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Research and analysis

Schools commentary: the emerging picture from 2022/23 inspections

Published 17 January 2023

Applies to England

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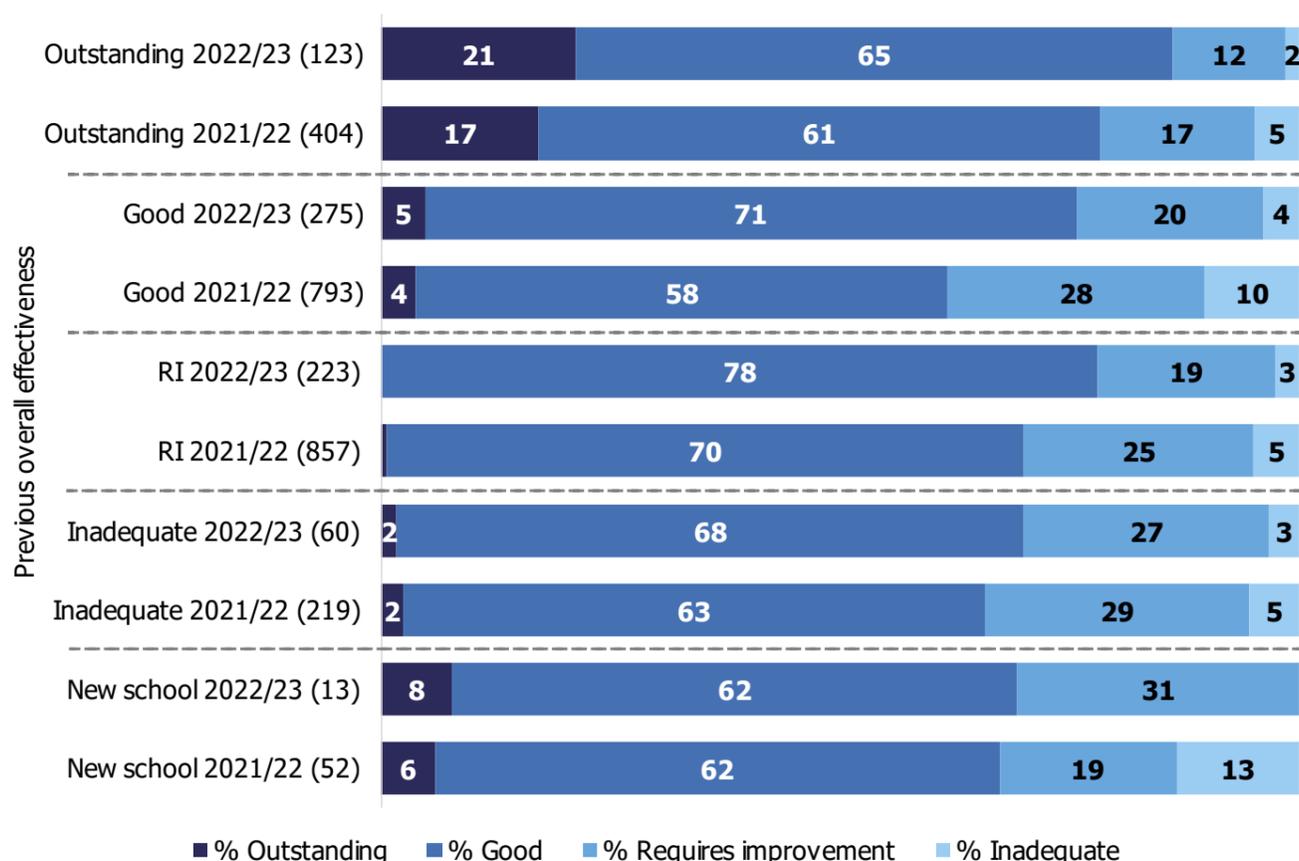
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Introduction

On 13 December 2022, we published our [Annual Report on the 2021/22 academic year](#). This told a largely positive story about the inspection outcomes for state-funded schools that year. Today we published our management information for inspections up to the end of December 2022.^{[\[footnote 1\]](#)} Initial signs for the 2022/23 academic year are that schools continue to show improvement, and for some groups of schools inspection outcomes are stronger than last year.

Graded inspections

Figure 1: Outcomes of graded inspections by previous overall effectiveness grade



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

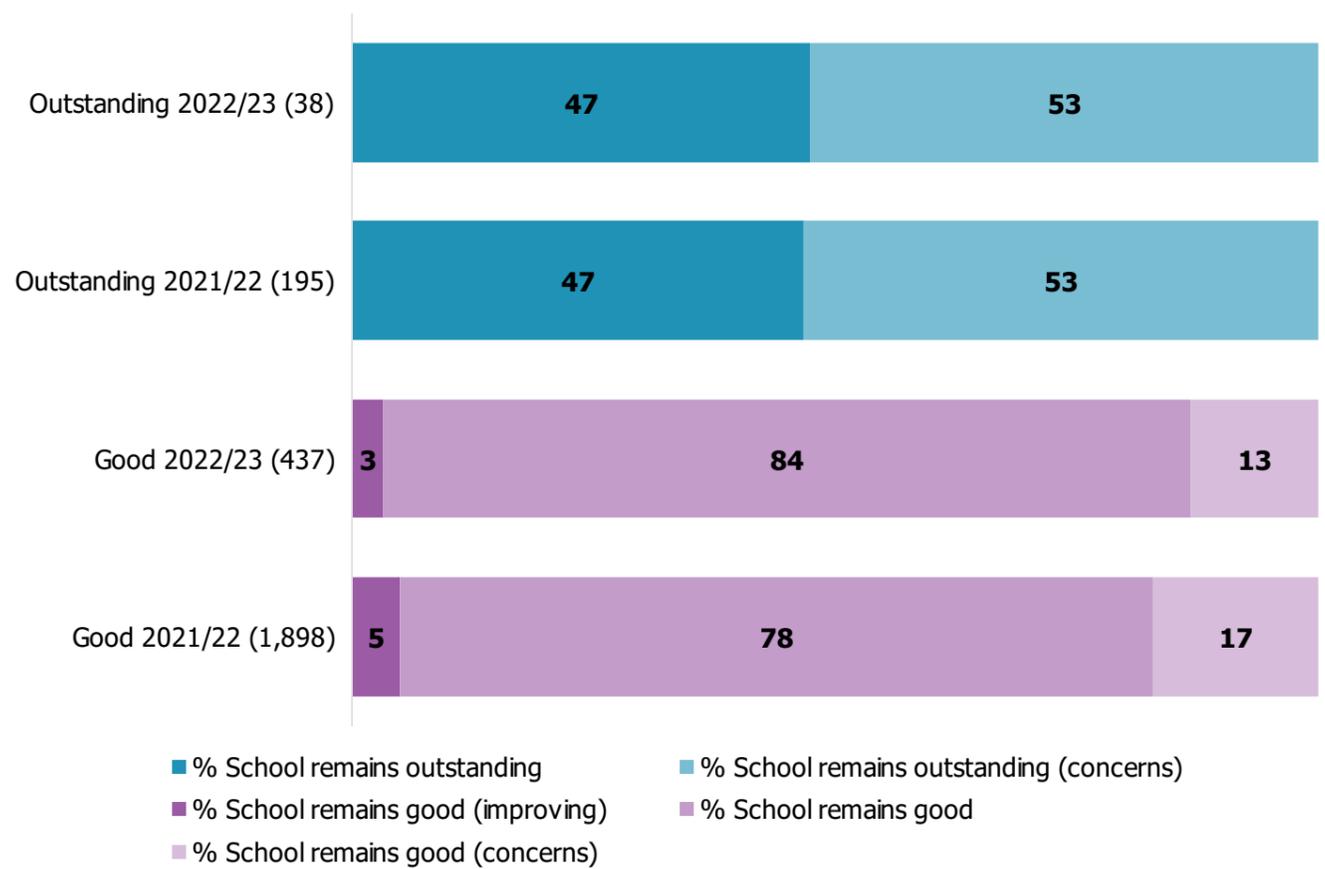
In 2022/23, 78% of schools previously judged to require improvement have improved to good, compared with 70% in 2021/22. 71% of good schools have also maintained their grade at a graded inspection, higher than 58% last year, with a similar proportion also improving to outstanding (5% compared with 4% in 2021/22).

The vast majority of outstanding schools visited this year are primary and secondary schools that were exempt from routine inspection between 2012 and 2020.^[footnote 2] Since the government lifted the exemption and we restarted routine inspections, the majority of schools that had a graded inspection have lost the top grade. However, it is encouraging to see that a slightly higher proportion of the previously exempt schools have remained outstanding this year (21% compared with 17%), and, crucially, a lower proportion were found to require improvement or to be inadequate (13% compared with 21%).

Looking across all the different phases of education and previous grades, 41 schools were judged outstanding at a graded inspection so far in 2022/23. Of these, 26 were already outstanding, while 15 improved to outstanding or had not been inspected previously.

Ungraded inspections

Figure 2: Outcomes of ungraded inspections by previous overall effectiveness grade



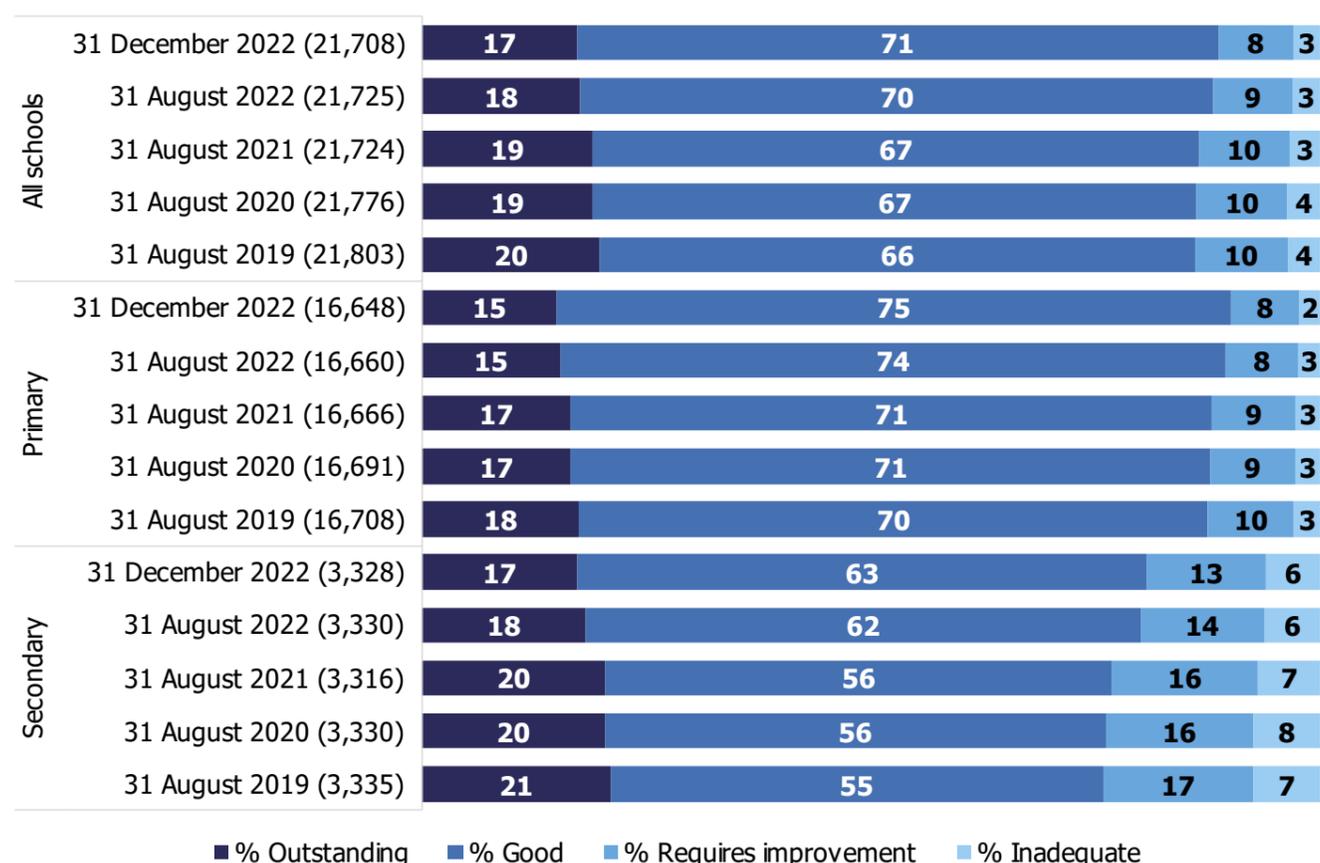
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Inspectors raised concerns about the same proportion of the outstanding schools inspected in 2022/23 so far as in 2021/22. However, they raised concerns about a slightly lower proportion of the good schools they visited (13% compared with 17% in 2021/22). All of the schools where inspectors either had concerns or thought the school may be improving will receive a follow-up graded inspection within 12 months.

State of the nation

In our Annual Report, we highlighted that 88% of all 22,000 schools inspected were judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent inspection – a small increase from 86% in August 2021. Both primary and secondary schools had seen small increases. Last term we saw further small increases. At the end of December, 89% of all schools were good or outstanding, including 90% of primary schools and 81% of secondary schools.

Figure 3: Most recent overall effectiveness of state-funded schools, over time



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

Following the resumption of routine inspections of outstanding schools, the overall proportion of all schools judged outstanding has decreased slightly, from 19% in August 2021 to 17% currently. Yet this is more than offset by an increase in the proportion judged good (from 67% in 2021 to 71% now). While there appears to be some gradual rebalancing between good and outstanding, the overall proportion of schools with one of the two top grades continues to rise.

Annex: data tables for figures

Figure 1: Outcomes of graded inspections by previous overall effectiveness grade

Previous overall effectiveness	Number of schools	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
Outstanding 2022/23	123	21	65	12	2
Outstanding 2021/22	404	17	61	17	5
Good 2022/23	275	5	71	20	4
Good 2021/22	793	4	58	28	10
RI 2022/23	223	0	78	19	3
RI 2021/22	857	0	70	25	5
Inadequate 2022/23	60	2	68	27	3
Inadequate 2021/22	219	2	63	29	5

New school 2022/23	13	8	62	31	0
New school 2021/22	52	6	62	19	13

See [Figure 1](#)

Figure 2: Outcomes of ungraded inspections by previous overall effectiveness grade

Previous overall effectiveness	Number of Schools	% School remains outstanding	% School remains outstanding (concerns)	% School remains good (improving)	% School remains good
Outstanding 2022/23	38	47	53	n/a	n/a
Outstanding 2021/22	195	47	53	n/a	n/a
Good 2022/23	437	n/a	n/a	3	84
Good 2021/22	1,898	n/a	n/a	5	78

See [Figure 2](#)

Figure 3: Most recent overall effectiveness of state-funded schools, over time

	Phase	Number of schools	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequ
31 December 2022	All schools	21,708	17	71	8	3
31 August 2022	All schools	21,725	18	70	9	3
31 August 2021	All schools	21,724	19	67	10	3
31 August 2020	All schools	21,776	19	67	10	4
31 August 2019	All schools	21,803	20	66	10	4

Phase	Number of schools	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequ
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31 December 2022	Primary	16,648	15	75	8	2
31 August 2022	Primary	16,660	15	74	8	3
31 August 2021	Primary	16,666	17	71	9	3
31 August 2020	Primary	16,691	17	71	9	3
31 August 2019	Primary	16,708	18	70	10	3

	Phase	Number of schools	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
31 December 2022	Secondary	3,328	17	63	13	6
31 August 2022	Secondary	3,330	18	62	14	6
31 August 2021	Secondary	3,316	20	56	16	7
31 August 2020	Secondary	3,330	20	56	16	8
31 August 2019	Secondary	3,335	21	55	17	7

See [Figure 3](#)

1. Based on inspections carried out and published by 31 December 2022. See our [State-funded school inspections and outcomes: management information](#) for details. Note that, out of the 2,307 inspections carried out, reports have been published for 1,198, and the details of these schools are in the publication. The outcomes of the additional inspections not yet published will be included in subsequent management information releases, available at the same link. In general reports for schools with lower grades tend to take slightly longer to be published, which can slightly affect the final grade profile for the period. ↩
2. Primary and secondary schools were exempt from routine inspection between 2012 and 2020 but could still be inspected if there were concerns. Nursery schools, special schools and alternative provision were not exempt. ↩

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