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Guidance

# Glossary: education inspection terminology

A glossary of terms used across Ofsted's education inspection information and guidance.

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## Applies to England

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This glossary explains the terms used in our inspection

information and guidance where there is no widely accepted official definition. For terms that do have an official definition, the glossary clarifies how we have used them.

## **Glossary: for all education remits**

This section defines terms that apply across all the education areas (or ‘remits’) that we inspect:

- early years settings
- state-funded schools
- non-association independent schools
- further education and skills providers
- initial teacher education providers

### **Babies**

Children up to 2 years old.

### **Barriers to learning and/or well-being**

Barriers to learning and/or well-being are any factors that may make it difficult for an individual to achieve their potential or experience well-being. These barriers can arise from individual circumstances, such as health, development or emotional needs, or from external factors, including family, community or wider social conditions. They could also include [protected characteristics](#).

We identify members of key groups, as defined in statutory duties or government guidance, where education providers have specific responsibilities to address those barriers – for example, those who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or those known (or previously known) to children’s social care.

Additionally, barriers can be challenges that individuals face that are specific to the provider's context. These may require tailored approaches to reduce their impact on learning and/or well-being.

## **Children**

Children in early years or the school Reception Year (often known as 'babies and children up to 5 years old').

## **Disadvantaged**

The term 'disadvantaged' means those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged. This includes those receiving pupil premium funding, or those in FE and skills providers who are from low-income backgrounds – for example, those who have been eligible for free school meals in the past 6 years.

## **Evaluation area**

An evaluation area represents a single component of everything that makes up high-quality education provision.

Each evaluation area has its own section of the toolkit that explains the evidence inspectors will gather for a specific aspect of the provider's work.

Each evaluation area includes grading standards or indicators for each grade.

## **Grading standards**

Grading standards are statements in the toolkit that describe provision graded as 'expected standard' or higher. They are the standards that providers should meet or aim to meet across all aspects of their provision.

## **Grading indicators**

Grading indicators are statements in the toolkit that describe what provision graded as 'needs attention' or below typically looks like.

## **Inspection information page**

This provides information about our inspections for a general audience. Each remit has its own inspection information page.

## **Known to social care**

This means an individual who:

- at any time, met the definition of a child in need of help and protection, as set out in section 17 of the Children Act 1989
- has ever received statutory local authority support from a social worker
- is looked after or who was previously looked after

## **Leaders**

Leaders are staff who are responsible for making decisions about how an education provider operates. The roles may vary between providers. They include senior leaders and middle leaders, but not governors or trustees.

In a childminder setting, the childminder is the 'leader' and all references to leaders apply to the childminder.

## **Learners**

Those in further education (FE) and skills provision.

## **Operating guide**

Operating guides are technical guidance for inspectors. They are a step-by-step guide that sets out the relevant inspection methodology and practice. There is one operating guide for each remit.

## **Outcomes**

Outcomes refer to the broad impact of leaders' work on the academic achievement and personal development of children, pupils, learners/apprentices or trainees.

Outcomes include published outcomes from national tests and examinations (where relevant) but also outcomes such as being ready for the next stage of education, employment and training (in FE and skills provision) or being prepared to teach their subject(s) and phase (in ITE provision).

## **Parents**

This includes other carers, such as grandparents or foster carers.

## **Pupil premium**

Funding provided to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This includes the early years pupil premium, the pupil premium, and the service pupil premium.

## **Pupils**

Children in school.

## **Responsible body**

The entity legally responsible for the performance of an educational institution and for the well-being of leaders. For state-funded schools, it is usually the local authority. For academies, it is often a multi-academy trust.

## **Report card**

The report card is the written outcome of an inspection. It is published on the [Ofsted reports website](#).

## **Specialist settings**

Specialist settings refer to alternative provision (AP), including all pupil referral units (PRUs), AP free schools and academies; hospital schools; specially resourced provision or special educational needs (SEN) units in mainstream or special schools; academy and maintained special schools; and independent special schools.

## **Students**

Those in a school sixth form.

## **Toolkit**

The toolkit sets out the specific areas evaluated and graded on inspection – the evaluation areas. Each remit has a toolkit detailing what we inspect. It is a collection of resources (or tools) to support inspectors' evaluation of a provision at the point of inspection. Providers can also use it to support their self-evaluation processes and continuous improvement.

## **Trainees**

Those in initial teacher education.

# **Glossary: for specific education remits**

## **Early years**

### **Teaching in the early years**

‘Teaching’ is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn.

It includes adults’ interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities – communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what children are doing, facilitating, and setting challenges.

It takes account of the equipment that adults provide and the attention they give to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations.

Our definition of ‘teaching’ incorporates how practitioners:

- assess what children know, understand and can do
- take account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning)
- use this information to plan children’s next steps in learning and to monitor their progress

### **Federation**

A federation is 2 or more maintained schools operating under a single governing body.

### **Governors/those responsible for governance**

Someone whose role is to provide non-executive support to the board of trustees. The board of trustees must have a governance professional who helps the board to understand its role and legal responsibilities and who supports it to design and implement high-quality governance. Their responsibilities can vary in each trust and can incorporate the responsibilities of a clerk.

## **Qualifying complaint**

These are complaints made to Ofsted that qualify for consideration under [section 11A\(2\) of the Education Act 2005](#).

## **Trust**

A 'trust' refers to any academy trust, including single-academy trusts, multi-academy trusts and multi-academy companies (many dioceses use the term 'multi-academy companies'; these are legally identical to multi-academy trusts but use the different name).

## **Non-association independent schools**

### **Independent school standards (ISS)**

These are the standards set by the Department for Education (which is the registration authority for independent schools) that all independent schools are expected to meet at all times. The ISS are distinct from the 'grading standards' defined above.

## **Proprietor**

The individuals or body responsible for managing and overseeing a school. In independent schools, the proprietor is the sole or joint person(s) or body that has ownership control and to whom the school's

management is responsible. The proprietor is directly responsible for ensuring the ISS are met continually over time.

## **Further education and skills**

### **Achievement**

We define 'achievement' as the successful completion of a learning goal. Examples include passing a formal examination, hitting personal targets or developing planned new knowledge and skills.

### **Behaviours**

We use 'behaviours' in curriculum, teaching and training to refer to the essential behaviours learners and apprentices develop to support them to move onto their next steps. This includes professional behaviours for the workplace, or the behaviours required to move on to the next stage of their education and training.

The term 'behaviours' is part of an apprenticeship standard, where the curriculum refers to knowledge, skills and behaviours.

We use 'behaviours' in participation and development to refer to the behaviours that learners and apprentices develop to enable them to successfully participate in their course. This may include attendance and their ability to work with others in preparation for their next steps.

We may also talk about learners with high needs developing their 'behaviours' to attend their course. This may include self-regulation with or without the support provided by staff to enable them to manage their behaviour and to remain on their course.

## **High-needs provision**

Provision for learners who receive high-needs funding and have an education, health and care plan. We inspect this as part of programmes for learners with high needs. This is study towards gaining new knowledge and skills on a course or programme.

## **Progression**

This occurs when learners move to the next stage of development. Examples include going on to a higher level of study or into a work role.

## **Those responsible for governance and/or oversight of the provider**

These are the people responsible for supporting and challenging provider leaders, including checking the provider is meeting its statutory duties.

## **Teacher or trainer**

This term may refer collectively to teachers, trainers, lecturers, mentors, assessors and/or staff in similar instructional or guidance roles.

## **Initial teacher education**

### **Initial teacher education (ITE) and initial teacher training (ITT)**

‘ITE’ is the term we use when inspecting teacher training providers. ‘ITT’ is the term used by the Department for Education, and we use it when referring to compliance criteria.

## **ITE curriculum**

The provider's ITE curriculum sets out what trainees will learn and when, including in their teaching practice. This is distinct from the curriculums that trainees are being trained to teach, for example the national curriculum.

## **Mentor**

A mentor is someone who works with trainees regularly, typically at the placement/setting/workplace where the trainees are based. Mentors are trained and supported by the provider that is responsible for the ITE programmes.

## **Partner organisation**

This is an institution that works with the ITE provider on ITE programmes, including where trainees undertake their teaching practice.

## **Teacher educator**

Teacher educators teach trainees on teacher training programmes.

## **Those responsible for the oversight of the ITE provider**

These are the people responsible for supporting and challenging provider leaders, including checking the provider is meeting its statutory duties.

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