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Guidance

Early career framework and national professional qualification inspection framework and handbook

Updated 11 July 2022

Applies to England

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This handbook is for use until 1 September 2022. See the [guidance that will come into force on 1 September](#).

Introduction

1. This document sets out the framework and handbook for inspections of early career framework (ECF) and national professional qualification (NPQ) lead providers in England from summer 2022. It has 2 parts:

- [Part 1 – ECF and NPQ inspection framework](#). This part sets out the purposes and principles of inspecting lead providers and the statutory basis for doing so, along with the inspection approach, model, frequency and timing
- [Part 2 – ECF and NPQ inspection handbook](#). This part contains information about the processes before, during and after the inspection. It includes the evaluation criteria that inspectors use to

make the graded judgements and examples of the kinds of evidence and activities they use to make their judgements

2. We carry out ECF and NPQ inspections under Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

3. We only inspect providers that are funded by the Department for Education (DfE) to provide ECF and NPQ training and professional development. Throughout this document, we refer to these as 'lead providers'.

4. We will visit a sample of schools or institutions that are commissioned as delivery partners to gather evidence about the effectiveness of the lead provider. However, we will not make inspection judgements about these delivery partners themselves. Also, we will not inspect under this framework any schools that deliver the ECF training themselves.

5. This document reflects the expectations and requirements that the DfE sets out in the ECF and NPQ programmes of education. We define the ECF and NPQ programmes of education as the content frameworks (or 'the content') alongside the contract requirements set out by the DfE, and 'the materials' that have been developed by lead providers and approved by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). More information about what these include can be found in Part 2 of this document, the handbook.

6. As in our other inspections, the term 'curriculum' relates to the aims of a programme of training or education, including the knowledge and understanding to be gained at each stage. A lead provider's curriculum will detail how it intends to structure and implement the ECF or NPQ training and professional development around the relevant programme of education.

Privacy notice

7. During inspection, inspectors will collect information by speaking to: leaders and managers at lead providers, delivery partners or schools, a sample of early career teachers (ECTs) and NPQ participants, trainers, induction tutors and mentors (where applicable). They will also collect other information, for example from webinars, presentations and online resources.

8. We use this information to prepare our report and for the purposes set out in our privacy notice. We may record information about ECTs and NPQ participants, and the people outlined in the paragraph above, temporarily for the purpose of inspection planning. Inspectors may ask to take photographs, for example of ECTs'/NPQ participants' work. Inspectors will not take photographs of individuals. It may be possible for some people to be identified from the information we have recorded, either alone or in combination with other information. We will not publish any information that could identify an individual or record any names in the inspection evidence base.

9. Ofsted has powers to carry out ECF and NPQ inspections under [section 126 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#). We have powers of entry to any premises on which the education or training is provided, including delivery partners, and powers to ‘inspect, take copies of, or take away any documents relating to the education or training’ under sections 131 and 132. These powers enable our inspectors to look at computers and other devices that may hold relevant information.

Part 1. The ECF and NPQ inspection framework

10. This framework sets out the purposes and principles of inspecting lead providers and the statutory basis for doing so, along with the inspection approach, model, frequency and timing.

Principles and purpose of inspection

11. Inspections of ECF and NPQ lead providers give an independent, external evaluation of their effectiveness and, where appropriate, recommend what they should do to improve.

12. Inspections are based on the range of evidence available to inspectors, which they evaluate against this framework. They also follow our policies and relevant legislation in areas such as safeguarding, equality and diversity.

13. Our inspections of ECF training and NPQ professional development:

- make judgements that help lead providers to learn from areas of strength and improve from areas of weakness
- encourage the improvement of individual lead providers and the education system as a whole
- ensure that information is available to potential ECTs and NPQ participants, employers and other stakeholders about the quality of ECF training and NPQ professional development
- provide information to the Secretary of State for Education and to Parliament about the work of lead providers, allowing the government to act, if necessary. This information includes whether an acceptable standard of professional development and training is being provided, minimum standards are being met, and the use of public money is justified

Statutory basis for ECF and NPQ inspections

14. ECF and NPQ inspections will be carried out under chapter 3 of [Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).

15. Publicly funded training of teachers, lecturers, trainers and others who provide education or training falls within the definition of education and training to which chapter 3 applies in section 123(1)(h) and regulation 3(1)(c) of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006 \(Prescribed Education and Training etc\) Regulations 2007](#). Therefore, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector may carry out ECF and NPQ inspections under [section 126 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#).

The Equality Act 2010

16. Inspectors will assess the extent to which the lead provider complies with the relevant legal duties as set out in the [Equality Act 2010](#) (including, where relevant, the public sector equality duty) and the [Human Rights Act 1998](#).

Overarching approach to inspection

17. This framework builds on the underpinning research and methodology used in the [education inspection framework](#) and [initial teacher education framework and handbook](#). It puts a single, joined-up conversation about the quality of professional development and training at the heart of inspection.

18. Inspectors must be able to form a connection between different pieces of evidence. Inspection activities are structured to allow them to do this. Inspectors will not emphasise one type of evidence above others. They will not focus solely on one particular training session or on one ECT or NPQ participant. Rather, inspectors will gather evidence that is balanced and connected. They will consider the quality of professional development and training and how this prepares ECTs to teach in their settings, subjects and phases and NPQ participants to apply new knowledge to their professional practice.

Inspection model

19. We will carry out 2 different types of ECF and NPQ inspection:

- full inspections
- lead provider monitoring visits (LPMVs)

20. This framework and handbook cover both of these inspections.

21. If a provider offers both ECF and NPQ programmes, we will usually carry out full inspections in parallel, where possible. However, we will always carry out a single LPMV for lead providers in their first year of operation, regardless of whether they offer both ECF and NPQ programmes.

How we determine the frequency and timing of an ECF and NPQ inspection

22. New lead providers will receive an LPMV in the first year of operation. Inspectors will take into account that the lead provider is in the early stages of implementation.

23. From the second year of delivery onwards, lead providers will usually receive a full inspection a minimum of once every 2 academic years.

24. Our scheduling arrangements will ensure that the frequency of inspection is proportionate to the performance and circumstances of lead providers. The timing of an ECF or NPQ inspection is determined by an annual risk assessment process.

25. We use a broad range of indicators to select lead providers for inspection, including:

- the time since the previous inspection
- the outcomes of the previous inspection
- local intelligence
- information from the DfE (for example, the lead provider's course arrangements, the number of participants on the courses and the views of participants on the programmes)
- any other significant concerns that are brought to our attention, for example complaints about the lead provider

26. If an LPMV finds that a lead provider is not taking effective action to ensure that delivery of the ECF and/or NPQ programmes is of a high quality, we will normally return to do a full inspection within a year.

Part 2. The ECF and NPQ inspection handbook

Inspection during the COVID-19 pandemic

27. ECF and NPQ inspections of lead providers will be on site. However, it may be pragmatic to carry out some elements of the inspection through video or telephone calls. We will also use video or telephone calls to involve stakeholders who are unable to meet in person. This will be agreed with the lead provider during the planning call.

How we will collect evidence and judge ECF and NPQ lead providers

28. This handbook is primarily a guide for inspectors on how to carry out ECF and NPQ full inspections and LPMVs. However, we have made it available to lead providers and other organisations to ensure that they are informed about the processes and procedures of inspection. The handbook balances the need for consistency in inspections with the flexibility required to respond to the individual circumstances of each lead provider.

29. This handbook should not be regarded as a set of inflexible rules, but as a broad account of the procedures of inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement when they use this handbook.

30. It applies to all inspections of lead providers and LPMVs carried out from summer 2022 under the ECF and NPQ inspection framework ('the framework').

Parallel inspections of lead providers that offer ECF and NPQ programmes

31. As explained in the ['Inspection model' section](#), if a provider offers both ECF and NPQ programmes, we will usually carry out full inspections in parallel. There will be 2 lead inspectors and 2 separate inspection teams: one for the ECF training and one for the NPQ professional development.

32. Inspection activities will be carried out separately. The lead inspectors will plan inspection activities to minimise any potential burden on the lead provider, delivery partners and schools.

33. Inspectors will make separate judgements about the individual programmes, and each inspection will result in a separate report.

Clarification for lead providers

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

35. Ofsted will:

- visit a sample of delivery partners and engage with others involved in receiving and delivering the programmes, including managers responsible for the provision, ECTs, NPQ participants, induction tutors and mentors to inform our assessment of a lead provider
- consider a range of evidence, including: national data; discussions with leaders, managers, staff, ECTs and NPQ participants; and questionnaire responses
- report on any failure to comply with the statutory requirements of the ECF
- invite the lead provider's representative (the nominee) to observe inspectors' daily team meetings and final team meetings

36. Ofsted will not:

- make judgements about individual delivery partners
- make a direct judgement on the ECF or NPQ programmes of education
- grade individual lessons taught by ECTs or NPQ participants, or sessions led by trainers or mentors
- provide evidence that could be used in capability or disciplinary proceedings, or for the purposes of performance management
- advocate a particular method of planning (including lesson planning), teaching or assessment
- have pre-conceived expectations of what ECF and NPQ curriculum plans should look like
- expect the ECF to be used as an assessment framework

37. Ofsted does not require lead providers to make available to inspectors:

- evidence in any specific format, including ECF and/or NPQ curriculum planning

evidence for inspection beyond that set out in this handbook

- photographic evidence of ECTs' or NPQ participants' work (although inspectors may ask to take photographs of parts of their work, which will be anonymised)
- performance and tracking information
- self-evaluation, other than that which is already part of the provider's usual business processes

38. Ofsted does not require lead providers to:

- do additional preparatory work or ask delivery partners to do preparatory work specifically for the inspection, beyond that necessary for the smooth running of the inspection
- use our evaluation schedule in any way to grade the training or professional development provided by delivery partners

39. Ofsted does not specify:

- how training or professional development planning should be set out, the length of time it should take or the amount of detail it should contain (although we will expect this to be in line with the requirements set out in the lead provider's contract and signed off by the DfE)
- how lead providers quality assure the training and professional development provided by delivery partners

Contract requirements

40. Lead providers are contracted to deliver either the ECF training or NPQ professional development, or both. They have secured contracts from the DfE through a competitive procurement process. These contracts specify certain compliance criteria that lead providers must adhere to when designing ECF training and/or NPQ professional development. The DfE and EEF have also approved the materials, content and coverage of ECF statements and underlying evidence. In this handbook, we refer to these set elements as 'the programme of education'.

Full inspections and LPMVs of ECF and NPQ lead providers

Before the inspection or LPMV

41. The arrangements set out in this section apply to both full inspections and LPMVs, except where otherwise stated.

Notification and introduction

42. We will normally contact the lead provider's representative by telephone to announce the inspection or LPMV between 9.30am and 11am 5 working days before the start of the inspection or visit, usually on a Monday.

43. If the lead provider's representative is unavailable when the notification call is made, we will ask to speak to the most senior member of staff available. After we have informed the lead provider that the inspection will take place, we will send confirmation to the lead provider by email.

44. An inspection support administrator (ISA) will request information that the lead provider will need to provide before the inspection. They will also request information that will be required by the start of the inspection.

45. The ISA will then send the lead provider a note setting out information for leaders to be aware of before the inspection. This will include:

- Ofsted's privacy notice, which lead providers should share with any delivery partners, schools, mentors, induction tutors, stakeholders and ECTs or NPQ participants that inspectors will be meeting during the inspection
- clarification that inspectors will use a range of technology to gather evidence electronically, including mobile devices, tablets and laptops
- a notification to be distributed to delivery partners, schools, mentors, induction tutors, stakeholders and ECTs or NPQ participants confirming the dates of the inspection
- clarification that inspectors may request to take photographic evidence, for example of ECTs'/NPQ participants' work, but that inspectors will not take photographs of individuals or any materials that will identify individuals
- emails to be sent to delivery partners, trainers, ECTs, NPQ participants, induction tutors, schools, mentors and other relevant stakeholders notifying them of the visit

Requests for deferral or cancellation

46. A lead provider may request a deferral of its full inspection or LPMV. The provider may make a request to the ISA when notified of the inspection, or to the lead inspector on the same day. We will not normally consider a deferral request if we receive it after 4.30pm on the day that the lead provider is notified. If the ISA or lead inspector receives a request, they must immediately contact the regional duty desk. We will decide whether this should be granted in accordance with our [deferral policy](#).

Information that lead providers must provide by 9am, 2 days after the notification call (usually on a Wednesday)

47. Lead providers must confirm:

- the list of all ECF and/or NPQ delivery partners, their main location and the location of the training they deliver, including whether this is delivered remotely, and whether they focus on any specialist delivery areas
- the number of ECTs, with each delivery partner and their phase
- the number of NPQ participants on each course being offered
- timetables for all delivery partners' training sessions (whether face-to-face or online) taking place during the inspection or LPMV
- information about the ECF and/or NPQ training curriculum, including an overview of the training calendar with start and planned end dates
- information about the mentor training curriculum, including an overview of the training calendar
- how inspectors can access handbooks or other relevant information
- general information such as key staff names and responsibilities, office locations and practical arrangements, for example about travel, to allow for effective and efficient planning

Information that lead providers must provide by the start of the inspection or LPMV

48. Any pre-existing evidence of:

- how lead providers gain an understanding of the experience and expertise of trainers and mentors
- how lead providers monitor the quality of aspects of the programmes delivered by the delivery partners
- the professional development and/or training provided for trainers/facilitators in delivery partners
- strategic oversight/governance processes
- self-evaluation and subsequent improvement planning

Preparation

49. Following notification, the lead inspector (or in parallel inspections, both lead inspectors) will speak to the lead provider's representative(s) to arrange the preparatory telephone conversations. These will have 2 elements:

- a reflective, educationally focused conversation about the lead provider's context, strengths and challenges and, where relevant, action since the previous inspection or LPMV
- shorter inspection-planning conversations that focus on practical and logistical matters

50. In parallel inspections, ECF training and NPQ professional development may be managed by a central senior leadership team or by different teams:

- when they are managed by one team, the 2 lead inspectors may attend one initial reflective, educationally focused conversation and then hold separate conversations with the leadership teams of specific programmes
- when they are managed by different teams, leaders can opt for 2 separate reflective, educationally focused conversations (each led by the relevant lead inspector)

51. In calls to ECF and NPQ lead providers, inspectors will discuss:

- the team structure, including roles and responsibilities
- how samples of different stakeholders will be selected
- in the case of a full inspection, the focused review methodology and which delivery partners will form the initial focused review sample
- the information needed by the start of the inspection or LPMV
- any planned interruptions to normal routines during the inspection or LPMV

52. Lead providers must provide a list of all ECTs and/or NPQ participants who are at the delivery partners selected by the lead inspector(s). This is so that inspectors can choose a sample of ECTs and NPQ participants. The lead provider must make these lists available as soon as possible, but definitely by 9am on the fourth day (usually the Thursday) following the reflective, educationally focused conversation.

The reflective, educationally focused conversation

53. This conversation will take place 2 days after the notification call, normally between 11am and 12.30pm. However, the lead inspector will try to take account of staff availability and avoid disrupting the lead provider's day-to-day work. The conversation will usually last around 90 minutes.

54. Inspectors will use the conversation to understand:

- the lead provider's context, including the ways in which leaders work with delivery partners
- how leaders have designed a curriculum to implement the ECF programme of education effectively so that it is taught 'exactly, comprehensively and exclusively' (as set out by the DfE)
- how the curriculum supports ECTs to understand and apply the knowledge and skills set out in the ECF content ('learn that' and 'learn how to' statements) in their setting
- how leaders have designed a curriculum to implement the NPQ programmes of education effectively so that they are taught comprehensively
- how leaders ensure that course facilitators/trainers have the necessary knowledge, expertise and experience
- how leaders ensure, and assure themselves, that their curriculum will prepare ECTs to teach effectively in their setting

- how leaders plan to ensure, and assure themselves, that their curriculum is preparing NPQ participants for leadership roles within their setting
- where relevant, the progress that leaders have made in evaluating the effectiveness of the programmes they deliver and act on the strengths and weaknesses of the provision, including any areas for improvement identified at previous inspections or LPMVs
- any enhancements and adaptations made to the curriculum to meet the needs of ECTs and/or NPQ participants, including those in specialist areas and any local or national priorities
- how leaders ensure that the delivery-partner-based curriculum and school-based mentoring are being developed in a way that will support ECTs, including those who are not following a typical pattern, to complete their induction
- how leaders ensure, and assure themselves, that their mentor training programme enables mentors to understand their role and support ECTs with clear, consistent and effective mentoring in their school
- how leaders have set up and use systems to communicate and engage with different stakeholders so that they can be adaptive to the needs of ECTs and NPQ participants

Inspection planning discussion

55. This discussion will normally begin on the day after the reflective, educationally focused conversation.

56. In parallel inspections, this would normally be 2 separate calls with the relevant programme leadership teams. The lead inspectors will take account of the lead provider's representative's availability and aim to avoid disrupting the provider's day-to-day business.

57. For each of the separate inspections or LPMVs, the relevant lead inspector will:

- discuss which ECTs, mentors, NPQ participants, school leaders and induction tutors will be selected for the initial sample
- ask that the lead provider flags any ECTs or NPQ participants who should not be part of the sample, for example due to capability procedures
- discuss any information about planned interruptions to normal routines during the inspection or LPMV
- consider information about events taking place at delivery partners and schools during the inspection or LPMV week
- review details of selected ECTs' or NPQ participants' places of work, including addresses and unique reference numbers (URNs) for schools
- request information about staff absence and other practical issues
- agree a place where the inspection team(s) can be based, and other practical arrangements such as wifi codes

- request maps, postcodes or sat nav details of the delivery partners
- provide an opportunity for the lead provider to ask any questions or raise any concerns, such as perceived conflicts of interest
- arrange meetings with relevant staff, including:
 - those responsible for governance
 - those responsible for delivering the ECF and mentor training and NPQ professional development
 - groups of or individual mentors identified by the inspector
 - groups of or individual current ECTs or NPQ participants identified by the inspector
 - former ECTs or NPQ participants to give feedback on their training experiences identified by the inspector (where applicable)
 - school leaders and induction tutors (where relevant)
- discuss other meetings needed to understand the lead provider's curriculum intent, implementation and impact

58. The lead inspector may also ask the lead provider for other information required to carry out the inspection or LPMV. They may arrange follow-up calls to finalise arrangements.

Further preparation for inspection or an LPMV carried out by the lead inspector

59. Planning for an inspection or LPMV will be informed by analysis of a wide range of information. This may include:

- the previous inspection report for the lead provider (where relevant)
- any surveys or LPMV letters
- information about the provider from the DfE
- the outcomes of any risk assessment Ofsted has carried out
- information on Ofsted's provider information portal, including any complaints received since the previous inspection and compliance action taken by the DfE
- ECT and NPQ participant surveys and/or questionnaires
- relevant publicly available information, such as the lead provider's website
- information provided to Ofsted on an annual basis by the lead provider

Seeking the views of stakeholders

60. Inspectors will meet with a range of stakeholders during both LPMVs and full inspections.

61. The views of ECTs, mentors and NPQ participants are important for inspectors to consider when determining the effectiveness of the training. Therefore, as part of a full inspection or LPMV, following the notification call, we will share a link to relevant surveys for each group of people. The

surveys will be open from the point of the notification call and will close on day 3 of the inspection at 1pm.

62. Surveys carried out by the lead provider or the DfE to gather the views of ECTs, mentors, NPQ participants, school leaders, induction tutors and lead provider or delivery partner staff may also provide useful evidence. These surveys, however, do not replace inspectors talking to these stakeholders or collecting their views through our own inspection surveys.

Focused reviews during full inspections

63. Although meetings with leaders are important, inspectors' priority during full inspections is to collect first-hand evidence of the experience of ECTs, mentors and NPQ participants. Inspectors will do this through focused reviews. The focused reviews will provide evidence of the effective implementation and impact of the lead provider's curriculum.

- On ECF inspections, the focused reviews will provide evidence of how well ECTs learn about the core content areas of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment and how they might apply these in their settings, subjects and phases. Evidence from focused review activities will also inform judgements on how well ECTs learn about and apply their skills in the core content areas of managing pupils' behaviour and their own professional behaviours. Inspectors will also consider how well the taught curriculum ensures fidelity with the set programme and the quality of the mentor training programme.
- On NPQ inspections, the focused reviews will provide evidence of how well NPQ participants learn new knowledge and skills that they can use in their professional practice.

64. Each inspector will typically carry out focused reviews on days 1 and 2 of the inspection. They may continue with focused-review activities, where necessary, during days 3 and 4.

65. On ECF inspections, the lead inspector will liaise with the lead provider to select a sample of ECTs and their mentors for each inspector to focus on. The sample will be primarily phase- or setting-based. The samples of ECTs will be selected from delivery partners across several different regions, where possible. [\[footnote 1\]](#)

66. On NPQ inspections, each focused review will be on one of the NPQ programmes offered by the lead provider.

67. Lead inspectors need to consider which delivery partners to choose as part of the focused review sample, to ensure that it is diverse and inclusive. This could be done geographically, based on the location of individuals within the inspection team. It could be based on the number of ECTs or NPQ participants at individual delivery partners, ensuring that very large or very small cohorts are considered. However it is done, the lead inspector must ensure breadth as well as depth in the sample. It will cover different geographical areas, phases and delivery partner types.

68. The lead inspector(s) will identify any delivery partner training sessions and/or other events that it might be possible to visit and the range of discussions that will need to be arranged. Lead inspectors should discuss and agree these requirements with the lead provider's representative as soon as possible so they can make the necessary arrangements.

Planning the inspection or LPMV

69. The lead provider will confirm the inspection or LPMV timetable so that leaders can make the necessary practical arrangements with delivery partners, ECTs and NPQ participants, mentors and other stakeholders. The lead provider will provide practical information for the inspection team, for example about meeting rooms and car parking.

70. The lead inspector(s) will prepare and distribute the joining instructions to the relevant inspection team. In parallel full inspections, the individual lead inspectors will be responsible for preparing these and distributing them to their team.

71. The joining instructions are likely to include:

- essential information about the lead provider, its delivery partners and the timing of the inspection
- a brief summary of the pre-inspection information
- a clear indication of inspectors' roles, responsibilities and locations
- an inspection programme, the delivery partners and schools to be visited/communicated with and any other inspection activities, including team meetings
- for a full inspection, the focused reviews that will be carried out initially during the first 2 days of the inspection

72. Lead inspectors must deploy inspection team members effectively to contribute to the key judgement areas.

73. Inspectors must plan sufficient time to meet frequently with the lead provider's representative(s), to hold inspection team meetings and to give oral feedback so that, wherever possible, they can finish the inspection in the usual time frame. During parallel inspections, both lead inspectors must plan regular time together and, where appropriate, hold joint meetings with the central senior leadership teams at the lead provider.

74. The lead inspector must complete the record of visits form, which will list the delivery partners for this inspection, including the specific schools that contribute to the training of ECTs. The lead inspector must check that the settings selected are not due to be visited as part of another known Ofsted inspection by completing and submitting this form in a timely manner. It may be necessary to change the initial selection of delivery partners or schools.

The full inspection

Days allocated to inspection and inspection team members

75. Full inspections will usually consist of 4 days of activity within the same week. The size of the inspection team may vary according to a number of factors, for example the geographical reach of the delivery partners that the lead provider uses, the number of participants and/or the number of NPQ courses the provider delivers.

Arrival time on the first day of inspection

76. On the first day of a full inspection, inspectors will normally arrive on site between 10.30am and 12 midday. Earlier activities may be planned if they are virtual and do not interfere with travel. Where the inspection starts on a Monday, lead inspectors should adapt the start time to ensure that team members do not need to travel on a Sunday evening.

Gathering and recording evidence

77. Inspections will normally begin with discussions with senior staff from the lead provider to understand the organisation, structure and intent of the ECF and/or NPQ programmes and to confirm practical arrangements, as necessary.

78. Inspectors will also meet or hold video or telephone calls with individuals or groups of leaders and/or those involved in delivering the ECF training or NPQ professional development. Inspectors will not make judgements about individual delivery partners but will consider how the lead provider:

- oversees and quality assures the implementation of the ECF and/or NPQ curriculum by its delivery partners
- ensures that mentors receive high-quality training and support to enable them to be an effective mentor
- holds delivery partners to account for the quality of professional development and training that they deliver on behalf of the provider

Inspectors' visits to training

79. During an inspection, inspectors may visit training or professional development sessions to collect evidence about the quality of training. Inspectors will want to understand what ECTs and NPQ participants know, understand and can do as a result of their professional development and training.

80. When visiting training sessions, inspectors will consider:

- how the session fits into the ECF, mentor or NPQ training curriculum
- how well delivery partner staff implement the planned curriculum
- whether ECTs, mentors and NPQ participants are able to build on previous learning
- whether ECTs and NPQ participants can see how the individual taught parts of the programme build together to influence positive change in their professional practice

81. Inspectors may observe meetings between mentors and ECTs to consider how well ECTs are supported to develop their knowledge and skills in teaching their subjects and phases.

82. Inspectors will talk to NPQ participants to consider the effectiveness of the professional development they are receiving.

Meeting with stakeholders

83. Inspectors will hold meetings, video calls or telephone calls during inspections with a range of individuals and groups, such as:

- lead provider representatives or senior leaders
- lead provider training or professional development leaders
- delivery partner representatives or trainers
- school-based mentors and induction leads
- school-based leaders (where applicable)
- current and former ECTs (where applicable)
- current and former NPQ participants (where applicable)
- those responsible for governance or executive board members
- other stakeholders

Meeting with delivery partner staff and school-based mentors and leaders

84. Inspectors will meet with delivery partner trainers to evaluate how well the planned curriculum is designed around the programme of education. They will also assess how well it is implemented to support ECTs to teach their subject or phase of education and prepare NPQ participants for their respective roles.

85. Inspectors will meet with school-based mentors to consider how well the mentor training enables mentors to support ECTs effectively, including where mentors are less experienced or have less capacity due to other workload pressures. They will also consider how well the school-based mentoring aligns with, and reinforces the content and sequencing of, the lead provider's curriculum. Inspectors will be mindful of where the responsibility for mentor training ends (as the quality of individual mentors is the responsibility of the schools in which the ECTs work).

86. Inspectors will normally also meet with relevant school and/or trust leaders or local authorities to discuss the effectiveness and impact of the training their ECTs and NPQ participants receive.

Meeting with current and former ECTs and NPQ participants

87. Inspectors will meet with current ECTs to consider how well they have learned the core content themes and the extent to which they know how to apply these to their teaching in their setting, subject and/or phase. Inspectors will discuss how ECTs work with their mentors to enhance their practice, for example through the use of exemplified materials.

88. Inspectors will also meet with ECTs who have recently completed their induction to consider how well they apply the ECF training curriculum, including how they teach pupils in specific subjects and phases.

89. During NPQ inspections, inspectors will speak to current participants and those who have recently completed courses. In both cases, this is to consider the quality of the professional development and how well participants can apply what they have learned in their role. Inspectors will also consider whether participants are receiving/did receive the support and feedback they need/needed to improve.

90. Meetings may be held in a variety of ways to make sure that inspectors can speak to as many ECTs and/or NPQ participants as possible. Meetings can include:

- visits (where applicable) to delivery partners and schools where several ECTs and NPQ participants are present
- video or telephone calls
- individual calls in which a specific topic needs to be discussed that may be important for evidence-gathering
- focus group discussions with a range of current and former ECTs and/or NPQ participants to discuss the impact of training or professional development

Other evidence-gathering activities

91. Inspectors will also carry out other activities to gather evidence for the 2 key judgements in the full inspection. These may include scrutiny of:

- documents relating to leadership and management
- pre-existing improvement planning and self-evaluation documents to consider the impact of these on the quality of provision
- any pre-existing evidence of internal and external monitoring and evaluation that may demonstrate how the provider improves provision
- any evidence of how the lead provider's leaders monitor the needs of mentors, and use their

understanding of the experience and expertise of mentors and trainers to inform their mentor training

- any evidence of the training provided for mentors and trainers that supports the delivery of the curriculum

Engaging with the lead provider's representative(s)

92. In order for inspection to support improvement, the lead provider needs to understand the evidence and findings that have led to the judgements and recommendations for improvement.

93. The lead inspectors will ensure that the lead provider's representative/leaders:

- are kept informed about how the inspection is proceeding
- understand how the inspection team reaches its judgements
- have opportunities to clarify how evidence is used to reach judgements
- understand the strengths and weaknesses identified when looking at the ECT training and NPQ professional development

Team meetings during the inspection

94. Inspection teams will:

- meet each day to discuss emerging findings. Team members may join these meetings remotely as appropriate. A maximum of 2 nominated leaders or managers from the lead provider will be invited as observers
- hold regular keeping-in-touch meetings with the lead provider's nominated representative(s) throughout the inspection
- meet at the end of the inspection for a grading meeting. A maximum of 2 nominated leaders or managers from the lead provider will be invited as observers, but all judgements will be made by inspectors and the inspection team
- record the outcomes of all team meetings electronically

Reaching final judgements

95. Lead inspectors will ensure that time is set aside for inspectors to prepare for the final team meeting and the final feedback. During the final team meeting, the team will discuss the evidence and agree judgements for the quality of professional development and training and for leadership and management, as well as an overall judgement grade. The main points for feedback to the lead provider will be recorded as the meeting progresses.

Providing feedback

96. Each inspection ends with a final feedback meeting with the lead provider. The lead inspector must ensure that the lead provider is clear:

- about the provisional grades awarded for each key judgement area
- about the key findings from the inspection, as summarised in the final summary evaluation; the lead inspector must give sufficient details to enable all attendees to understand how judgements have been reached
- that the grades are provisional and may be subject to change as a result of quality assurance procedures or moderation, and so must be treated as restricted and confidential to the relevant senior personnel (as determined by the lead provider)
- that the main findings of the inspection and the main points provided orally in the feedback, subject to any change, will be referred to in the text of the report, although the text of the report may differ slightly from the oral feedback
- that the post-inspection survey is available for them to complete
- about any recommendations for improvement
- about the process for publication of the report
- how to make a complaint about the inspection

After the inspection

The inspection report

97. Full inspections will result in a published report for each of the ECF and NPQ contracts as applicable to the lead provider.

98. For all inspections, the relevant lead inspector will be responsible for writing the inspection report and submitting the evidence to Ofsted shortly after the inspection ends.

99. The lead inspector will:

- ensure that the text of the report explains the judgements and reflects the evidence
- ensure that the findings in the report are consistent with the feedback given to the lead provider at the end of the inspection
- complete and submit the final version of the record of visits form, which lists the providers and schools visited as part of the inspection, to check that the settings selected are not due to be visited as part of another known Ofsted inspection.

Arrangements for publishing the report

100. Inspection reports will be quality assured before they are shared with the lead provider. The draft report is restricted and confidential to the relevant personnel (as determined by the lead provider) and should not be shared more widely or published.

101. Normally within 18 working days of the end of the inspection, the lead provider will be invited to comment on the draft report. The lead provider will have 5 working days to alert us to any factual inaccuracies in the draft report or make other comments about the inspection process and findings it would like us to consider before the report is finalised.

102. The lead inspector will consider all comments. The lead provider's comments and lead inspector's responses may be reviewed by regional Senior Her Majesty's Inspectors (SHMI) if appropriate.

103. Typically, the lead provider will receive an electronic version of the report within 30 working days of the end of the inspection. We will also send our response to comments on the draft report and inspection process and findings. In most circumstances, the final report will be published on our reports website within 38 working days.

104. The ISA will email the final version of the report to the:

- lead provider
- lead inspector
- DfE

105. The inspection process is not completed until all inspection activity has been carried out and the final version of the inspection report has been published.

The inspection evidence base

106. The evidence base for all inspections will be retained in line with our retention and disposal policy. This is normally for 6 years from when the report is published. We may decide that retaining it for longer is warranted for research purposes.

The evaluation schedule – how we will judge lead providers

107. The evaluation schedule is not exhaustive. It does not replace the professional judgement of inspectors.

108. Inspectors will use the evaluation schedule in conjunction with the instructions and guidance in [Part 1](#).

109. For a full inspection, graded judgements will be made against the following key judgement areas:

- overall effectiveness
- quality of professional development and training
- leadership and management

110. Inspectors will use the following 4-point scale to grade the key judgement areas and the overall effectiveness judgement:

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

111. Inspectors will use the criteria set out below to make each of the graded judgements for the full inspections.

Reaching a judgement of outstanding

112. Outstanding is a challenging and exacting judgement. In order to reach this standard, inspectors will determine whether the lead provider meets all the criteria for good under that judgement and whether it does so securely and consistently. In other words, it is not enough for the lead provider to perform strongly against some aspects of the judgement and not against others; it must meet all the criteria for good. In addition, there are further criteria set out under the outstanding judgement that the lead provider will also need to meet.

113. A lead provider should only be judged outstanding in a particular area if it is performing exceptionally. This outstanding performance should be consistent and secure across all judgement areas in order to be judged outstanding overall.

Reaching a judgement of good, requires improvement or inadequate

114. When considering a final judgement, inspectors will assess whether the evidence they have gathered shows that the lead provider's overall quality is most closely aligned with the criteria for good.

115. When a lead provider does not, on a best-fit approach, meet the criteria for good, and none of the criteria for inadequate apply, the lead provider will be graded as requires improvement.

116. When inspectors' evidence shows that any one of the criteria for inadequate applies, then this aspect of the lead provider's work will likely be judged inadequate.

Overall effectiveness

117. In judging the lead provider's overall effectiveness during a full inspection, inspectors will take account of the 2 key judgements:

- the quality of professional development and training
- leadership and management

118. Inspectors will judge the overall effectiveness by applying the grading criteria set out below.

Grade descriptors for overall effectiveness

Outstanding (1)

- The quality of professional development and training is outstanding.
- The quality of leadership and management is outstanding.

Good (2)

- Both key judgements must be at least good.

Requires improvement (3)

- If the lead provider is judged as requires improvement in either of the 2 key judgements, the overall effectiveness will also be requires improvement, unless one key judgement is inadequate.

- The provision complies with the [contract requirements](#) as set by the DfE.

Inadequate (4)

- The judgement on the lead provider's overall effectiveness will be inadequate if either one or both of the key judgements is inadequate.
- It will also be inadequate if it is non-compliant with the [statutory DfE guidance for ECF](#).

The quality of professional development and training

119. Inspectors will take a rounded view of the quality of professional development and training that a lead provider offers. This will include close consideration of the lead provider's curriculum.

120. Inspectors will:

- consider how lead providers have designed their curriculum around the set programme of education to enable ECTs and NPQ participants to learn about, and learn how to apply, the content in their respective subject/phase contexts, settings and leadership roles (we call this 'intent'). This includes the design of ECF mentor training so that school-based mentors can support ECTs effectively
- consider the way in which the lead provider's curriculum is delivered and quality assured, ensuring that ECF mentor training is of a sufficiently high quality to support ECTs to build their knowledge and apply that knowledge (we call this 'implementation')
- consider whether ECTs and NPQ participants know more and remember more of the planned content and can apply that knowledge to their professional practice (we call this 'impact')
- comment on the quality of the lead provider's ECF mentor training programme to support ECTs

121. Inspectors will not make a judgement on the ECF and NPQ programmes of education, which are set by the DfE and approved by the EEF (see ['contract requirements'](#)).

Intent: ECF

122. In evaluating the lead provider's intent, inspectors will primarily consider:

- how well lead providers have designed a curriculum that takes the body of professional

knowledge and content specified in the 5 core areas of content^[footnote 2] and exemplified it so that ECTs can apply that knowledge as they teach in different phases, settings and subjects

- how well the lead provider's curriculum considers the ECTs' prior knowledge and how well it can be adapted to meet individuals' needs
- whether the lead provider has developed an effective mentor training programme. This programme should support mentors to understand how they might exemplify the ECF, making it specific to subjects, phases and settings. For example, in the case of primary ECTs, it should support them to teach early reading, including systematic synthetic phonics, confidently and competently

123. In forming a judgement about the lead provider's intent, inspectors will be mindful of the requirements and expectations that lead providers need to meet in constructing their ECF training curriculum. Inspectors will discuss intent with the lead provider's representatives, leaders and managers.

Intent: NPQ

124. In evaluating the lead provider's intent, inspectors will consider:

- whether the lead provider has designed an ambitious and well-sequenced professional development curriculum that elaborates on and exemplifies the set components from the NPQ frameworks. This curriculum should build on participants' experience and expertise to enable them to further develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours so that they can successfully move on to the next stage of their professional practice
- how the content of this curriculum is structured and sequenced over the course of the training
- how the common threads across the NPQ content frameworks are exemplified, explored and made accessible for leaders at different stages of their professional careers, so that they are prepared for successive qualifications and leadership positions

125. In forming a judgement about the lead provider's intent, inspectors will be mindful of the requirements and expectations that lead providers need to meet in constructing their NPQ professional development curriculum. Inspectors will discuss intent with the lead provider's representatives, leaders and managers.

Implementation

126. In evaluating the implementation of the lead provider's ECF or NPQ curriculum, inspectors will primarily consider how ECTs, NPQ participants and mentors are taught and trained. Inspectors will consider how the mentoring training programme supports ECTs.

127. In forming a judgement about ECF and NPQ lead providers' implementation, inspectors will be mindful of the requirements and expectations that lead providers need to meet in implementing their

programmes.

The use of assessment

128. Inspectors will evaluate how the lead provider uses formative assessment to inform the delivery of the curriculum.

129. Assessment of ECTs and NPQ participants should be largely formative. Inspectors should check that ECTs and NPQ participants are gaining, applying and refining the knowledge and skills set out in the lead provider's curriculum. Lead providers should use formative assessment to help ECTs and NPQ participants embed knowledge and use it fluently, and to assist trainers and mentors to refine the support that they offer.

130. The content of the ECF is not an assessment tool, and should not be used as one. Delivery partners should avoid using summative assessments too early (for example, by using generic outcome descriptors such as the [teachers' standards](#)). At the end of an ECT's induction period, [the appropriate body](#) will use the teachers' standards to assess the ECT's performance.

131. Inspectors will not consider the accuracy of NPQ summative assessments. They will understand the expectations of the contractual requirements for NPQ assessments.

Impact

132. In evaluating the impact of ECF and NPQ lead providers, inspectors will consider whether:

- ECTs and NPQ participants know more and remember more of the intended training or professional development and can apply that knowledge systematically in their professional practice
- ECTs have learned the components of the set ECF content and whether their professional practice has been developed appropriately from their starting points, over the 2-year induction period, so they have gained the ability to apply these principles in the context of their subject and phase
- NPQ participants have learned the components of the set NPQ content and their professional practice/leadership has been developed appropriately from their starting points in preparation for the next stage of professional practice

133. In informing a judgement about the ECF and/or NPQ lead provider's impact, inspectors will be mindful of the requirements and expectations that lead providers need to meet in determining impact. This includes that the content set out in the ECF should not be used as an assessment framework.

Grade descriptors: quality of professional development and training

134. Inspectors will use professional judgement when judging the quality of the lead provider's professional development and training.

- If all aspects of the criteria for good are consistently met, inspectors will consider whether all the criteria for outstanding are also met. For a lead provider to be graded outstanding for quality of professional development and training, it must be consistently meeting all aspects of the criteria for good and outstanding.
- When a lead provider does not, on a 'best fit' basis, meet the criteria for good consistently and none of the criteria for inadequate apply, it will be graded as requires improvement for its quality of professional development and training.
- When inspectors' evidence shows that any of the descriptors for inadequate apply, then this aspect of the lead provider's work will likely be judged inadequate.

Outstanding (1)

The lead provider meets all the criteria for good for the quality of professional development and training securely and consistently. The quality of education and training provided is exceptional.

In addition, the following apply.

Intent

- The lead provider's training curriculum is expertly designed, fully inclusive of the set ECF or NPQ programmes and pitched meticulously to the starting points and development needs of ECTs or NPQ participants. This enables ECTs or NPQ participants to become highly competent and confident as teachers and leaders.
- All delivery partner leaders and trainers have a deep and consistent understanding of the intended curriculum and the appropriate experience, expertise and knowledge to implement it.
- The ECF mentor training programme is designed to be of a consistently high quality, ensuring that mentors are equipped to provide very effective support for ECTs. This is the case even when individual mentors are less experienced or have less capacity due to other workload pressures.

Implementation

- The ECF training and/or NPQ professional development curriculum is implemented and delivered consistently well across all delivery partners. This allows ECTs and NPQ participants to learn the content of the intended curriculum highly effectively.
- The lead provider has ensured strong links between the mentor training curriculum and

training curriculum for the ECF. This means that the mentoring programme is of a consistently high quality, enabling ECTs to gain knowledge and expertise in their chosen subjects, settings and phases.

- Trainers and mentors across all the delivery partners are consistently skilful at drawing on the lead provider's curriculum, so that interactions with individual ECTs or NPQ participants are pitched at exactly the right level to accelerate their progress.

Impact

- Over the course of the 2-year training programme, ECTs develop highly detailed knowledge and high-quality practices and working habits. They have the ability to apply these principles very effectively in the context of their subject, settings and phases.
- NPQ participants acquire and develop leadership knowledge and expertise that significantly enhance their current leadership skills and prepare them well for the next stage of their professional practice.

Good (2)

Intent

The lead provider's curriculum:

- is ambitious in scope, coherent and well planned. It is designed carefully around the set ECF or NPQ programmes of education and builds on ECTs' or NPQ participants' prior expertise and experience. It leads to cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills so that ECTs or NPQ participants become proficient and confident practitioners and leaders
- enables ECTs or NPQ participants to apply generic principles from the set programmes to their subject, phase or leadership position
- encourages ECTs or NPQ participants to engage with up-to-date and pertinent research findings, for example the research that informs the ECF and NPQ frameworks
- ensures that ECTs or NPQ participants are taught how to apply principles from scholarship and research relevant to their subject, phase or leadership position. For instance, they have the ability to teach early reading effectively, including using systematic synthetic phonics proficiently and improving literacy for all pupils
- includes details of how ECTs will develop their knowledge of how to promote inclusion, by applying high expectations to all groups and ensuring that all pupils have access to a broad, rich curriculum
- sets out how mentors will gain the knowledge they need to provide effective support, so that ECTs can apply what they are learning in their subject, phase or setting

- sets out clearly how delivery partners will implement the lead provider's curriculum ensuring fidelity with the set ECF and NPQ programmes
- enables NPQ participants to develop their professional behaviours and ECTs to develop wider professional responsibilities to help them prepare for a successful career as a teacher. They are taught how to manage their workloads and understand how to maintain their own health and well-being, as well as how to engage with relevant leadership and/or scholarly communities
- emphasises high standards for ECTs' or NPQ participants' personal and professional conduct, including through any online presence and in promoting a positive view of inclusion

Implementation

- ECTs or NPQ participants receive clear, consistent and effective professional development and training from the lead provider and delivery partners' settings. They receive regular formative feedback and are supported through focused and challenging discussion.
- All trainers and expert practitioners are supported to draw on and model application of their own knowledge and skills, relevant to their subject, phase or leadership position. They demonstrate and develop expertise in how to use relevant professional and academic literature. They find meaningful opportunities to enhance ECTs' subject and curriculum knowledge and NPQ participants' leadership practice.
- Trainers frequently check what ECTs or NPQ participants have learned and understand of the curriculum. They can use this information to plan the next stages of training and mentoring. This helps ECTs or NPQ participants to embed and apply what they have learned and are learning.
- Training for ECF mentors is of a consistently high quality. This enables mentors to provide ECTs with clear, consistent and effective mentoring support so that they can apply their knowledge of the generic content of the ECF into subjects, phases and settings.
- Training for mentors promotes the importance of ECTs' learning targets being produced collaboratively between mentors and ECTs. These targets relate to the programme content and focus on the specific expertise to be developed. They are adapted flexibly in response to ECTs' progress and needs, including those relating to the protected characteristics cited in the Equality Act 2010.

Impact

- ECTs or NPQ participants have largely learned the intended knowledge and skills set out in the lead provider's curriculum. They are able to apply this knowledge confidently in their professional practice in the subjects and phases in which they teach and/or in

their leadership positions. The professional development and training have adequately prepared them for the next stage of their career.

- ECTs or NPQ participants are able to reflect on their teaching and leadership behaviours, including identifying their strengths and areas for improvement.

Requires improvement (3)

- The quality of professional development and training for ECTs, NPQ participants or mentors is not good.
- The lead provider has not included the full content of the ECF in the training programme. However, the minor elements that are not included do not have a significantly negative impact on the overall quality of the ECF training curriculum for ECTs.
- The lead provider has not included the full content of the NPQ professional development programme. This does not have a significantly negative impact on the overall quality of the programme.

Inadequate (4)

Intent

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

The lead provider's curriculum:

- lacks ambition and coherence and is poorly planned. It does not take into account ECTs' or NPQ participants' prior expertise and experience
- fails to develop cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for ECTs or NPQ participants
- does not comply with the set contents of the ECF or NPQ programmes in multiple core areas or in one area that leads to a significantly negative impact on the quality of the training programme for ECTs or NPQ participants
- does not enable ECTs or NPQ participants to learn about and/or learn how to apply the generic principles of the set frameworks to their own practice. Consequently, they do not develop or improve the knowledge, practices and working habits that they will need

for teaching or leadership

- does not ensure that training for ECF mentors is of a consistently high quality, so mentors are not able to support ECTs sufficiently
- does not ensure that ECTs or NPQ participants are taught how to apply principles from scholarship and research relevant to their setting, subject, phase or leadership position. For instance, they do not have the ability to teach early reading effectively, including using systematic synthetic phonics proficiently and improving literacy for all pupils

Implementation

- The implementation of the lead provider's curriculum is weak. Too many ECTs or NPQ participants receive inadequate and ineffective professional development and training.
- Mentor training is ineffective. It does not enable mentors to support ECTs to adapt their learning to their own settings, subjects and phases.
- The ECF is, incorrectly, being used as an assessment framework.

Impact

- When ECTs and/or participants on the NPQ programmes complete the professional development and training programmes, they are unaware of their professional strengths and areas for improvement.
- ECTs do not gain the knowledge or develop the practices and working habits they need to prepare them for a successful career in teaching.
- NPQ participants are unable to apply what they have learned to their setting/contexts when making leadership decisions.

Leadership and management

135. This judgement is about how well leaders, managers and those responsible for governance ensure that the lead provider's professional development and training has a positive impact on all ECTs, NPQ participants and mentors.

136. Inspectors will:

- evaluate the work and impact of senior leaders, managers and other leaders in the lead provider
- meet with delivery partners, school leaders, induction tutors, trainers, mentors and ECTs or NPQ participants to establish the quality of leadership and management in the lead provider

- comment on how well the lead provider understands the strengths and areas for development in the ECF training and the mentoring programme, and also comment on the effectiveness of actions taken to mitigate any risks
- comment on how well the lead provider understands the strengths and areas for development in the NPQ professional development, and comment on the effectiveness of actions taken to mitigate any risks

137. Inspectors will not:

- evaluate leaders and managers in the delivery partners
- evaluate leaders, induction tutors, managers and mentors in the schools that participate in the ECF and/or NPQ training programmes

138. Inspectors must consider how effectively lead providers work with delivery partners to ensure that:

- leadership and management are strategic, for example establishing a shared vision, so that self-evaluation leads to demonstrable improvements
- assurance systems are of high quality
- they adhere to the contents and sequencing of the ECF and the NPQ programmes

139. In evaluating the extent to which lead providers ensure that the curriculum prepares ECTs to teach in their settings effectively, and develops the expertise of NPQ participants, inspectors must consider:

- how leaders have ensured that ECTs are prepared for the realities of teaching
- how leaders have ensured that the delivery partners:
 - have trainers with the appropriate level of subject and phase expertise, subject teaching experience and continuing professional development to support ECTs proficiently
 - have trainers with the appropriate level of leadership expertise and experience and continuing professional development to support NPQ participants proficiently
 - do not have excessive expectations of ECTs, NPQ participants and mentors and that processes are in place to support them, and the schools in which they work, to manage their workload effectively
- how leaders assure themselves that all trainers, induction tutors, mentors and the schools where mentors work are fully aware of their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities

140. Inspectors must consider how lead providers ensure that there are appropriate monitoring and assessment of ECTs' and NPQ participants' progress in mastering the components of the ECF and NPQ curriculums. For example, they will consider the extent to which leaders and managers at the lead provider are:

- evaluating and monitoring the quality of the curriculum, its intent, its implementation and its impact on ECTs' and NPQ participants' practice
- acting on self-evaluation findings in order to improve the quality of professional development and training
- ensuring that each ECT's or NPQ participant's training programme is responsive to continuing formative assessment of strengths, gaps and needs
- drawing on evaluations and satisfaction surveys of ECTs, NPQ participants, mentors, trainers, induction tutors and school leaders to review and improve provision
- ensuring that the final assessment arrangements are rigorous (where relevant)
- understanding and applying the fundamental principle that 'the curriculum is the progression model', for example by avoiding attempts to track progress, not making premature summative judgements, and not using documents such as the teachers' standards or the NPQ content itself as final-outcome descriptors

141. Inspectors must consider how effectively leaders and managers ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, contractual agreements and requirements relating to:

- promoting equality and diversity
- eliminating discrimination
- safeguarding, including e-safety and the 'Prevent' duty

142. Inspectors must consider how lead providers have established systems whereby ECTs or NPQ participants can raise concerns about safeguarding or equalities.

143. Inspectors must evaluate whether lead providers pursue a vision of excellence focused on improving or sustaining high-quality provision for ECTs or NPQ participants. To do this, they must consider:

- the extent to which delivery partners have ensured that the content and sequencing of the ECF is taught exactly, comprehensively and exclusively
- the extent to which delivery partners have ensured that the content of the NPQ professional development is taught in full
- the extent to which leaders' implementation of improvement plans is based on a robust and perceptive self-evaluation of curriculum intent, implementation and impact
- how well lead providers know that their programmes are leading to improved practice and whether they have systems and structures in place to identify these improvements in professional practice
- how lead providers work collaboratively with delivery partners to ensure that they have the knowledge, expertise and capacity to deliver consistently high-quality professional development and training

- whether professional development provided for all mentors and trainers in the delivery partners is of a high quality
- whether lead providers are effective in dealing with local, regional and national concerns. These include teacher quality, supply and retention matters, all of which contribute towards improving the education sector's professional capacity for curriculum improvement, in line with the education inspection framework

144. When evaluating the effectiveness of leadership and management, inspectors will consider how well leaders and managers at the lead provider ensure that those responsible for governance understand their roles. They will look at how well governance enhances the effectiveness of the ECF training and NPQ professional development and whether those responsible for it ensure that the statutory duties of the lead provider are met.

145. When evaluating the effectiveness of leadership and management, inspectors will be mindful of the requirements and expectations that lead providers need to meet.

Grade descriptors: leadership and management of the lead provider

146. Inspectors will use professional judgement when grading the lead provider's leadership and management.

- If all aspects of the criteria for good are consistently met, inspectors will consider whether all the criteria for outstanding are also met. For a lead provider to be graded outstanding for leadership and management, it must be consistently meeting all aspects of the criteria for good and outstanding.
- When a lead provider does not, on a 'best fit' basis, meet the criteria for good consistently and none of the criteria for inadequate apply, the lead provider will be graded as requires improvement for leadership and management.
- When inspectors' evidence shows that any of the descriptors for inadequate apply, then this aspect of the lead provider's work will be judged inadequate.

Outstanding (1)

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

In particular, the following may apply.

- Leaders and managers are relentless in pursuing and realising a vision of excellence focused on improving or sustaining high-quality provision in all of their delivery partners and across all of the programmes.

- Leaders and managers are highly effective in ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are engaged in the work of the lead provider and contribute to the success of this.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the ECF curriculum includes phase- and subject-specific exemplification, so that ECTs are fully prepared to teach in their setting.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the NPQ curriculum fully prepares participants to be confident and competent in their leadership positions so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their professional practice.
- Monitoring and continuing formative assessment arrangements are highly effective in identifying whether ECTs and NPQ participants are learning the component contents of the programme sufficiently.
- Improvement planning is based on rigorous and systematic evaluation of the ECF, NPQ and mentor training curriculums, using evidence of qualitative impact on learning, professional knowledge and developing expertise in the setting. Evaluation takes into account, where appropriate, the views of delivery partners, school leaders, induction tutors, former and current ECTs or NPQ participants, and appropriate bodies.
- Leaders carefully select delivery partners and check routinely that the trainers have the high levels of knowledge, expertise and experience needed to deliver high-quality professional development and training. They take rapid action to remedy any gaps in knowledge or expertise.

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

Good (2)

Strategic leadership

- The lead provider and delivery partners work together effectively to develop the ECF training curriculum and NPQ curriculum.
- Quality assurance systems evaluate the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum(s) effectively.
- The lead provider takes effective action to support delivery partners in securing a consistently high standard of training for ECTs and mentors and professional development for NPQ participants.
- The lead provider and those responsible for governance ensure that they meet all statutory duties.

Vision of excellence

- The lead provider has a coherent and connected vision for the professional development offered through the NPQs and/or the training of ECTs.
- There is an effective cycle of induction, training and reflective feedback for mentors. Lead providers work with delivery partners to ensure that, as far as possible, mentor training enables mentors to support ECTs to learn the ECF curriculum and to apply it to their classroom practice and wider role as teachers.
- The lead provider has robust systems for quality assuring the strengths and development needs of mentors working with ECTs and ensures that mentor training is of the highest quality.
- Leaders and managers ensure that they are aware of the composition and needs of each cohort of ECTs. In particular, they are aware of ECTs' phases and their previous training routes. They pitch the curriculum appropriately to secure development in ECTs' practice.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their delivery of the ECF and NPQ curriculums. They use this information to secure improvements for ECTs or NPQ participants.
- Leaders and managers routinely use ECTs' and NPQ participants' views to evaluate the effectiveness of the training, plan for improvement and measure the impact of initiatives.
- The lead provider recognises that teachers and school leaders may undertake a number of NPQs over the course of their career. The lead provider ensures that training materials will not be repeated but will be specifically matched to the individual qualification.
- The lead provider ensures that delivery partners have sufficient expertise to focus on important aspects of teaching and leadership. These aspects include ensuring that ECTs and NPQ participants understand the importance of promoting inclusion, equality and diversity and safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty.
- Selection procedures ensure that NPQ participants are ready to acquire the relevant leadership knowledge during the course and have clear potential to meet the required standard to gain accreditation by the end of it.

Workload

- The lead provider supports delivery partners to ensure that ECTs, NPQ participants and mentors receive appropriate and timely professional and pastoral support, including with managing workload. The lead provider and delivery partners are alert to concerns and intervene when possible to avoid ECTs or NPQs withdrawing from the programme when they have the capacity to continue.
- The lead provider does not encourage unnecessary bureaucratic workload demands such as excessive paperwork. The lead provider takes effective action to ensure that

demands on, and requirements of, delivery partners, ECTs, mentors and NPQ participants are proportionate.

Equality, diversity and safeguarding

- The lead provider ensures that training and professional development programmes promote knowledge and application of fundamental British values, the Equality Act 2010 and safeguarding legislation, including the 'Prevent' duty.

Requires improvement (3)

- Leadership and management are not good.
- The lead provider has failed to ensure that the programmes consistently adhere to the set content and sequencing required. Areas of the programme that do not meet these criteria are minor and easily rectified so gaps in compliance do not have a significant impact on ECTs or NPQ participants.

Inadequate (4)

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

- The lead provider does not work effectively with delivery partners to ensure that the intent, implementation and impact of the professional development and training curriculum for ECTs, mentors and NPQ participants are of a high standard.
- Quality assurance systems do not evaluate effectively the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum. Consequently, the curriculums do not meet requirements and adhere to the ECF and NPQ programmes, and improvement planning is weak.
- The quality of mentor training does not bring about quality interactions between ECTs and mentors.
- The lead provider does not quality assure the mentoring programme effectively. It does not know where there are strengths and weaknesses. It cannot, therefore, anticipate or mitigate problems as they arise.
- ECTs are not prepared well enough to teach in their subjects and phases. NPQ participants are not well prepared for current and future leadership roles.
- The lead provider and those responsible for governance do not meet statutory duties.
- The lead provider does not routinely check that delivery partners are avoiding bureaucratic workload demands. Unnecessary burdens are placed on ECTs, induction tutors, mentors, trainers and NPQ participants. These burdens routinely detract from

wider learning within the training or professional development programmes.

- Leaders have failed to ensure that the provision consistently adheres to the set criteria. Areas of the programme that do not meet the criteria are not minor, and this has a significant impact on ECTs, mentors or NPQ participants.
- The lead provider does not ensure that training and professional development programmes promote the application of fundamental British values, the Equality Act 2010 and safeguarding legislation.

Lead provider monitoring visits of ECF and NPQ lead providers

147. Lead providers will receive an LPMV within the first 12 months of delivering the ECF or NPQ programmes. We may also carry out an LPMV where there are concerns about specific elements of a lead provider's practice.

148. Inspectors will take into account that the lead provider is in the early stages of implementation. The LPMV will focus primarily (although not exclusively) on the effectiveness of leaders and managers in delivering a high-quality training programme for ECTs and/or NPQ participants.

149. Inspectors will evaluate the extent to which leaders and managers have:

- designed an effective curriculum for the professional development and training of ECTs, mentors and NPQ participants
- established efficient systems for managing the effective day-to-day delivery of a large-scale training and/or professional development programme
- developed an approach to self-evaluation that is based on thorough and accurate quality assurance mechanisms
- collaborated with delivery partners effectively to ensure high-quality implementation of the programme
- engaged with all stakeholders effectively, including around workload expectations and statutory guidance, such as that relating to equalities, and established systems so that ECTs and NPQ participants can raise concerns about safeguarding or equalities in a safe and timely way

150. Inspectors must evaluate whether lead providers are pursuing a vision of excellence focused on implementing, improving or sustaining high-quality professional development and training for ECTs or NPQ participants. To do this, they must consider the effectiveness of lead providers' intent,

implementation and impact.

151. Inspectors must evaluate how effectively the lead providers:

- ensure that the content and sequencing of the ECF are taught exactly, comprehensively and exclusively by the delivery partner
- ensure that the content of the NPQ professional development programme is taught in full by the delivery partners
- develop improvement plans that are based on a robust and perceptive self-evaluation of overall curriculum intent, implementation and impact
- check that their programmes are leading to ECTs and NPQ participants improving their practice
- collaborate with delivery partners to ensure that they have the knowledge, expertise and capacity to deliver consistently high-quality professional development and training
- ensure that professional development provided for all mentors and trainers in the delivery partners is of a high quality
- gather the views of stakeholders so that they can respond to the needs of ECTs, NPQ participants and mentors. This includes robust communication systems for reporting workload and/or safeguarding concerns
- work closely with delivery partners to be strategic and effective in addressing local, regional and national concerns. These include teacher quality, supply and retention issues, all of which contribute towards improving the education sector's professional capacity for curriculum improvement, in line with the education inspection framework

152. Inspectors will consider how well leaders and managers at the lead provider ensure that those responsible for governance understand their roles. They will look at how well they enhance the effectiveness of the ECF training and NPQ professional development and whether they ensure that the statutory duties of the lead provider are met.

153. Inspectors will also take into account the statutory and contractual requirements and expectations that lead providers need to meet.

LPMV outcomes

154. There are 2 possible LPMV outcomes:

- leaders and managers are taking effective action to ensure that delivery of the ECF and/or NPQ programmes is of a high quality
- leaders and managers are not taking effective action to ensure that delivery of the ECF and/or

NPQ programmes is of a high quality

Before the LPMV

155. The arrangements for LPMVs are the same as for full inspections. This includes the arrangements for notifying the lead provider of the inspection, the information lead providers must provide and the preparatory conversations with the lead inspector.

The activities for the LPMV

156. After the [initial planning call](#), the lead inspector will liaise with the lead provider to arrange activities. This will include selecting a sample of ECTs and mentors, or NPQ participants, for inspectors to meet and relevant leaders and stakeholders within the delivery chain.

157. Inspectors will normally visit delivery partners during the LPMV. If that is not practical, inspectors may arrange a video or telephone call with delivery partner leaders, trainers, ECTs, induction tutors, mentors and/or NPQ participants. These meetings and calls will usually be carried out in delivery partners across different regions. [\[footnote 3\]](#)

158. Each inspector will meet with, or call, a sample of ECTs and their mentors or NPQ participants as part of their LPMV activities. The lead inspector will ensure that the overall sample is diverse and inclusive. Selection will cover different geographical areas, delivery partner types and phases.

159. The lead inspector(s) will identify any delivery partner training sessions and/or other events that it might be possible to visit or, where recordings have been made, that it might be possible to access. Lead inspectors should discuss and agree all requirements with the lead provider's representative as soon as possible so they can make the necessary practical arrangements.

Joining instructions and LPMV timetable

160. The lead inspector will confirm the timetable for the LPMV, so that leaders can make the necessary practical arrangements with delivery partners, ECTs and NPQ participants, mentors and other stakeholders. The lead provider will provide practical information for the inspection team, for example about meeting rooms and car parking.

161. The lead inspector will prepare, populate and distribute the joining instructions to the inspection team. In an LPMV where the lead provider offers both ECF and NPQ programmes, the lead inspector will be responsible for preparing these and distributing them to the team. The joining instructions are likely to include:

- essential information about the lead provider and its delivery partners, and the timing of the LPMV
- a clear indication of inspectors' roles, responsibilities and locations

- an LPMV programme, the delivery partners and schools to be visited/communicated with, and any other LPMV activities, including team meetings

162. Lead inspectors must deploy inspection team members effectively to contribute to the evidence base.

The LPMV

Days allocated to LPMV and inspection team members

163. LPMVs will consist of 3 days on site within the same week. The size of the inspection team may vary according to a number of factors, for example the geographical reach of the delivery partners that the lead provider uses, the number of participants and/or the number of NPQ courses the provider delivers.

Arrival time on the first day of LPMV

164. On the first day of an LPMV, inspectors will normally arrive on site between 10.30am and 12 midday. Earlier activities may be planned if they are virtual and do not interfere with travelling. Lead inspectors should adapt the start time to ensure that where the LPMV starts on a Monday, team members do not need to travel on a Sunday evening.

Principles for working with the lead provider

165. The monitoring visits are designed to promote constructive, challenging and professional dialogue with the lead provider's representatives, including those responsible for governance. The lead inspector will plan the visit so that leaders and those responsible for governance have time to present evidence about the delivery of the programmes, how they have arrived at the evaluation of their current performance and the action plans that support any improvement.

166. The lead inspector will provide regular opportunities for keeping-in-touch meetings with the lead provider's representative.

167. Leaders and those responsible for governance are not required to:

- prepare documentary evidence that is in addition to any standard documents or policies that they use for their normal day-to-day business
- 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 LPMV purposes

LPMV activities

168. The kinds of [activities carried out](#) during LPMVs are no different to full ECF and NPQ inspections. However, inspectors will not gather the same depth of evidence about the quality of professional development and training as they would when carrying out a full ECF or NPQ inspection. The focus will be on the effectiveness of leaders and managers in ensuring that the training and professional development they deliver is of the highest quality.

169. Inspectors will carry out a range of activities in order to collect evidence. These might include:

- meeting with lead provider programme leaders; delivery partner leaders and trainers; current ECTs and their mentors and current NPQ participants (where applicable); school-based induction leads and senior leaders; and any other lead provider representatives, including those responsible for governance
- reviewing documentation, including curriculum plans, training materials, existing evidence of quality assurance, improvement plans, stakeholder feedback and governor minutes (where appropriate)
- sampling recordings of training sessions or visiting segments of live sessions where this is possible

Overarching approach to LPMVs

170. As with a full inspection, inspectors must be able to form a connection between different pieces of evidence. They will focus on gathering evidence that is balanced and connected. They will not emphasise one type of evidence above others.

171. The focus of the LPMV will not be on one particular training session, or on one ECT or NPQ participant. Rather, it will connect all these pieces of evidence. Inspectors will consider this evidence to make judgements about the quality of training and professional development.

Team meetings during the LPMV

172. LPMV teams will:

- meet briefly every day to discuss emerging findings. Team members may join these meetings remotely as appropriate. A maximum of 2 nominated leaders or managers from the lead provider will be invited as observers
- hold regular keeping-in-touch meetings with the lead provider's nominated representative(s) throughout the LPMV
- meet at the end of the LPMV for a final team meeting. A maximum of 2 nominated leaders or managers from the lead provider will be invited as observers, but all judgements will be made by inspectors and the LPMV team

- record the outcomes of all team meetings electronically

Reaching final judgements

173. Lead inspectors will ensure that time is set aside for inspectors to prepare for the final team meeting and the final feedback. During the final team meeting, the team will collate the main points for feedback to the lead provider. These will be recorded as the meeting progresses.

Providing feedback

174. Each LPMV ends with a final feedback meeting with the lead provider.

175. The lead inspector must ensure that the lead provider is clear:

- about the provisional judgements awarded
- about the key findings from the LPMV, as summarised in the final summary evaluation – the lead inspector must give sufficient details to enable all attendees to understand how the judgement has been reached
- that the judgement is provisional and may be subject to change as a result of quality assurance procedures or moderation, and so must be treated as restricted and confidential to the relevant senior personnel (as determined by the lead provider)
- that the main findings of the LPMV and the main points provided verbally in the feedback, subject to any change, will be referred to in the text of the LPMV letter, although the text of the letter may differ slightly from the oral feedback
- that the judgement does not equate to grades in a full inspection
- that the post-LPMV survey is available for them to complete
- about the process for publication of the LPMV letter
- how to make a complaint about the LPMV

After the LPMV

The LPMV letter

176. LPMVs will result in a published LPMV letter. The lead inspector will be responsible for writing the letter and submitting the evidence to Ofsted shortly after the LPMV ends.

177. The lead inspector will:

- ensure that the text of the LPMV letter explains the judgement and reflects the evidence

- ensure that the findings in the LPMV letter are consistent with the feedback given to the lead provider at the end of the LPMV
- complete and submit the final version of the record of visits form, which lists the providers and schools visited as part of the LPMV, to check that the settings selected are not due to be visited as part of another known Ofsted inspection

178. The LPMV letter will focus explicitly on how well leaders and managers of the lead provider have:

- designed an effective curriculum for the professional development and training of ECTs, mentors and NPQ participants
- established efficient and effective systems for managing the day-to-day delivery of a large-scale training and/or professional development programme
- developed an approach to self-evaluation that is based on thorough and accurate quality assurance mechanisms
- collaborated with delivery partners effectively to ensure high-quality implementation of the programme
- engaged with all stakeholders effectively, including around workload expectations and statutory guidance, such as that relating to equalities, and established systems so that ECTs and NPQ participants can raise concerns about safeguarding or equalities in a safe and timely way

Arrangements for publishing the LPMV letter

179. LPMV letters will be quality assured before they are shared with the lead provider. The draft letter is restricted and confidential to the relevant personnel (as determined by the lead provider) and should not be shared more widely or published.

180. Normally within 18 working days of the end of the LPMV, the lead provider will be invited to comment on the draft LPMV letter. The lead provider will have 5 working days to alert us to any factual inaccuracies in the draft letter or make other comments about the LPMV process and findings it would like us to consider before the letter is finalised.

181. The lead inspector will respond to the lead provider's comments about factual accuracy. The factual accuracy comments of both the lead provider and the lead inspector may be reviewed by regional SHMI if appropriate.

182. Typically, the lead provider will receive an electronic version of the LPMV letter within 30 working days of the end of the LPMV. We will also send our response to comments on the draft letter and LPMV process and findings. In most circumstances, the final LPMV letter will be published on our reports website within 38 working days.

183. The ISA will email the final version of the LPMV letter to the:

- lead provider
- lead inspector
- DfE

184. The process for LPMVs should not be treated as complete until the final version of the LPMV letter has been published on our reports website.

The LPMV evidence base

185. The evidence base for all inspections, including LPMVs, will be retained in line with our retention and disposal policy. This is normally for 6 years from when the LPMV letter is published. We may decide that retaining it for longer is warranted for research purposes.

Quality assurance and complaints during full inspections and LPMVs

Quality assurance

186. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector(s) must ensure that inspections and visits are carried out in accordance with the principles of inspection and the expectations set out in '[Conduct during inspections](#)'.

187. We monitor the quality of inspections and LPMVs through a range of formal processes. This may involve a telephone call to the lead inspector(s) to discuss the inspection or LPMV progress, or an on-site visit during the inspection or LPMV. When an on-site quality assurance visit is scheduled, the lead inspector will usually explain the purpose and format during the initial telephone conversation with the lead provider's representative(s).

188. Lead inspectors must contact the relevant regional SHMI and inform the teacher development SHMI and/or specialist adviser if a lead provider is likely to be judged as outstanding, inadequate or requires improvement at the end of a full inspection.

189. Lead inspectors must contact the relevant regional SHMI and inform the teacher development SHMI and/or specialist adviser if a lead provider is likely to receive the judgement that they have not taken effective action to ensure that the delivery of the ECF and/or NPQ programmes is of a high quality at the end of an LPMV.

190. All lead providers will be invited to take part in a post-inspection or post-LPMV survey so that we can gather their views about the quality of the inspection or LPMV and can use these to contribute to the development of inspection and monitoring visits.

Handling concerns and complaints

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

192. If it is not possible to resolve concerns during the inspection or LPMV, or through submitting comments in response to the draft full inspection report or LPMV letter, the lead provider may wish to lodge a formal complaint on receipt of the final report or letter. The relevant lead inspector will ensure that the lead provider is informed that it is able to make a formal complaint and that information about [how to complain](#) is available on our website.

Conduct during full inspections and LPMVs

193. So that inspections and LPMVs are productive and beneficial, it is important that inspectors and lead providers establish and maintain an appropriate working relationship based on courtesy and professional behaviour.

194. Inspectors and lead providers must follow the expectations set out in '[Conduct during inspections](#)'. Inspectors should be as flexible as possible to fit in with the lead provider and delivery partners, while ensuring that they can gather robust evidence to support their judgements. We expect lead providers to work with inspectors to ensure a positive working relationship based on courteous and professional behaviour at all times.

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1. The 8 Ofsted regions are: East Midlands, East of England, North East, Yorkshire and Humber, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands and London. We will try to pick delivery partners that cover several of these regions, where possible, to ensure a geographic spread. [↩](#)
2. The 5 core areas of the ECF are: behaviour management, pedagogy, curriculum, assessment and professional behaviours. [↩](#)
3. The 8 Ofsted regions are: East Midlands, East of England, North East, Yorkshire and Humber, North West, South East, South West, West Midlands and London. We will try to speak to delivery partners across several of these, where possible. [↩](#)

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