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Official Statistics

# Main findings: State-funded schools inspections and outcomes as at 31 December 2023

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**Applies to England**

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This is the main findings report for the [state-funded schools inspections and outcomes as at 31 December 2023](#) release. The following are also available:

- underlying data
- methodology
- pre-release access list

## Summary

This release includes:

- schools' most recent inspections and outcomes as at 31 December 2023
- data for inspections completed between 1 September 2023 and 31 December 2023 where the reports were published by 7 February 2024
- revised data for inspections completed between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023

## Key findings

So far in 2023/24, we have carried out 2,611 inspections.

Comparing schools with the same previous grade, the inspection outcomes for schools have been more positive in 2023/24 than in 2022/23 or 2021/22.

90% of all schools are now good or outstanding, an increase from 89% in August 2023.

# Inspections between 1 September 2023 and 31 December 2023

So far in 2023/24, we have carried out 2,611 inspections.

This academic year, we have carried out 2,611 inspections, including 1,604 graded inspections, 893 ungraded inspections and 114 monitoring or urgent inspections. This is a notable increase from 2,144 at this point in 2022/23.

Comparing schools with the same previous grade, the inspection outcomes for schools have been more positive in 2023/24 than in 2022/23 or 2021/22.

The outcomes from the inspections this year have continued the positive trend seen over the last 2 years since we resumed inspections, following a pause during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eighty-four per cent of the schools that had a graded inspection – and 90% of those that had a graded or an ungraded inspection – were judged to be good or outstanding, or remained good or outstanding.

Comparing schools with the same previous grade (see [figure 1](#)), the graded inspection outcomes for each group of schools with a previous inspection have been better this year so far, than last year or the year before.

## Graded inspections

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



1. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.
  2. Numbers of inspections are in brackets. For 2021/22 and 2022/23, the number of inspections is for the full academic year from September to August. For 2023/24, it is for the partial year to date from September to December.
- View [data in an accessible table format](#).

So far in 2023/24, 36% of outstanding schools have retained their grade at a graded inspection. This is a notable increase when compared with the 21% that remained outstanding in 2022/23, and the 16% in 2021/22.

In 2023/24, 78% of schools previously judged to require improvement have improved to good or outstanding, compared with 74% in 2022/23. 72% of good schools have also maintained their grade at a graded inspection, higher than 69% last year.

The great majority of outstanding schools that had a graded inspection this year (97%) were primary and secondary schools that were exempt from routine inspection between 2012 and 2020.<sup>[footnote 1]</sup> Since the government lifted the exemption and we restarted routine inspections of these schools, 25% of the schools that have had a graded inspection have remained outstanding. The proportion of previously exempt schools that have remained outstanding has continued to increase this year (36% compared with 20% in 2022/23), and the proportion found to require improvement or to be inadequate has continued to decrease (5% compared with 13% in 2022/23).

Looking across all the different phases of education and previous grades, 250 schools have been judged outstanding at a graded inspection so far in 2023/24. Of these, 196 were already outstanding, while 54 improved to outstanding or had not been inspected previously.

## Figure 2: Overall effectiveness and key judgements of graded inspections, 2023/24



1. Percentages are rounded and may not add up to 100.

2. Numbers of inspections are in brackets.

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

In graded inspections, we make 4 key judgements, along with the overall effectiveness judgement. We also judge early years and sixth-form provision, where relevant. In line with our framework and handbooks, where quality of education has an impact on overall effectiveness, as seen in previous years, outcomes for quality of education in these inspections are very similar to those for overall effectiveness. Outcomes for behaviour and attitudes and personal development are more positive than outcomes for other key judgements (93% and 95% good or outstanding respectively). This has been the case each year since the education inspection framework (EIF) started. As in previous years, primary schools achieved higher grades than secondary for all key judgements.<sup>[footnote 2]</sup> The biggest difference between primary and secondary continues to be for behaviour and attitudes (96% good or outstanding in primary as against 84% in secondary).

## Ungraded inspections

### Figure 3: Outcomes of ungraded inspections that did not convert by previous overall effectiveness grade



1. Percentages are rounded and may not add up to 100.

2. Numbers of inspections are in brackets.

3. Excludes ungraded inspections that converted to a graded inspection.

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

In 39% of ungraded inspections of outstanding schools this year, inspectors were not satisfied that the school would have received at least its current grade if it had received a graded inspection instead of an ungraded inspection. This was the same proportion as in 2022/23. Inspectors raised concerns in a smaller proportion of the good schools they visited (10% this year compared with 13% in 2022/23). All schools where inspectors either had concerns or thought the school may be improving should receive a follow-up graded inspection within 1 to 2 years.

## Safeguarding

Of the schools that had a graded or an ungraded inspection this year, 99.8% had effective safeguarding arrangements, and only 5 did not have effective arrangements.<sup>[footnote 3]</sup> If a school is found to be ineffective for safeguarding at a graded inspection, then leadership and management and overall effectiveness are usually graded inadequate, but the other judgements are not affected.

When a school's arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective, there are usually other significant weaknesses in the school. All of the 5 schools found to have ineffective safeguarding this year were graded requires improvement or inadequate for all of the other key judgements (quality of education, personal development, and behaviour and attitudes). This means that these schools would most likely have been judged requires improvement or inadequate even if there had not been issues with safeguarding arrangements.

## Schools at their most recent inspection

90% of all schools are now good or outstanding, an increase from 89% in August 2023.

90% of all schools are now good or outstanding, a small increase from 89% in August 2023, and 88% in August 2022. Both primary and secondary schools have seen a small increase so far this year (from 90% to 91% of primary schools, and 82% to 83% of secondary schools).

### Figure 4: Most recent overall effectiveness of state-funded schools, over time



1. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

2. Numbers of schools are in brackets.

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

Since the routine inspections of outstanding schools resumed, the overall proportion of all schools judged outstanding has decreased, from 19% in August 2021 to 15% currently. In the same period, there has been an increase in the proportion judged good (from 67% in 2021 to 75%

currently). While this indicates a gradual shift from outstanding to good, as well as from requires improvement and inadequate to good, the overall proportion of schools with one of the 2 top grades continues to rise.

One group of schools that has seen an increase in the proportion judged good or outstanding over time is schools with a high proportion of deprived pupils. This means that, since we resumed inspections following the pause during the COVID-19 pandemic, the gap in inspection outcomes between deprived and more affluent schools is becoming smaller. In August 2019, 82% of schools in the 2 most deprived quintiles were judged good or outstanding compared with 92% in the most affluent 2 quintiles. [\[footnote 4\]](#) By August 2022, this gap had closed from 10 percentage points to 8 percentage points, and by December 2023 it was 6 percentage points.

## Revisions to previous release

The provisional data in the previous release related to inspections that took place between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023, with the reports published by 30 September 2023. Revised data for inspections in this period is provided in tables 1R and 2R of the data file accompanying this release: [State-funded schools inspections and outcomes as at 31 December 2023, charts and tables](#).

This revised data includes an additional 35 full inspections that had not been published by 30 September 2023, but were published by 7 February 2024. These inspections resulted in the following number of additional judgements at each overall effectiveness grade:

- 2 outstanding
- 12 good
- 12 requires improvement
- 9 inadequate

**Table 1: Changes in overall effectiveness proportions for schools inspected between 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023**

Ofsted phase	Provisional % outstanding	Revised % outstanding	Percentage point change in % outstanding	Provisional % good	Revised % good	Percentage point change in % good
Nursery	37	37	0	53	53	0
Primary	5	6	1	73	73	0
Secondary	11	11	0	60	60	0
Special	17	17	0	57	56	-1

<b>Alternative provision</b>	15	15	0	41	41	0
<b>All schools</b>	7	7	0	70	69	-1

Provisional data includes inspections published up to 30 September 2023, and revised data includes inspections published up to 7 February 2024.

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

## Notes

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

This official statistics release reports on the outcomes of state-funded school inspections carried out under sections 5 and 8 of the [Education Act 2005](#). We carried out these inspections between 1 September 2023 and 31 December 2023. This release includes all inspections published by 7 February 2024. It also includes the most recent inspections and outcomes for all schools that we have inspected, as at 31 December 2023.

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

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

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

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

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

## Graded, ungraded, monitoring and urgent inspections

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

We are required to inspect all schools to which section 5 applies, at prescribed intervals. The regulations set the interval for graded inspections from the end of the school year in which the last inspection took place. This interval was temporarily extended by 18 months when inspections were paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section 8 enables His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) to carry out inspections for a range of purposes. This includes monitoring visits to schools that are in a category of concern following a graded inspection. Inspectors may also visit schools to aid HMCI in keeping the Secretary of State for Education informed or to contribute to reports on, for example, the teaching in a curriculum subject or a particular aspect of the work of schools.

Inspections carried out under section 8 include:

- ungraded inspections of schools judged to be good or outstanding at their most recent graded inspection
- monitoring inspections of schools judged as requires improvement, having serious weaknesses or requiring special measures
- urgent inspections, which include those with no formal designation and unannounced inspections in response to concerns about behaviour in a school

### **Ungraded inspections**

Ungraded inspections are usually 2-day inspections, although some small primary schools may have a 1-day inspection. The ungraded inspection determines whether the school continues to provide the same good or outstanding standard of education for pupils. It does not result in individual graded judgements. It also does not change the school's overall effectiveness grade. If there are serious concerns, we convert the ungraded inspection to a graded inspection, at which inspectors will make the full set of graded judgements.

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

Since January 2018, ungraded inspections have only converted to graded inspections if there have been serious concerns. If an ungraded inspection is not converted, but inspectors find evidence that the school may no longer receive the same grade for overall effectiveness, they will specify that the next inspection should be a graded inspection.

Between May 2012 and November 2020, outstanding primary and secondary schools were exempt from routine inspection. In November 2020, the government lifted the exemption, and we restarted routine inspections of previously exempt schools in September 2021. The [school inspection handbook](#) provides further details about inspections of formerly exempt outstanding schools.



## Glossary

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

## Further information

### Contacts

If you are a member of the public and have any comments or feedback on this publication, please contact Louise Butler on 03000 131 457 or the schools data and analysis team on [inspectioninsight@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:inspectioninsight@ofsted.gov.uk).

Press enquiries should be sent to our press team, at [pressenquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:pressenquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

### Acknowledgements

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## How to search

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This will open a search box in the top right-hand corner of the page. Type the word you are looking for in the search bar and press enter.

Your browser will highlight the word, usually in yellow, wherever it appears on the page. Press enter to move to the next place where it appears.

## Data tables for figures

**Data for figure 1: Outcomes of graded inspections by previous overall effectiveness grade**

<b>Previous overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Number of inspections</b>	<b>% Outstanding</b>	<b>% Good</b>	<b>% Requires improvement</b>	<b>% Inadequate</b>
Outstanding 2023/24	545	36	59	5	0
Outstanding 2022/23	579	21	66	11	2
Outstanding 2021/22	419	16	61	17	5
Good 2023/24	575	6	72	19	2
Good 2022/23	2,010	6	69	21	4
Good 2021/22	814	4	57	28	11
RI 2023/24	320	2	76	21	2
RI 2022/23	767	1	73	22	4
RI 2021/22	862	0	69	25	5
Inadequate 2023/24	127	6	69	25	1
Inadequate 2022/23	275	1	65	30	3
Inadequate 2021/22	220	2	63	29	5
New school 2023/24	37	16	73	8	3
New school 2022/23	126	19	71	9	1
New school 2021/22	52	6	62	19	13
All schools 2023/24	1,604	16	68	15	1
All schools 2022/23	3,757	7	69	20	4
All schools 2021/22	2,367	5	63	25	7

See [Figure 1](#).

**Data for figure 2: Overall effectiveness and key judgements of graded inspections, 2023/24**

<b>Judgement</b>	<b>Number of inspections</b>	<b>% Outstanding</b>	<b>% Good</b>	<b>% Requires improvement</b>	<b>% Inadequate</b>
Overall effectiveness	1,604	16	68	15	1
Quality of education	1,604	16	68	15	1
Behaviour and attitudes	1,604	27	66	6	1
Personal development	1,604	31	64	5	0
Leadership and management	1,604	18	69	12	1
Early years provision	1,193	24	68	7	1
Sixth-form provision	176	38	57	5	1

See [Figure 2](#).

### Data for figure 3: Outcomes of ungraded inspections that did not convert by previous overall effectiveness grade

<b>Previous overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Number of inspections</b>	<b>% School remains outstanding</b>	<b>% School remains outstanding (concerns)</b>	<b>% School remains good (improving)</b>	<b>% School remains good</b>	<b>% Scl remain good (conc)</b>
Outstanding 2023/24	110	61	39	not applicable	not applicable	not applic
Outstanding 2022/23	355	61	39	not applicable	not applicable	not applic
Outstanding 2021/22	195	47	53	not applicable	not applicable	not applic
Good 2023/24	783	not applicable	not applicable	10	80	10
Good 2022/23	2,910	not applicable	not applicable	7	80	13

Good 2021/22	1,906	not applicable	not applicable	5	78	17
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See [Figure 3](#).

#### Data for figure 4: Most recent overall effectiveness of state-funded schools, over time

Phase	As at	Number of schools	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
All schools	31 December 2023	21,085	15	75	8	2
All schools	31 August 2023	21,809	16	73	9	3
All schools	31 August 2022	21,725	18	70	9	3
All schools	31 August 2021	21,724	19	67	10	3
All schools	31 August 2020	21,776	19	67	10	4
All schools	31 August 2019	21,803	20	66	10	4
Primary	31 December 2023	16,684	12	79	8	1
Primary	31 August 2023	16,696	14	76	8	2
Primary	31 August 2022	16,660	15	74	8	3
Primary	31 August 2021	16,666	17	71	9	3
Primary	31 August 2020	16,691	17	71	9	3
Primary	31 August 2019	16,708	18	70	10	3

Secondary	31 December 2023	3,365	15	68	13	4
Secondary	31 August 2023	3,363	16	66	13	5
Secondary	31 August 2022	3,330	18	61	14	6
Secondary	31 August 2021	3,316	20	56	16	7
Secondary	31 August 2020	3,330	20	56	16	8
Secondary	31 August 2019	3,335	21	55	17	7

See [Figure 4](#).

1. 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. The schools referred to were all outstanding when the exemption ended, but had not necessarily been outstanding for the full period of the exemption since 2012. [↩](#)
2. Based on inspections under the EIF in 2019/20, 2021/22 and 2022/23. 2020/21 is not included, as graded inspections were largely paused due to the pandemic. [↩](#)
3. Effective safeguarding means having no serious and/or widespread issues with safeguarding practice that put children at risk from harm, but could mean there are minor issues, such as technicalities in paperwork, that do not put children at risk. [↩](#)
4. Based on the [indices of multiple deprivation 2019](#). Each school is assigned a score based on the home postcodes of the pupils who attended the school at the time of the January school census. The schools are then placed into one of 5 deprivation bands. [↩](#)

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