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Official Statistics

State-funded schools inspections and outcomes as at 31 December 2021

Published 31 March 2022

Applies to England

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This is the main findings report for the [state-funded schools inspections and outcomes as at 31 December 2021](#) release. The following are also available:

- [underlying data](#)
- [methodology](#)
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Summary

This release includes:

- schools' most recent inspections and outcomes as at 31 December 2021
- data for inspections completed between 1 September 2021 and 31 December 2021 and published by 7 February 2022
- revised data for inspections completed between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this release

Between 1 September 2021 and 31 December 2021, 59 inspections of state-funded schools were [deferred](#) because the schools requested a deferral for COVID-19-related reasons.

Due to the rapid spread of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in December 2021, we stopped inspecting schools one week earlier than originally planned, except for when there were safeguarding concerns. This was to allow schools time to put COVID-19 contingency measures in place ready for the spring term in January 2022.

Schools at their most recent inspection

Eighty-seven per cent of all schools are good or outstanding.

Eighty-seven per cent of all schools are good or outstanding. This is a slight increase from 86% in August 2021.

The percentage of nursery schools that we judged good or outstanding has increased from 98% to 99% since August 2021. The percentage of secondary schools judged good or outstanding also increased, from 77% to 78%, in the same period, following a rise from 76% to 77% between March and August 2021.

The percentage of schools judged good or outstanding in all other phases remained the same compared with August 2021: 88% of primary schools, 90% of special schools and 85% of alternative provision.

Figure 1: Overall effectiveness of state-funded schools at their most recent inspection, by phase



1. Alternative provision includes academy alternative provision, free school alternative provision and pupil referral units.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

Inspections between 1 September 2021 and 31 December

2021

Of the 754 section 5 inspections that we have carried out this year, 99 more schools had improved to good or outstanding than had declined to requires improvement or inadequate.

To date in this academic year, we have carried out:

- 754 section 5 inspections. This includes section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools and monitoring inspections that were deemed section 5 inspections
- 756 section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools that were not deemed a section 5 inspection
- 58 section 8 monitoring inspections and ‘no formal designation’ inspections

We carried out fewer inspections than usual during the 2019 to 2020 and 2020 to 2021 academic years due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 2: The balance between the numbers of schools becoming good or outstanding and the numbers becoming requires improvement or inadequate



1. Includes the number of schools that improved from requires improvement or inadequate to good or outstanding (plus those not previously inspected that were judged to be good or outstanding), and then deducts the number of schools that declined from good or outstanding to requires improvement or inadequate (plus those not previously inspected that were judged to require improvement or to be inadequate).

2. The dashed lines indicate that there were changes to the inspection framework in September 2015 and September 2019.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

Of the 754 section 5 inspections that we have carried out this year, 99 more schools improved to good or outstanding (from requires improvement or inadequate) than declined to requires improvement or inadequate (from good or outstanding). More schools have improved to good or outstanding than declined to requires improvement or inadequate in each of the last 4 academic years. This sustained positive balance of outcomes in recent years has resulted in a very gradual 1 percentage point increase in the percentage of schools judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection, as described in the previous section.

Inspections of schools previously judged to be outstanding

This academic year, 50% of outstanding schools inspected have retained their grade.

Figure 3: Grade movement for state-funded schools previously judged outstanding, by year



1. The 2020 to 2021 academic year has been excluded from this chart as we only carried out a small number of inspections during this year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. This excludes section 8 'no formal designation' inspections.
3. The dashed line indicates that there was a change to the inspection framework in September 2019.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

Between May 2012 and November 2020, primary and secondary schools judged to be outstanding in their overall effectiveness at their most recent section 5 inspection were exempt from routine inspections. During this period, we only inspected an outstanding school if it was flagged through our risk assessment, or we received other intelligence suggesting that an inspection was needed. This year, previously exempt schools were prioritised for inspection according to the length of time since their last inspection. Those not inspected since 2015 had a section 5 inspection, and those inspected since 2015 had a section 8 inspection. Over half of the previously exempt outstanding schools inspected this year had not had a full section 5 inspection for 10 years or more. This has resulted in changes to the volume and the type of inspections carried out, and the pattern of inspection outcomes. We have carried out 255 section 5 and section 8 inspections this year of schools that were previously judged outstanding. [\[footnote 1\]](#)

Of the 255 inspections we carried out this year, 50% of schools retained their outstanding grade, compared with 33% in the 2019 to 2020 academic year. The percentage of inspections where we had concerns was 19% this year, compared with 5% in the 2019 to 2020 academic year. This increase is not surprising, as previously this outcome only applied to nursery schools, special schools and alternative provision, but this year it applies to primary and secondary schools too. These schools with concerns keep their outstanding grade, but their next inspection will be a full graded section 5 inspection.

Figure 4: Grade movement for state-funded schools previously judged outstanding, by phase and year



1. The 2020 to 2021 academic year has been excluded from this chart as we only carried out a small number of inspections during this year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. This excludes section 8 'no formal designation' inspections.
3. The dashed lines indicates that there was a change to the inspection framework in September 2019.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

Since the 2018 to 2019 academic year, secondary schools have been consistently more likely to retain their outstanding overall effectiveness grade than primary schools.

Inspections of schools previously judged to be good

This year, 87% of schools previously judged to be good maintained their good grade either at a full section 5 inspection or a section 8 inspection. This compares with 83% in the 2019 to 2020 academic year.

Figure 5: Grade movement for state-funded schools previously judged good, by year



1. The 2020 to 2021 academic year has been excluded from this chart as we only carried out a small number of inspections during this year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The dashed line indicates that there was a change to the inspection framework in September 2019.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

The percentage of previously good schools that we consider to be improving is 3%, the same percentage as in 2019 to 2020. The percentage of previously good schools where we highlighted concerns has slightly increased, from 12% in 2019 to 2020 to 14% this year. Good schools that are identified as either improving or declining keep their good grade, and their next inspection will be a full graded section 5 inspection.

Inspections of schools previously judged to require improvement

This year, 71% of schools that previously required improvement were judged good or outstanding, compared with 56% in the 2019 to 2020 academic year.

Figure 6: Grade movement for state-funded schools previously judged to require improvement, by year



1. The 2020 to 2021 academic year has been excluded from this chart as we only carried out a small number of inspections during this year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The dashed lines indicate that there were changes to the inspection framework in September 2015 and September 2019.
3. This includes section 5 inspections only.

View [data in an accessible table format](#).

We carried out 292 section 5 inspections this year of schools that were previously judged to require improvement.

This year, 71% of schools that previously required improvement were judged good or outstanding, compared with 56% in the 2019 to 2020 academic year. Excluding the 2020 to 2021 academic year, this year had the highest proportion of schools that improved to good or outstanding after previously requiring improvement since the 2015 to 2016 academic year. [\[footnote 2\]](#) Schools that had a full inspection this year have had more section 8 monitoring inspections since their previous full inspection than those that were inspected in 2019 to 2020. These schools also had a longer gap between section 5 inspections than schools inspected in earlier years. This was because of the COVID-19 pandemic, as between April 2020 and April 2021 we did not carry out any full inspections, but still did some monitoring visits.

All the schools that improved this year after previously requiring improvement were judged to be good, with the majority of these (71%) being primary schools.

Revisions to previous release

The provisional data in the previous release related to inspections that took place between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021, with the reports published by 30 September 2021. Revised data for inspections in this period is provided in tables 1R and 2R of the data file accompanying this release: [State-funded schools inspections and outcomes as at 31 December 2021, charts and tables](#).

This revised data includes an additional 13 full inspections that had not been published by 30

September 2021 but were published by 7 February 2022. These inspections resulted in the following number of additional judgements at each overall effectiveness grade:

- 0 outstanding
- 4 good
- 3 requires improvement
- 6 inadequate

Table 1: Changes in overall effectiveness proportions for schools inspected between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021

Ofsted phase	Provisional % outstanding	Revised % outstanding	Percentage point change in % outstanding	Provisional % good	Revised % good	Percentage point change in % good
Nursery	0	0	0	0	0	0
Primary	0	0	0	63	60	-3
Secondary	7	5	-2	50	46	-4
Special	0	0	0	14	14	0
Alternative provision	0	0	0	20	20	0
All schools	2	2	0	51	48	-3

Provisional data includes inspections published up to 30 September 2021 and revised data includes inspections published up to 7 February 2022.

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

Notes

The purpose of these official statistics is to disseminate the data on school standards collected through Ofsted's role as an inspectorate. They provide information about how the judgements of schools have changed over time. They vary across different phases of education and different parts of the country.

This official statistics release reports on the outcomes of state-funded school inspections carried out under sections 5 or 8 of the [Education Act 2005](#). We carried out these inspections between 1 September 2021 and 31 December 2021. This release includes all inspections published by 7 February 2022. It also includes the most recent inspections and outcomes for all schools that we have inspected, as at 31 December 2021.

Throughout this release, we use the term 'schools' to cover all local authority maintained schools, state-funded academies and non-maintained special schools in England that section 5 of the Education Act 2005 requires us to inspect.

We carried out inspections between September 2015 and August 2019 under the [common inspection framework](#).

Since September 2019, we have carried out inspections under the [education inspection framework](#).

You can find an explanation of the main uses of this data, further contextual information and the arrangements for quality assurance in the [methodology report](#). This report provides information about the strengths and limitations of the statistics.

Where we have quoted percentages in this report, figures have been rounded and may not add to 100.

Section 5 and section 8 inspections

Ofsted carries out inspections under sections 5 and 8 of the Education Act 2005.

We are required to inspect at prescribed intervals all schools to which section 5 applies. The regulations set the interval for section 5 inspections 'within 5 school years from the end of the school year in which the last inspection took place'.

Section 8 enables Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) to carry out inspections for a range of purposes. This includes 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, the teaching in a curriculum subject or a particular aspect of the work of schools.

Inspections carried out under section 8 include:

- inspections of schools judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent section 5 inspection
- monitoring inspections of schools judged as requires improvement, having serious weaknesses or requiring special measures
- any inspection carried out in other circumstances if the inspection has no specific designation
- unannounced inspections in response to concerns about behaviour in a school

Section 8 inspections of schools judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent section 5 inspection

These section 8 inspections are usually 2-day inspections, although some small primary schools may receive a 1-day inspection. These take place approximately every 4 years. The section 8 inspection determines whether the school continues to provide the same good or outstanding standard of education for pupils. It does not result in individual graded judgements. It also does not change the school's overall effectiveness grade. If there are serious concerns, we convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection, where inspectors will make the full set of graded judgements.

Since November 2017, some previously good schools are subject to a section 5 inspection instead of a section 8 inspection if our risk assessment tells us that a section 8 inspection would be highly likely to convert to a section 5. For example, this applies if a school has undergone significant change, such as changing its age range, or if we have concerns that the quality of provision may have deteriorated significantly.

Since January 2018, section 8 inspections are only converted to a section 5 inspection if there are serious concerns. If a section 8 inspection is not converted, there are additional outcomes if the school remains either good or outstanding, and the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

Between May 2012 and November 2020, outstanding primary and secondary schools were exempt from routine inspection. In November 2020, Parliament lifted its exemption. The [school inspection handbook](#) provides further details about inspections of formerly exempt outstanding schools.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, routine inspections of schools did not resume until the summer term of 2021.

Glossary

Definitions of terms are in the [statistical glossary](#).

Further information

Contacts

If you are a member of the public and have any comments or feedback on this publication, contact Louise Butler on 03000 131 457 or the schools data and analysis team on

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Press enquiries should be sent to our press team on pressenquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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Annex: data tables for figures

Data for figure 1: Overall effectiveness of state-funded schools at their most recent inspection, by phase

Phase	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
Alternative provision (327)	18	67	9	6
Special (1,018)	38	52	5	5
Secondary (3,317)	20	58	15	7
Primary (16,643)	16	72	9	3

Nursery (386)	64	35	1	0
All schools (21,691)	19	68	10	3

See [Figure 1](#).

Data for figure 2: The balance between the numbers of schools becoming good or outstanding and the numbers becoming requires improvement or inadequate

Academic year	Balance
2014/15 (5,041)	661
2015/16 (2,401)	918
2016/17 (2,821)	163
2017/18 (2,466)	-209
2018/19 (2,575)	161
2019/20 (1,551)	54
2020/21 (97)	32
2021/22 (754)	99

See [Figure 2](#).

Data for figure 3: Grade movement for state-funded schools previously judged outstanding, by year

Academic year	% Outstanding	% School remains outstanding (concerns)	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
2021/22 (255)	31	19	35	13	2
2019/20 (344)	28	5	49	14	4

2018/19 (580)	35	6	40	16	4
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See [Figure 3](#).

Data for figure 4: Grade movement for state-funded schools previously judged outstanding, by phase and year

Phase	Academic year	% Outstanding	% School remains outstanding (concerns)	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
Primary	2021/22 (170)	24	19	41	15	2
Primary	2019/20 (205)	9	0	69	18	2
Primary	2018/19 (296)	13	0	59	23	5
Secondary	2021/22 (49)	41	12	35	10	2
Secondary	2019/20 (41)	32	0	54	15	0
Secondary	2018/19 (87)	18	0	51	24	7

See [Figure 4](#).

Data for figure 5: Grade movement for state-funded schools previously judged good, by year

Academic year	% Outstanding	% School remains good (improving)	% Good	% School remains good (concerns)	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
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2021/22 (900)	2	3	69	14	9	2
2019/20 (1,844)	2	3	67	12	12	3
2018/19 (3,326)	4	8	67	8	10	3

See [Figure 5](#).

Data for figure 6: Grade movement for state-funded schools previously judged to require improvement, by year

Academic year	% Improved to good or outstanding	% Remained requires improvement	% Declined to inadequate
2014/15 (1,674)	67	27	7
2015/16 (1,600)	71	22	7
2016/17 (1,171)	61	28	11
2017/18 (624)	61	33	6
2018/19 (863)	64	27	9
2019/20 (586)	56	36	8
2021/22 (292)	71	25	4

See [Figure 6](#).

1. This excludes section 8 'no formal designation' inspections. [↩](#)
2. We only carried out a small number of inspections during the 2020 to 2021 academic year, due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. [↩](#)

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