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Guidance

# Initial teacher education (ITE) inspection operating guide for inspectors: for use from January 2026

Updated 10 September 2025

**Applies to England**

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**For use on inspections from January 2026.**

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# About this page

This guidance sets out how overall lead inspectors (OLI), lead inspectors (LI) and phase lead inspectors (PLI) ('you') should carry out inspections of initial teacher education (ITE).

It applies to each ITE phase: early years, primary, secondary and further education (FE) and skills.

Inspectors should use the guidance in this document and the [toolkit for ITE inspections](#), along with their professional curiosity and compassion, to gather evidence to reach fair and accurate grades. They should also draw on their experience and expertise.

## Conduct

Throughout the inspection, you must act in line with our [code of conduct](#), and show professionalism, courtesy, empathy and respect at all times. At the earliest opportunity, and as necessary throughout the inspection, remind both the provider and the inspection team of the importance of following the code of conduct.

## Key principles

### Principle 1

- Throughout the inspection, the toolkit will help you gather evidence to celebrate the provider's strengths, validate

leaders' priorities and progress and highlight where improvement is needed. In doing so, you will consider the extent to which trainees:

- achieve – are prepared to teach their subject(s) and phase and successfully complete their ITE programme
- belong – feel welcomed and valued as trainee teacher professionals within their teaching community
- thrive – benefit from an effective ITE curriculum so that the pupils and learners they teach are kept safe and are able to flourish, whatever their background or individual needs

These prompts relate directly to the evaluation areas in the toolkit and will give you assurance that you are building a clear and typical picture of all aspects of the ITE provision.

## **Principle 2**

- Leadership and inclusion are key areas of focus when gathering evidence.

## **Principle 3**

- The 'expected standard' in the evaluation areas in the toolkit is the starting point for planning your inspection activities.

# **What to do before arriving on site**

# Preparing for inspection

Preparation is a vital part of ensuring that the inspection is a positive experience. Being focused and proportionate is key. This includes evaluating the most important information that will help you to have a professional and constructive conversation with leaders and [nominee\(s\)](#) in the planning calls.

When preparing, consider the [3 key principles](#).

As an OLI/LI/PLI, you have 3 planning days for an ITE inspection. The first of these is the notification day, when your planning should begin. Review the following, and record brief, relevant, evaluative information:

- the annual ITE provider return
- the provider's previous inspection report on the age phase or phases (where applicable)
- the Ofsted 'finding information about a provider' portal, including any complaints received since the last inspection
- our inspection data summary report (IDSR)
- the annual trainee online questionnaire (where applicable)
- the provider's website
- information reported in the press or online

## Notification

### Notification call arrangements

An inspection support administrator (ISA) telephones the person who is identified on the annual provider return as the main contact. This will usually be 5 working days before the on-site

inspection.

If the main contact cannot be reached after several attempts, the ISA will call the alternative contact(s) listed in the provider return.

The ISA informs the provider that an inspection will take place and the inspection dates. They also confirm who will be on the inspection team and check for any conflicts of interest or concerns. If there are conflicts or concerns, the ISA will inform you, as the OLI/LI. You should follow these up with the regional Senior His Majesty's Inspector (Senior HMI) and record them in the evidence base.

The ISA checks factual information about the provider, including contact details and the number of trainees on roll for each phase. They also outline the role of [the nominee](#) and ask the provider if they would like to select a nominee or nominees to work closely with inspectors throughout the inspection. In multi-phase providers, they may choose to select phase-specific nominees.

If the provider does select a nominee or nominees, they are asked if the proposed nominee or nominees have accessed any of our optional training for nominees. The ISA reassures the provider that, if they decide that they do not need a nominee, the inspection will still proceed as planned without any adverse impact.

The ISA agrees with the provider the time for the first planning call with the OLI/LI and provides guidance on who should attend the call. The ISA will encourage the provider to have at least one other senior leader and the nominee(s) present to assist and support them in the first call and all subsequent calls. If the nominee joins the planning call(s) you must check that any information that you discuss is appropriate to share with them.

The ISA asks whether anyone who will be joining the planning call requires any reasonable adjustments due to a disability and, if so, what arrangements are already in place. The ISA will inform you of any requests.

You should consider any requests, following the guidance in the [Responding to requests for reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations](#) section, and contact the duty desk. Advise leaders of any decisions when you make the initial planning call. If they have any questions or unresolved concerns following this discussion, refer them to the provider contact helpline.

The ISA also asks whether other adaptations to the inspection process may need to be made, where those with other protected characteristics may otherwise be put at a disadvantage.

## Requests for deferral

Familiarise yourself with our guidance on [deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence](#). If the ISA receives a request for a deferral at any point during the notification, they will inform you. You should then follow the required process, including contacting the regional Senior HMI and the teacher development policy team. If you receive a request for a deferral at any time during the planning calls, you should follow the same process and also inform the ISA.

## Pre-inspection documents

Following the notification call, the ISA sends the provider guidance on what documents are needed before the on-site inspection and how to upload these to the provider portal. These documents include:

- a list of trainees, their ITE programme (including subject(s) for secondary and FE and skills) and details of where they are currently on placement or employed for their teaching practice (the setting or provider name, unique reference number (URN))

and postcode)

- timetable information for the days of the on-site inspection, including the delivery location(s) for the taught elements of the ITE curriculum and any training partners and partner colleges
- the provider's self-evaluation and any associated improvement documents, where available

## **Initial planning call by the OLI/LI (as applicable)**

### **Constructive, professional dialogue**

At the heart of our inspections is a professional dialogue between inspectors, leaders and [the nominee\(s\)](#). This dialogue must follow our [code of conduct](#) and always be carried out with professionalism, courtesy, empathy and respect. Consider the well-being of staff and leaders throughout.

Building a rapport between inspectors and leaders starts from the initial planning call. Call the provider at the time agreed in the notification call. This should be a video conference call, unless technology does not allow this. Ask the provider not to record this call or any further calls, except where this is required as a response to a request for reasonable adjustments. Similarly, tell the provider that we do not record the call, except in the same circumstances. Let leaders know that they are welcome to take notes.

### **Introduction and discussing practicalities**

Record the roles of all leaders and nominee(s) who are on the call.

Remind leaders that:

- we have a [code of conduct](#) that sets out our expectations for leaders and staff at the provider
- these expectations include asking the provider to be open, transparent and honest with inspectors so that the inspection can be carried out with integrity

Explain to leaders and nominee(s) what you are going to discuss on the call and what needs to happen over this week to plan the inspection. Emphasise to leaders and nominee(s) that they can take breaks from the call and have time to talk with colleagues as needed.

You should cover the following points.

### **Leaders' well-being**

Check on the leaders' well-being.

Establish who is available to support their well-being. Record how to contact them.

Make sure leaders are aware that support for their own, and their staff's, well-being is available through a range of organisations, including the charity [Education Support](#).

## **Nominee**

Confirm that the nominee(s) is/are suitably placed to support inspection activity. They should be a senior member of staff with a thorough knowledge of how the provider operates on a day-to-day basis. Record in the evidence base the role of the person(s) selected to be the nominee(s).



Agree with leaders how the nominee(s) will support the inspection, including facilitating logistics, gathering contextual information, and coordinating access to evidence and inspection activities.

Invite the nominee(s) to accompany you throughout each day of the inspection, except when their presence could limit evidence-gathering or discourage open communication. For example, the nominee(s) should not attend confidential meetings with trainees or staff. Be clear about this, and agree which activities it applies to.

Explain to the nominee(s) how inspection planning will be carried out.

You must not share confidential notes or complaint-related information with the nominee(s). Only relevant logistical and contextual information may be shared.

## **Reasonable adjustments and adaptations**

Check that any reasonable adjustments agreed during the notification call have been put in place. Make sure you have considered any other requested adaptations to the inspection process where those with other protected characteristics may otherwise be put at a disadvantage.

Remind leaders that they can ask for any further reasonable adjustments or adaptations during the rest of the inspection process. See the [Responding to requests for reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations](#) section for further information.

Record any requests and their outcome in the evidence base, along with any other adaptations that have been requested.

## **Ensuring leaders have what they need**

Establish whether leaders have the practical information they need, including links to surveys, the provider contact helpline number, and instructions on how to upload documents to the provider portal.

Remind leaders to encourage trainees, mentors and staff to complete the inspection surveys.

Ask leaders if they want to make any specific points about the provider's context. Ask if they have any issues or concerns that they would like to raise, or if there is anything they want to clarify before the inspection. Explain that they will be able to raise any matters during the inspection itself.

If any complaints have been made about the provider, explain that the inspection will focus on the wider issues raised by the complaints. Inspectors will not investigate individual complaints.

Make sure leaders understand the process of inspection and the evaluation areas to be inspected.

Make sure leaders and the nominee(s) are given the Ofsted telephone number, where they can contact a senior Ofsted leader if there are any concerns that it has not been possible to resolve with the OLI/LI during the inspection.

In a multi-phase inspection, from this point onwards you may split the inspection planning into phase-specific calls with the relevant phase lead inspector, if that suits the provider's structure.

## **Understanding the provider's context and leaders' priorities for improvement**

In collaboration with leader(s) and the nominee(s), discuss:

- the provider's context and structure, identifying those responsible for oversight of the ITE provision (governance), any major changes since the previous inspection, and details of (and responses to) any recent tensions in, or pressures from, the community
- any evaluation that leaders have carried out of the provider's current strengths, their priorities for improvement, and how they have assessed the impact of their actions – refer to the 'expected standard' of the relevant evaluation area in the [toolkit for ITE inspections](#) to inform the discussion, including where leaders believe the provider currently sits in terms of the 5-point grading scale for each evaluation area
- the provider's approach to inclusion, particularly their provision for trainees with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being – some of these trainees should be included in the sample you select
- any relevant safeguarding issues, as identified by leaders

Consider and plan with leaders what inspection activities you and the team need to carry out to gather the necessary evidence to:

- celebrate what leaders have identified as strengths
- validate the priorities leaders have identified for improvement, and the extent to which they have an effective plan to bring about the desired impact
- highlight where there is more to do to ensure that all trainees achieve and belong, and are supported to ensure the pupils and learners they teach can thrive

Remember to apply the [3 key principles](#) throughout the planning call.

## Subsequent planning calls

In collaboration with leader(s) and the nominee(s), subsequent planning calls should clarify practical arrangements and logistics for the inspection.

Work with leader(s) and the nominee(s) to identify, as soon as possible, the partners and placement or employment settings that are to be visited during the inspection. Plan and agree the areas of focus of the inspection, taking into account what leaders have shared about their context, strengths and priorities for improvement. Be clear with leaders that the areas of focus of the inspection may change as the inspection progresses, taking into account the emerging evidence.

During the planning calls, explain that inspectors will focus on gathering direct, first-hand evidence about:

- the ITE curriculum and how it is taught
- trainees' progress, outcomes and experiences
- leaders' priorities and actions, and their impact

Explain the purpose of case sampling and the interconnectedness of inspection activities.

Wherever possible, minimise the need for the provider to change its usual routines. The inspection timetable is flexible, and you should plan activities to take account of the provider's context and leaders' priorities, as well as areas that the inspection team needs to explore.

Tell leaders that throughout each day, you will check emerging evidence, referencing the toolkit evaluation areas, with a focus on whether the 'expected standard' is being met. And you will discuss with them how emerging evidence aligns with their self-evaluation.

Explain that each day there will be an end-of-day reflection summary reflection meeting (or grading meeting, towards the end of the final inspection day) with leaders, the nominee(s) (if there are any) and the inspection team. These meetings will

review all toolkit evaluation areas and 'compliance, including safeguarding' standards. You may have gathered reliable evidence indicating a 'secure fit' around an evaluation area. If this is the case, and leaders agree, you may decide not to gather any further evidence in this evaluation area. This is likely to be the case where the emerging evidence gathered aligns with the leaders' self-evaluation against the grading standards.

Agree which leaders will attend the summary reflection and grading meetings and the expectations for these. Explain that it is flexible who attends, as long as they agree with you who is attending before the meeting takes place.

Collaboratively, you should:

- where relevant, agree the training partners/partner colleges that will be part of the inspection
- if there are multiple sites/training locations, identify which of these inspectors will visit or be based at
- agree the settings to visit, using the list of placements and employment settings that was provided; maximise the time available by visiting a number of trainees based in the same setting/school/partner college, where relevant
- select the trainees who will be included in case samples throughout the inspection; this will include trainees at the placements or employment settings identified earlier, as well as additional trainees who may be attending training during the inspection or who may be involved in other activities
- make sure the sample of trainees to be visited includes a representative sample of those with identified SEND or who may have other barriers to their learning and/or well-being
- plan the most useful inspection activities to carry out (including the initial meetings on day 1 of the on-site inspection)
- establish with leader(s) and the nominee(s) what work trainees complete and how inspectors can access this easily during the on-site inspection

The selection of trainees and settings is likely to vary according to the ITE phase(s) the provider offers. Within each phase, the selection should include trainees on different routes into teaching. As you need to determine the extent to which trainees are being prepared in each phase to teach subject(s) well, inspections in the secondary and FE and skills phases are likely to include activities involving trainees preparing to teach the same subject or cluster of subjects. However, this should not be the only determining factor in your selection. You must ensure that the selection of settings to visit has undergone Ofsted's required administrative checks.

Make clear the activities you will carry out when you visit settings, schools or partner colleges to sample trainees' teaching practice. These should include:

- discussions with trainee(s)
- discussions with mentor(s)
- visiting part of a lesson where trainees are teaching (where available)
- discussions with setting leaders
- reviews of trainees' work, with the trainee(s) present

Explain that inspectors may carry out joint inspection activities with provider leaders and/or staff, except when their presence could limit evidence-gathering or discourage open communication. This can include some of the activities during inspectors' visits to settings, schools and partner colleges. Remember this is an important opportunity for leaders to show us their context. Plan these opportunities carefully with leader(s) and nominee(s).

Sometimes you will also be able to talk with early career teachers (ECTs) and/or former early years and FE and skills trainees who undertook their ITE training with the provider.

Make clear the time you need for each activity. Make sure you leave enough time to speak with trainees and review their work

with them. Also consider when it would be more helpful to speak with trainees individually, for example when they have SEND or other barriers to their learning and/or well-being.

By the end of the final planning call, you should have:

- confirmed the inspection timetable for days 1 and 2 of the on-site inspection, including meetings for the OLI/LI and PLIs as necessary
- confirmed where any further setting/school/partner college visits will take place on days 3 and 4 of the inspection
- explained that these visits will be adapted as evidence emerges during the on-site inspection
- made sure that time is planned into the schedule(s) for ongoing reflection meetings
- made sure that leaders understand the purpose and content of the ongoing and summary reflection meetings
- arranged for the provider to invite relevant stakeholders to the final feedback meeting (see [inspection information for ITE](#))
- confirmed that the inspection timetable will be available for everyone to view

## After the call(s)

Make sure that team members know the arrangements for the inspection.

Make sure all team members are aware of the outcome of any requests for reasonable adjustments, and any other adaptations to the inspection process that are to be made where those with other protected characteristics may otherwise be put at a disadvantage.

# Core requirements throughout the inspection

Throughout the inspection, you (as the OLI/LI/PLI) are responsible for assuring the quality of the evidence gathered, managing the conduct of the inspection team, and ensuring the smooth running of the inspection with leaders, including the nominee. You will focus on building and managing relationships with leaders, having the oversight of leadership and compliance, including safeguarding, and quality assuring the work of your team.

On each day of the inspection, arrive at the time arranged with leaders. This should not normally be before 9am. It is likely that the start time will be later on day 1 of the inspection and you should confirm this with leaders.

Check with leaders on their well-being and on the well-being of other leaders and staff, before inspection activities begin each day and throughout the inspection. Allow leaders and/or the nominee(s) to raise any issues or concerns, or to seek clarification, including related to the conduct of the inspection or of individual inspectors.

With the nominee(s) (if selected), review the planned timetable and adjust inspection activities, as needed. Remember to plan regular time to reflect on and record the evidence.

Agree in advance the number of attendees at each summary reflection meeting, including the grading meeting, to allow for a productive conversation in the time available.

At each reflection meeting, reflect with the leaders and nominee(s) on the well-being of staff and how effective any reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations have been. Ask whether they want to change the arrangements/adaptations or make any additional requests. (Refer to the [Responding to requests for reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations](#) section



for further information.) Continue to anticipate and consider any further reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations you may need to put in place.

Leave by 5pm each day, other than in exceptional circumstances or when there are evening classes to visit.

## **Considering safeguarding on an ITE inspection**

When determining whether the 'compliance, including safeguarding' standards are 'met', it is important to go beyond reviewing documents and ensuring that providers meet statutory requirements. This includes speaking with staff and trainees.

You should:

- consider, proportionately, the views of trainees and staff through discussions and surveys
- look for evidence of effective training and its impact on trainees' knowledge of how to keep themselves safe and their safeguarding responsibilities as a trainee teacher/teacher
- ask trainees whether they feel safe and know who to turn to if they have concerns
- examine how effectively the provider is implementing its safer recruitment policies and processes and how it reviews them

Throughout the inspection, adapt your activities to the provider's context, agreeing this with leaders wherever possible.

## **Recording evidence**

You must make sure that the evidence base:

- is a clear and accurate evaluative record of relevant evidence (rather than a verbatim record of discussion or inspection activities)
- explains how you arrived at your decisions and findings, including how you weighed the available evidence in reaching these; this includes findings relating to provisional grades, as well as other relevant decisions, such as the focus of inspection activities or responses to requests by leaders and nominee(s)
- complies with any relevant legal requirements, thresholds and Ofsted policies (justifying any departures from policies), and reflects our guidelines (including this operating guide and the [toolkit for ITE inspections](#))

If leaders have accompanied you on activities, briefly review your findings with them.

Record evidence in a proportionate way, in sufficient detail to clearly explain the decisions and findings you reached and how you reached them. Recorded evidence should be more detailed in cases where decisions are more complex or, potentially, have greater consequences. This is so that the records reflect accurately and clearly how the decisions were reached and how you took account of relevant policies and guidance.

There will be times during the inspection when not using a laptop may be helpful – for example, in conversations with trainees. Avoid making handwritten notes to upload to your laptop later where possible; instead block out time following inspection activities to add your reflections to the evidence base at the earliest opportunity.

## **Meeting standards and determining grades**

# Evaluating against the toolkit evaluation areas and grading standards

Formally confirm provisional grades for each evaluation area.

When you have collected reliable evidence in an evaluation area to support an indicative grade, as set out in the 'gathering evidence about' sections of the ITE toolkit, consider whether all the expected standards are reached (a secure fit). If this is the case, consider whether all the strong standards are also reached securely. At this point, you might have reliable evidence to support the grade 'exceptional'. This is summarised in the table. You should call the duty desk when an 'exceptional' grade is likely.

When grading, consider the following steps:

Step	Question	Resulting grade
<b>1. Expected standard</b>	Does the ITE phase reach all the expected grading standards for this evaluation area?	If no, go to 'Where the evaluation standards are not reached' section.  If yes, go to Step 2.
<b>2. Strong standard</b>	Does the ITE phase also reach all the strong grading standards?	If no, grade as 'expected standard'.  If yes, go to Step 3.
<b>3. Exceptional</b>	Is there clear evidence of the additional standards that define exceptional practice?	If yes, grade as 'exceptional'.  If no, grade as 'strong standard'.

Consider whether the evidence shows that ‘compliance, including safeguarding’ standards are ‘met’.

Some minor inconsistencies may lead to priorities for improvement but do not lower the grade. Where one or more standards have not been met for a particular grade, then that grade cannot be given and you should refer to the guidance below.

## **Where the evaluation standards are not reached**

### **Needs attention**

An evaluation area is likely to be graded as ‘needs attention’ when:

- the ‘expected standard’ grade has not been reached, and
- no ‘urgent improvement’ indicators apply

Use the indicators for ‘needs attention’ to explain the grading and outline the priorities for improvement. If none of the ‘needs attention’ indicators apply, put forward a clear reason why the area is to be graded as ‘needs attention’ and not ‘expected standard’.

### **Urgent improvement**

If any of the ‘urgent improvement’ indicators apply, the evaluation area is likely to be graded as ‘urgent improvement’. You should call the duty desk when an ‘urgent improvement’ grade is likely.

## **Evaluation of compliance with Department for Education ITT/E criteria,**

## including safeguarding

You should consider whether the ITE offered by the provider complies with the relevant Department for Education statutory and non-statutory guidance – the [ITT criteria for primary and secondary](#), the [assessment-only route criteria](#), the non-statutory [early years ITT requirements](#) or the non-statutory [expectations for FE and skills ITE](#).<sup>[footnote 1]</sup>

For primary and secondary phase ITE, make sure that the provider offers trainees their minimum entitlement, as set out in the [Initial teacher training and early career framework](#).

For ITE in the FE and skills phase, make sure that the curriculum meets the requirements of the [occupational standard](#).

Consider whether the provider follows the safer recruitment processes when selecting trainees, in line with [Keeping children safe in education](#). Also consider how it complies with all relevant legislation and requirements relating to the [Prevent duty](#) and the [Equality Act 2010](#), including, where relevant, the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### **What to do if aspects of ‘compliance, including safeguarding’ are ‘not met’ or minor improvements are required**

During the inspection, you may identify minor improvements that the provider needs to make to its compliance practices, including safeguarding, such as correcting administrative errors in paperwork or updating policies. If leaders can make these minor improvements easily before the end of the on-site inspection, give them every chance to do so by discussing this constructively with them.

Sometimes, staff cannot finish making the required minor improvements before the end of the on-site inspection. When this is the case, you can still grade the relevant aspects of compliance, including safeguarding, as ‘met’ if they have taken the necessary steps to resolve the issues – for example, training

has been booked but will not take place for a number of weeks.

Importantly, the minor improvements should be such that, if they were not made straight away, leaving them undone would not have an immediate and/or significant impact on the safety of trainees.

If aspects of the 'compliance, including safeguarding' standards are 'not met', the leadership evaluation area will be graded as 'urgent improvement'.

## Where the evidence indicates a particular grade is likely to be reached

During a reflection meeting, if you have reliable evidence indicating a particular grade for any evaluation area, let leaders know. If the evidence supports a provisional grading decision, discuss and agree this with leaders. Record the provisional grade and leaders' comments in the evidence base.

**Remember** – you need to be very clear with leaders that any indicative grading throughout the inspection is provisional. The final grading process will be carried out at the end of the inspection and will be subject to Ofsted's quality assurance and consistency checking process.

Let the leaders and nominee(s) know if you have emerging evidence that any evaluation area is likely to be graded as 'needs attention' or 'urgent improvement'. Record the main points in the evidence base. Emphasise that provisional grades are not confirmed until the grading meeting on the last day of the

inspection.

# What to do on site during the inspection: day 1

Remember to apply the [3 key principles](#) throughout the inspection.

The first on-site activity is an initial meeting of the whole inspection team, leaders and nominee(s). Structure the discussion in 3 parts:

- the context of the provider, including leaders' views of the provider's current strengths and their priorities for improvement in relation to the areas of focus of the inspection, continuing the planning conversations
- a high-level overview of the structure of the ITE provision to inform inspection activities (where relevant, at phase level)
- clarification of the inspection activities, including those that will be carried out jointly with provider staff (where relevant, this may be done at a phase level); this could also include contextual information about the trainees being sampled and the placement settings, schools and partner colleges being visited

Some team inspectors may need to join the meeting remotely, depending on where they are starting their inspection activities. Inspection activities should start as soon as possible after this initial meeting.

The choice of activities for the rest of day 1 will reflect the type and specific circumstances of the provision. The inspection timetable is likely to include further meetings with leaders, as determined by the areas of focus of the inspection, and review of documentation. Visits to placement settings, schools and

partner colleges and to trainees' training sessions might also be arranged for day 1, depending on the providers' usual arrangements and as agreed with leaders.

Find a suitable time for the OLI/LI/PLI to meet with those responsible for oversight of the ITE provision.

Check whether anyone involved in the inspection requires (and/or has requested) any reasonable adjustments because of a disability. Consider whether you need to make any further adaptations to the inspection process so that those with other protected characteristics are not put at a disadvantage. Refer to the [Responding to requests for reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations](#) section for further information. Record any requests and their outcome in the evidence base, along with any other adaptations that have been requested.

## **Day 1 summary reflection meeting with leaders and the nominee(s)**

Check on the well-being of leaders and staff, and the process and conduct of the inspection. Resolve any concerns.

Share headline evidence from day 1, linked to the ITE toolkit. Ensure you have applied the [3 key principles](#). Record leaders' and nominees' comments in the evidence base.

Confirm the inspection activities required for day 2, ensuring these allow for gathering the required evidence for the ITE toolkit.

Discuss the practical arrangements for all the inspection activities that have been agreed for day 2 onwards.



# What to do on site during the inspection: days 2 to 4

The OLI/LI or PLI (as appropriate) should begin each day with a meeting with leaders and the nominee(s), where practicable (see the [Additional guidance to support evidence gathering](#) section).

Confirm everyone's well-being, note any overnight developments or unexpected events, and agree whether the timetable needs fine-tuning. Adjust plans only as much as necessary.

Activities on days 2 to 4 focus on trainees' experiences, and the extent to which leaders' actions are effective in supporting trainees to achieve and belong and ensure the pupils and learners they teach can thrive. These days typically include the following interconnected inspection activities:

- meetings with those responsible for the oversight of the ITE provider
- meetings with programme/subject leaders
- meetings with teacher educators
- meetings with lead mentors and mentor leadership teams
- meetings with training partners/partner colleges
- visits to placement settings, schools and partner colleges
- meetings with setting leaders and employers
- visits to the training of trainees
- meetings with mentors
- meetings with trainees
- visits to parts of lessons where trainees are teaching

- case sampling a group of trainees, including those with identified SEND or who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being
- reviews of trainees' work and portfolios
- meetings with ECTs/former trainees
- review of relevant documentation

Use ongoing reflection meetings with leaders and the nominee(s) to reflect on the emerging evidence. Allow leaders to share additional evidence. Consider whether you have reliable evidence to support a provisional grade for any evaluation area.

**Be flexible and responsive** – if new issues emerge, discuss them with leaders and the nominee(s), adjusting the inspection activities as necessary. Use the toolkit to adapt what you focus on as you go. Leaders will be aware of the need for this from the planning calls.

Inspectors are not required to carry out all the activities listed. Which activities you choose will vary according to the context of the provider and the activities that are taking place during the inspection. You should agree with the nominee(s) which activities are most appropriate to secure the necessary evidence to support your grading of the evaluation areas.

A focus on inclusion in your inspection activities will help you gather evidence about the effectiveness of support for trainees who face barriers to their learning and/or well-being, including those with identified SEND.

A focus on curriculum, teaching and training, achievement, and professional behaviours, personal development and well-being will help you to evaluate how well trainees are trained to teach their subject(s) and phase.

A focus on leadership gives leaders the opportunity to

demonstrate how their vision, values and priorities are being realised. This will provide important evidence for leadership in particular, as well as other evaluation areas.

## **Summary reflection meeting(s) with leaders and the nominee(s) from day 2 onwards**

As on day 1:

- Check on the well-being of leaders and staff, and the process and conduct of the inspection; resolve any concerns.
- When evaluating the first-hand evidence you have gathered, make sure you apply the [3 key principles](#).
- Share headline evidence and link it to the ITE toolkit.
- Evaluate to what extent the evidence supports a 'secure fit' in any of the evaluation areas, starting with the 'expected standard' for each evaluation area in the toolkit. Consider which areas are emerging as strengths, and areas where the provider may have more to do. This will help you to have a transparent dialogue with leaders about the emerging evidence, give leaders and the nominee(s) an opportunity to suggest further evidence, and help you to identify further areas to explore.
- Record leaders' and nominee(s)' comments in the evidence base.
- Discuss and agree with leaders and the nominee(s) the focus for subsequent inspection activities, making sure these will allow you to gather evidence relevant to the evaluation areas in the ITE toolkit. Use your emerging evaluation of strengths and areas that may require further improvement to do this. Give leaders and the nominee(s) the opportunity to draw your attention to specific aspects where they consider more evidence is needed to inform your evaluations.

- Discuss the practical arrangements for all the inspection activities that have been confirmed.

Use the toolkit to:

- consider how the emerging evidence relates to the grading standards for a particular evaluation area
- consider whether the evidence reliably supports an indicative grade for a particular evaluation area, using the grading standards
- consider the most appropriate focus for later inspection activities, using the evidence-gathering prompts

## **Grading meeting – day 4**

Once you have finished collecting evidence, the inspection team will hold the grading meeting. Leaders and the nominee(s) should be invited to attend. This meeting is to evaluate the evidence you have gathered, including that already shared and discussed at ongoing reflection meetings, to determine provisional final grades based on a 'secure fit'. This includes whether 'compliance, including safeguarding' standards are 'met'. Record the main points for feedback to the provider in the evidence base.

At the beginning of the meeting:

- check on leaders' and staff well-being, and allow leaders and/or the nominee(s) to raise any issues or concerns, or to seek clarification, including about the conduct of the inspection or of individual inspectors
- reflect with leaders and the nominee(s) on how effective any reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations were; ask them whether they want to change the existing arrangements or make any additional requests for the final feedback meeting

Following this, for each evaluation area:

- consider the evidence gathered on day 4
- evaluate how this evidence builds on that gathered earlier in the inspection
- agree as a team the provisional grades following the grading process set out in the section [Meeting standards and determining grades](#), in the following order (the OLI/LI/PLI is responsible for detailed oversight of leadership and compliance, including safeguarding):
  - inclusion
  - curriculum, teaching and training
  - achievement
  - professional behaviours, personal development and well-being
  - leadership
  - compliance, including safeguarding
- if required, identify next steps

You will then hold the final feedback meeting.

## Final feedback meeting

As OLI/LI, your feedback must be clear, respectful and grounded in the evidence gathered. It should cover the points that will appear in the written report card and should be suitable for you to copy from directly when drafting it.

Thank everyone for their contributions, engagement and involvement in the inspection. Then explain clearly to all those attending:

- that attendance at the final feedback meeting is voluntary, and

provider attendees may leave at any time

- the key findings from the inspection and the provisional grades for each evaluation area for each phase (and 'compliance, including safeguarding') – explain that these may change as a result of quality assurance and consistency checking procedures or moderation
- the rationale for each provisional grade and the key evidence supporting it, using the language of the toolkit
- celebrate the key strengths and validate the successes/evaluation of the provider's work
- highlight any next steps and what the provider needs to do to improve, giving sufficient detail so that those attending understand their part in these improvements
- that if any phase has been graded as less than the 'expected standard' in one or more of the evaluation areas there will be a reinspection within 12 months of the report card being published
- that leaders should share the inspection findings with those responsible for overseeing the ITE provision, and whoever else they consider appropriate – this may include colleagues, family members, and/or their wider support group; however, the information should not be made public or shared with trainees
- that the draft report card they receive must not be published; they must wait for the copy of the final report card
- that when they receive their draft report card and complete their factual accuracy check they do not need to check data from other published sources but may want to review any data that was gathered on inspection or commented upon in the report card
- that leaders are invited to complete the post-inspection survey
- that the provider has an opportunity to raise any issues or concerns or to seek clarification about the inspection, and can also contact Ofsted after the end of the inspection, if

necessary (see the [inspection information for ITE](#))

- that leaders can make a formal complaint and the information on how to do this is available in our [complaints procedure](#)

## What to do after the inspection

After the end of the inspection, as OLI, LI or PLI, write the relevant sections of the report card, following our internal writing guidance.

The text in the report card must:

- reflect the evidence gathered
- be clear, concise and informed by the provider's context, leaders' evaluation of their provision, and the toolkit
- explain the grade given for each evaluation area
- make clear what the provider should improve
- be consistent with the verbal feedback given to the provider at the end of the inspection

If the provider submits comments after reviewing the report card, you are responsible, as the OLI/LI, for reviewing and responding to the comments, and making any necessary amendments.

## Quality assurance and consistency checking

You are responsible for the quality of your work and that of your inspection team. You should ensure that the inspection is carried out in accordance with the principles of inspection and the [code of conduct](#). You are also responsible for giving feedback to

team inspectors about the quality of their work and their conduct.

## **Additional guidance to support inspection**

As part of the inspection process, and relevant to the [evidence-gathering activities](#), you must check whether anyone involved in the inspection requires (and/or has requested) any reasonable adjustments because of a disability. It is also important to continue to consider making other adaptations where those with other protected characteristics may otherwise be put at a disadvantage. Refer to the [Responding to requests for reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations](#) section for further information. Record any requests and their outcome in the evidence base, along with any other adaptations that have been requested.

## **Additional guidance to support evidence gathering**

### **Using the toolkit and building dialogue**

[The toolkit](#) provides guidance on gathering evidence within each evaluation area through inspection activities, as well as the standards you will use to determine grades.

It is not a checklist.

Connect evidence across a range of activities (determined by you as the OLI/LI), to gather reliable evidence and determine the



grades.

Use the toolkit to guide conversations, reflect on evidence and ensure that grades reflect the evidence gathered during the inspection. Always discuss with leaders and the nominee(s) the typicality of the evidence you are gathering and the emerging evaluations. Where leaders and/or the nominee(s) do not believe the evidence is typical or reflective of their provision, try to gather additional evidence where appropriate within the time you have. This may be through speaking with other leaders, staff, mentors, partner organisations or trainees, or reviewing more of the provider's work.

## **Inspection team meetings**

Throughout the inspection, plan appropriate times for inspection team meetings. When team inspectors are working remotely, these meetings may be necessary to ensure that you can keep in touch with the team and that you have sufficient oversight of the evidence. Leaders and the nominee(s) are not required to attend.

Use these meetings to review what has been seen, heard and recorded in the inspection evidence base to inform the reflective discussions with leaders and the nominee(s).

## **Ongoing reflection meetings with leader(s) and the nominee(s)**

As the OLI/LI or PLI (where relevant), you should agree how to keep leaders and the nominee(s) informed and involved throughout the inspection. These ongoing reflection meetings are an opportunity to review the evidence and share the team's thinking with leaders to enable open, professional and

transparent dialogue. This should include:

- holding short, focused meetings at agreed points in the day
- continually reviewing the toolkit evaluation areas covered by the inspection activities you have carried out up to that point
- sharing emerging findings with leaders and the nominee(s) orally as the inspection progresses
- recording the emerging findings you share with them in the evidence base

Encourage leader(s) and the nominee(s) to ask questions and connect evidence from across the inspection activities. Use the meetings to:

- check on the well-being of leaders and the provider's staff
- discuss the emerging evidence in the context of the toolkit, and consider whether any inspection activity needs to be adapted in the light of emerging evidence
- consider any additional areas of focus of the inspection, identifying what other evidence is needed and how to gather this
- review the planned timetable and adjust inspection activities as needed to accommodate the provider's working day and that of partner organisations; always give reasonable notice to partner organisations being visited as part of the inspection
- alert leaders if the evidence suggests that any area may be likely to be graded as 'urgent improvement' or if 'compliance, including safeguarding' may be likely to be 'not met'

## **Evidence-gathering activities**

The extent and sequence of inspection activities will depend on the provider's context and the outcome of your discussions with leader(s) and the nominee(s).

If you are meeting individual trainees, members of staff and/or leaders, give them the opportunity to be accompanied by a colleague. However, it is important that trainees and staff can express their views freely to inspectors. Remind staff that you do not expect them to bring documents with them to inform discussions in meetings, but this may help them to share their work with inspectors.

Adjust the arrangements when necessary. For example, staff may need to take a break, or be given an opportunity to follow up discussions later so that they can carry out their usual routines and responsibilities.

Meet a range of stakeholders to gather first-hand evidence. Be proportionate in considering their views. Connect evidence from them with the wider evidence base.

Take careful account of the well-being of leaders and staff and make suitable adjustments as necessary. If you see or suspect that a leader or staff member is upset or distressed at any point, you should respond sensitively. If you have serious concerns, you must inform those responsible for the person's well-being, other than in exceptional circumstances, and you must contact the national duty desk.

In exceptional circumstances, you may need to consider [pausing the inspection](#).

## **Joint activities with provider leaders and/or staff**

In collaboration with the nominee(s), arrange joint inspection activities with relevant leaders/staff, where they are available to take part. These are likely to include:

- visiting trainees while they are teaching in the setting, school or partner college in which they are undertaking their teaching

practice

- visiting teaching of the taught elements of the ITE curriculum, including intensive training and practice (ITAP)
- joint reviews of trainees' work, including when trainees are present
- case sampling, to understand the views and experiences of trainees, especially those with identified SEND or who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being

Explain to leaders that activities should be interconnected rather than stand-alone.

## **Engaging with those responsible for oversight of the ITE provision**

Meet those responsible for oversight of the ITE provision. Consider the provider's context and the leadership structures when deciding who to speak with.

This meeting should help you to understand:

- their role and responsibilities
- how they hold leaders to account, including how leaders make sure that the provider is meeting its statutory duties
- how they understand the strategic vision, values and priorities of the provider and their role in supporting and challenging leaders

These meetings will normally be held by the OLI or LI. However, if there are phase-specific considerations, the meeting(s) can be with the PLIs. The meetings may take place on a call if necessary.

## **Engaging with programme and/or subject leaders**

Arrange meetings with provider leaders, subject/area of learning and development leaders, and any other key staff as necessary. These meetings should help you to understand how:

- the ITE curriculum is designed to prepare trainees to teach the subjects/areas of learning and development within their phase
- the ITE curriculum prepares trainees to understand how to apply evidence-informed inclusive practices in their teaching, including the role of other professionals who support inclusion, and how to adapt their teaching to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils and learners, those with SEND, those known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being
- in the primary and secondary phases, ITAP, as part of the ITE curriculum, is designed to prepare trainees to teach their subject(s) and phase
- leaders make sure that the taught elements of the ITE curriculum align with and reinforce the content, sequencing and progression of teaching practice
- trainees are mentored, including how leaders and staff train and communicate with mentors
- how the mentor training curriculum in the primary and secondary phases prepares mentors to support trainees to teach their subject(s) and phase

In all phase inspections, evaluate how effectively the provider equips trainees to support pupils and learners to develop their proficiency in English (including reading and systematic synthetic phonics) and mathematics effectively.

## **Engagement with teacher educators**

Arrange meetings with those who teach and train the trainees. This could include teacher educators who are delivering training during the on-site inspection or those linked to a specific area of focus of the inspection. Consider:

- their experience of working at the provider, including their professional development
- their role in designing and delivering the ITE curriculum, and in assessing trainees
- how they make sure of the best possible experiences and outcomes for all trainees
- the impact of leaders' actions

## **Engagement with lead mentors or mentor leadership teams**

In the primary and secondary phases, use meetings with lead mentors or mentor leadership teams to consider:

- their roles and responsibilities
- the professional development they have received to support their role
- their role in designing and implementing the ITE curriculum, including ITAP
- the design, content and delivery of the mentor training curriculum and how this takes account of school mentors' prior learning
- their role in training, supporting and overseeing school mentors

- their role in overseeing trainees' progress throughout the programme

For the early years and FE and skills phases, evaluate leaders' oversight of mentoring, and the impact of this work.

## **Engagement with training partners/partner colleges**

In the primary and secondary phases, where an accredited provider has training partners, visit a proportionate number of them to gather evidence about the accredited provider's effectiveness. This will also contribute to the evidence you collect for the areas of focus of the inspection, as appropriate.

In FE and skills, visit a proportionate number of partner colleges.

These visits may be in person or online.

Do not grade these training partners or partner colleges, but consider:

- their roles and responsibilities, including how they engage with the accredited provider
- the context of the training partner/partner college
- their role in recruiting and selecting trainees
- their role in designing and implementing the ITE curriculum and how this is integrated into trainee placements and/or workplaces
- any role they have in teaching and training of the ITE curriculum
- their role in quality assurance of the ITE programme(s)

You may also speak with trainees, mentors and other stakeholders, including ECTs or former early years/FE and skills

trainees who undertook their ITE training with the provider, if this is relevant to the training partner/partner college.

Consider the number of trainees at a training partner/partner college proportionately when evaluating what is typical at the provider.

## **Engagement with setting leaders and employers**

Speak with setting leaders and employers during any visits to a trainee's teaching practice placement. You may arrange to speak with a group or individuals. Consider:

- their experience of working with the provider, including opportunities to provide feedback, and the impact of leaders' actions
- any involvement they have in the provider's work, including recruitment and the ITE curriculum
- their views on trainees' preparedness, and the quality of teaching and training they receive
- relevant staff's workload

## **Visiting the training of trainees**

You may visit the taught elements of the ITE curriculum (including ITAP), if this is taking place during the inspection. You would usually invite relevant provider staff/leaders or the nominee(s) to visit this training with you.

After visiting the training, provide an opportunity to discuss with them how the training builds on previous sessions and how it links to the wider taught elements of the ITE curriculum for



trainees.

## **Visiting teaching by trainees**

If trainees are on teaching practice or in their employer's setting during the inspection, you may visit part of a lesson where a trainee is teaching. Visiting trainees' teaching is a useful way to see first-hand how they are applying what they learn. When visiting trainees' teaching, do not grade individual lessons or provide feedback to trainees.

## **Engagement with mentors**

Arrange to speak with mentors during any visits you make to trainees' teaching practice placements or employer settings. Additionally, you may also arrange to speak separately to mentors. Consider:

- mentors' experience of working with the provider, including the impact of leaders' actions
- how the mentor training has provided them with sufficient understanding of the ITE curriculum and their role
- how they support trainees as part of a purposefully integrated subject- and phase-specific ITE curriculum
- how they ensure the best possible experiences and outcomes for trainees, including how trainees receive and use feedback and support
- their views on trainees' preparedness, and the quality of teaching and training they receive
- providers' support with mentors' workload and trainees' well-being

## Engagement with trainees

Gather evidence from a wide-ranging and representative sample of trainees during the on-site inspection. Work collaboratively with leaders and the nominee(s) as early as possible to select which trainees to speak with. Consider the provider's context and trainees' needs when selecting them, including whether leaders and the nominee(s) have any contextual information about a trainee whom you have selected.

Remind leaders that they must provide opportunities for inspectors to speak with trainees without leaders, staff or mentors present. In exceptional circumstances, the trainees may ask for an additional adult to be present, including if they require this as a reasonable adjustment.

Use the conversations with trainees to understand their experiences. You may discuss:

- the inclusivity of practice
- how well leaders are supporting trainees
- how well trainees have learned the ITE curriculum for their subject(s) and phase, including inclusive practices in their own teaching

Consider whether trainees are getting the practical experience, support and feedback they need. Connect what you learn to the wider evidence base.

Include in your evidence the progress, outcomes and experiences of a sample of trainees with identified SEND and/or those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being.

Ways to hold discussions with trainees include:

- visiting placements/employer settings

- setting up individual meetings, where appropriate, such as to discuss support for a trainee's identified SEND or other barriers to their learning and/or well-being
- holding focus groups with a range of trainees, whether in person or online
- speaking with trainees when visiting any centre- or placement-based teaching and training

## **Case sampling**

Case sampling is a flexible inspection activity to look in depth at the progress, outcomes and experiences of particular trainees. Case sampling is likely to involve reviewing records and a trainee's work, and speaking with staff and trainees.

The purpose of case sampling is to gather deep evidence about a range of trainees. You should evaluate whether the provider's values and policies are reflected in the experience of trainees, including those who are most in need of support. Establish whether these trainees' experiences are typical across the provider.

## **Review of trainees' work**

Trainees' work may take different forms, such as teaching files, portfolios, assignments and reflections. Note that their work is often their intellectual property and so you will need to plan with the nominee(s) how to access it.

Reviewing trainees' work provides further evidence about the ITE curriculum that trainees have been taught, how it has been taught, and the knowledge and skills they have developed. Trainees' work is an important part of how we inspect the curriculum and teaching and training, and of our evaluation of

trainees' knowledge and skills. However, it must be considered in the light of wider evidence.

Explore trainees' work during the on-site inspection to understand the implementation of the ITE curriculum and the progress they are making. Make sure that the work of trainees with identified SEND and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being is included in the sample.

Plan time to look at trainees' work with leaders and staff, as well as separately with the trainee.

## **Engagement with early career teachers/former trainees**

You must not visit lessons taught by ECTs or former early years and FE and skills trainees, but, wherever possible, hold discussions with them. If you meet them individually, give them the opportunity to be accompanied by a colleague. However, it is important that they can express their views freely. You should make it clear to leaders and ECTs/former trainees, as appropriate, that you are only going to be discussing their ITE programme and their subsequent preparedness to teach. You are not looking at their current provision as ECTs/former trainees.

Consider ways to hold discussions with them, including:

- visiting placements or employer settings that have current trainees – only speak with ECTs, and former early years and FE and skills trainees, who have studied at the provider you are inspecting
- setting up meetings with individuals, where appropriate, to discuss the support they received when they were a trainee for their identified SEND need or any other barrier to learning and/or well-being

- holding focus groups with a range of ECTs, and former early years and FE and skills trainees – these may be in person or online

Use these conversations to understand how well these former trainees feel they were prepared to teach in their subject(s) and phase. Also consider:

- the inclusivity of the provider
- how well leaders supported them when they were trainees
- how prepared they felt they were to support disadvantaged children, pupils and learners, those with SEND, those who are known (or were previously known) to children's social care and those who face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being, such as young carers

## **Seeking the views of trainees and staff through questionnaires and surveys**

Analyse the anonymous responses to the Ofsted surveys sent to trainees, mentors and staff, and identify any themes that emerge. Also take account of the results, where available, of any internal surveys of trainees, mentors or staff that the provider has carried out.

When preparing for the inspection, consider any responses to the annual trainee online questionnaire.

## **Reviewing relevant documents**

Reviewing relevant documents provides further evidence that can be used to inform your evaluations, including your checking of compliance.

# Specific contexts to consider

ITE providers may work in different ways to meet the needs of their institution and/or contribute to local and/or national needs. They vary in size and structure, as well as in the way in which leaders organise themselves. For example, some leadership teams are central, whereas others have specific responsibilities for phases, routes or partners. It is important that you plan the inspection to reflect these.

In many ITE providers, for example higher education institutions and further education colleges, some staff work in roles across the institution, and only a small part of their work covers ITE provision. These providers may not have dedicated roles for ITE, including for oversight and governance.

In providers that are large or spread out geographically, you may need to hold remote or hybrid meetings with leaders to make sure different locations can be represented.

In small providers, such as single-phase school-centred ITT providers or independent learning providers, it is possible that one individual carries out multiple roles. It is important to take account of individuals' multiple roles when planning meetings with leaders in these providers.

## Teaching apprenticeships

We inspect apprenticeship training, not degrees or qualifications or end-point assessment.

In a provider that is delivering teacher apprenticeships, you must consider how well leaders and managers ensure that the apprenticeship curriculum meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. You must consider the

extent to which the provider's staff engage with employers to:

- complete the apprenticeship training plan
- plan the initial assessment, training, ongoing assessments, review points and milestones throughout
- agree any additional qualifications to be included
- monitor and support apprentices to progress quickly; gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours; and achieve their full potential, including those with identified SEND and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being

You must assess how well trainers, assessors, coaches and mentors communicate up-to-date vocational and technical subject knowledge that reflects expected industry practice and meets employers' needs.

You must also determine whether apprentices acquire that knowledge effectively. They should demonstrate the required skills and behaviours to complete their apprenticeships, contribute to their workplace and fulfil their career aims by progressing to their intended job roles or other sustained employment or promotion, or, where appropriate, moving to a higher-level apprenticeship or qualification.

## **Other matters**

### **Responding to requests for reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations**

On all inspections, you must ask whether anyone requires any reasonable adjustments due to a disability. Contact the duty desk for all requests. Those on the duty desk may consult with relevant policy and legal teams as needed.

What is considered reasonable is an objective test that depends on all of the circumstances of the particular case. This includes the needs of the individual concerned, how effective the change will be in avoiding the disadvantage the disabled person would otherwise experience, what impact providing the adjustment will have on the inspection, and the circumstances in respect of the relevant inspection or visit.

To understand the request, you must enter into an open dialogue with the individual about their request. Ask what steps the individual thinks Ofsted should take to address the anticipated disadvantage. In the light of this, take some time to consider what adjustments might be reasonable in the circumstances of the inspection or visit. You can consider adjustments not proposed by the individual.

When considering whether the request is reasonable, take into account:

- how effective the reasonable adjustment would be in overcoming the disadvantage
- how practicable it is for Ofsted to make the adjustment
- the costs of making the adjustment
- the disruption that making the adjustment would cause
- the resources available to the inspector and to Ofsted
- the amount of resources already spent on making adjustments
- any health and safety risks, including the effect the arrangements will have on others

There is a 'positive' duty to make such adjustments if they are considered to be reasonable, as set out here. A failure to comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments is a form of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 and is an 'anticipatory' duty. You can treat disabled people better or 'more favourably' than non-disabled people and sometimes this may be an appropriate response to a request for reasonable



adjustments.

It may also be appropriate to consider other adaptations that are requested where those with other protected characteristics may otherwise be put at a disadvantage. Where you are being asked to make such an adaptation to avoid potential discrimination, consider what the reason is for the policy, criterion or practice that you are being asked to adapt (the objective justification), and what the impact would be of both making and not making the adaptation.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) protects people from unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the ground of a protected characteristic. This may include taking steps to avoid indirectly discriminating against someone on the ground of a protected characteristic. However, you should also consider the effect the proposed adaptation would have on others. Ensure that in making the adaptation you are not directly discriminating against anyone else on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

If you agree to the request(s), agree a plan for reasonable adjustments or adaptations with the individual and leaders as appropriate. You must discuss and agree the plan with the inspection team.

You must record in the evidence base that you have asked leaders if they need to request any reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations. You must also record the outcome of any decisions. It is essential that this information is recorded factually and accurately, and the anonymity of the individual is maintained.

## **If the provider has concerns/complaints**

Record any concerns raised, and actions taken, in the inspection evidence. Try to resolve any issues with leaders during the

inspection. If this is not possible, the provider can follow the steps set out in the [complaints procedure](#).

## **If you need to consider pausing the inspection**

There may be exceptional occasions when you need to consider pausing an inspection or phase inspection, including in response to concerns raised by the nominee(s). Contact the duty desk for advice. We will consider requests on a case-by-case basis, according to our published [guidance on pausing inspections](#).

## **If you identify evidence or allegations of abuse on inspection**

You must familiarise yourself with our [guidance on safeguarding concerns](#).

If you come across evidence or allegations of child abuse, stop all other activity immediately and focus on ensuring that the child receives the help they need. Do not attempt to investigate this yourself, but make sure the appropriate authority is informed, in line with the relevant provider's safeguarding policy. You must be satisfied that the correct referral has been made and record this in the evidence base.

## **If the provider uses artificial intelligence**

You do not need to ask if artificial intelligence (AI) is used or actively search for it. If you come across instances where a

provider uses AI, or has an explicit policy on trainees using AI, record how leaders have chosen to implement it, its impact, how this is monitored, and the provider’s checks and balances to make sure it is accurate, safe and used in the best interests of trainees, children and learners. If you have any concerns about the provider’s use of AI, contact the duty desk.

1. This guidance is currently non-statutory. The DfE plans to make it statutory during the course of the next inspection cycle. [↩](#)

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