced in September 2019 and is not comparable with earlier frameworks. As a result, analysis of this judgement will only represent inspections since September 2019 and will not provide a comprehensive view of the quality of provision nationally
- personal development: this judgement was introduced in September 2019 and is not comparable with earlier frameworks. As a result, analysis of this judgement will only represent inspections since September 2019 and will not provide a comprehensive view of the quality of provision nationally

The [previous inspection framework](#) ran between 1 September 2015 and 31 August 2019.

## Frequency of inspection

We do not inspect all providers with equal regularity. We take a proportionate risk-assessed approach to inspection, as indicated in our inspection frameworks. The result of this is that the further education and skills providers inspected in a particular reporting year are unlikely to be representative of all providers within the sector. This will also affect the comparability of inspection outcomes between years.

We inspect providers that were previously judged to be less than good in their most recent inspection more frequently than good providers, as outlined in the [handbook](#).

As of 1 September 2018, previously good providers normally receive a short inspection within 5 years. Short inspections and how they are included within the data are described above in the methodology section.

Users need to be particularly cautious if comparing outcomes from 2015 to 2016 or later with previous years. Before 1 September 2015, all good providers received a full inspection no later than the fifth reporting year. This included cases

where they continued to provide the same standard of education.

Until January 2021, most further education and skills providers previously judged to be outstanding at their most recent inspection were exempt from routine inspection and were not inspected unless we had concerns about them. Providers judged outstanding for overall effectiveness at their most recent inspection are now all subject to routine inspection. We have published information on whether these providers will receive an initial short or full inspection in the [further education and skills handbook](#).

Comparisons between provider types should be treated with caution. This is due to the different inspection frameworks used over the past 10 years and the variation in the number of providers included within the different groups.

Newly, directly and publicly funded providers usually receive a monitoring visit within 24 months of starting to deliver directly funded provision. In most cases, the timing of this visit is not determined by performance data of the provider. These providers will normally receive their first full inspection within 24 months of the publication of their monitoring visit report. When a provider receives one or more insufficient progress judgements at their monitoring visit, it will normally receive a full inspection within 6 to 12 months of the publication of the monitoring visit report. We may carry out a full inspection of these providers without carrying out a monitoring visit, when appropriate.

## Comparing inspections over time

Comparability between years of the most recent inspection outcomes for further education and skills providers has been affected by the following.

### Consultation

Following a consultation carried out in July 2016, there was a change to the methodology for aggregating the 'all further education and skills providers' figure to include National Career Service contractors and higher education institutions. As a result, the 'all further education and skills providers' figure as at 31 August 2016 and onwards will not be comparable with previous years.

### Changes to methodology

The methodology was changed to exclude providers that had ceased to be funded or closed during the reporting year, from the 31 August statistics. We backdated this change and applied it to the statistics as at 31 August 2015. Therefore, the most recent inspection outcomes for the different provider types and groups are comparable from 31 August 2015 onwards but are not comparable before this date.

## **Independent specialist colleges and dance and drama colleges**

Before 1 September 2015, we included independent specialist colleges within the 'colleges' group, along with general further education colleges, sixth-form colleges and specialist further education colleges (which specialise in agriculture and horticulture or performing arts). We took the decision to remove independent specialist colleges from the 'colleges' group and to report on them separately from 1 September 2015. We adjusted historic data published in the statistics to take account of this change.

Before 1 September 2015, we inspected dance and drama colleges at course level, with one dance and drama college potentially receiving multiple judgements for the different courses they delivered. We would have published one of these judgements as a proxy for overall effectiveness in the underlying data and tables. Ofsted now makes a judgement on the overall effectiveness of dance and drama colleges. This change makes the judgement comparable to other providers and therefore we will include dance and drama colleges from 1 September 2015 onwards in the aggregation for 'all further education and skills providers'. The previously published proxy for overall effectiveness is not comparable to the new judgement. We have removed this from the underlying data to prevent inappropriate comparisons.

## **Accuracy and reliability**

### **What this release reports on**

#### **The most recent inspection outcome for all further education and skills providers publicly funded and delivering education, training or apprenticeships recorded on Ofsted's systems**

Publicly funded providers include providers that are marked as being in receipt of funding within the dataset taken from Ofsted's systems as at the end of the relevant reporting period. There may be a delay between changes to a provider's funding status and Ofsted being informed.

#### **Inspections that have taken place during the reporting year**

We give the cut-off date for the publication of the reports included in the publication. Providers that are yet to be inspected are included within the underlying data but are not included as part of the aggregated statistics. If we have published an inspection report but subsequently withdrawn this, then this will not be included in inspection outcomes. If the inspection report is published after the cut-off date given for the release, the inspection judgement will not be

included. These will appear in later releases, after publication.

## Moderating reports

Ofsted moderates all inspection reports when a provider is judged to be inadequate. This may result in us publishing some inspection reports after the publication cut-off date required for inclusion within the provisional release. In addition, if there are concerns that we may require further evidence to secure the inspection evidence base, this will delay publication of an inspection report. [See details of these procedures.](#)

## Other reliability information

This release does not include the inspection outcomes of maintained schools and academies, independent schools or early years providers. These are included in separate releases. [See details of other releases.](#)

We extract inspection outcomes data from Ofsted's administrative systems. Errors in recording inspection outcomes may affect the quality of the source data. We have put in place a number of appropriate systems to minimise the risk of reporting error.

Technical production of the publications may also result in manual errors. We use a rigorous data quality assurance procedure with the aim of minimising the risk of reporting error. If we discover an error within the document, we place a note on the website and upload a corrected version of the document as soon as possible.

[See more information on the issues relating to the use of administrative data.](#)

We publish revisions in line with [our revisions policy for official statistics.](#)

## Timeliness and punctuality

We currently publish data twice a year. This includes details of inspections that have taken place and been published in the relevant period. To ensure that data is as timely as possible, each release includes the most recent possible full month of inspections.

We publish data at 9:30am on the date pre-announced in the [publication schedule](#). You can also find information on any delay in publication on the publication schedule.

We allow 1 calendar month after the end of the reporting period as the cut-off date for the inclusion of published inspection reports. This is to allow time for the publication of the majority of inspections that have taken place within the reporting period. The production stage for this release includes extracting and cleaning the data, drafting findings, quality assuring all outputs and uploading the information onto GOV.UK.

We announce publications through Ofsted's social media accounts. We give pre-release access in accordance with the [Pre-release to Official Statistics Order \(2008\)](#).

You can find the list of postholders granted [pre-release access](#) as a separate page accompanying each release.

## Accessibility and clarity

We publish our releases in an accessible format on GOV.UK. The information is publicly available and there are no restrictions on access to the published data. Each release includes outcomes from Ofsted inspections that we have subsequently published. The data is for keeping users informed of the progress of the inspection framework and of changes in the further education and skills sector.

Underlying data in an accessible format accompanies each release to allow users to perform their own analysis. Users may use and re-use this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the [Open Government Licence](#).

We have published 2 versions of the 'data, charts and tables' file. The functional version of the file contains formulas and options to filter. For example, users may wish to access the full and short inspection outcomes by reporting year for the provider type independent learning providers and can use the filter options to do this. The accessible version of the file is fully accessible and does not contain any dropdowns or formulas. However, it does contain all of the data and users can access the full inspection outcomes by reporting year for different provider types and groups.

## Performance, cost and burden on respondents

There is no burden on respondents in relation to these statistics. This is because the data is a by-product of Ofsted's inspection process. The only cost involved is for the internal resource needed to collate the release.

# Confidentiality, transparency and security

All data releases follow [Ofsted's confidentiality and revisions policies](#).

## Prisons and young offender institutions

Ofsted carries out inspections of prisons and young offender institutions in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP). Ofsted inspectors evaluate the quality of education, skills and work in prisons and young offender institutions. [HMIP publishes inspection reports for these inspections](#).

We carried out inspections of prisons and young offender institutions under the [common inspection framework](#) until 31 January 2020.

The [EIF](#) was introduced for inspections of prisons and young offender institutions taking place from 1 February 2020.

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