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Guidance

Summary of changes

Updated 12 June 2026

Applies to England

Contents

[September 2026](#)

This document sets out changes we have made to inspection guidance to reflect our inspection practice.

September 2026

State-funded schools inspection toolkit

In this update, the following changes have been made to the State-funded schools inspection toolkit.

Additional or updated wording to provide clarity on:

- leaders' and governors' responsibilities to have an effective, whole school approach to safeguarding
- pupils at risk of harm or who have been harmed
- arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions and allergy safety policies
- required records regarding to disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006
- the requirement for an inclusion strategy
- the role of the designated teacher in maintained schools and academies
- the role of the SENCo
- children with personal education plans
- virtual school heads
- pupils' attainment and progress when compared with similar schools
- attainment and progress for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND
- where pupils have joined a school with previously low attendance or following disruption to their education
- mobile phone policies
- enrichment, having regard to the Enrichment Framework (where applicable)
- statutory guidance for safe sleeping arrangements and children's food preparation and provision
- early years foundation stage profile (EYFSP) data
- the proportion of children reaching a good level of development compares with the national average
- all children being consistently very well prepared for the next stage of learning
- the impact of breaches of legal responsibilities in maintained nursery schools
- bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation going unnoticed or unchallenged
- achievement expected standard grading standards
- leaders' engagement with pupils and families in the inclusion expected standard
- inclusion bases and curriculum adaptation
- pupils' progress across the curriculum
- pupils with an education, health and care plan having support to attend and behave

School inspection operating guide for inspectors

In this update, the following changes have been made to the School inspection operating guide.

Additional or updated wording to provide clarity on:

- inspector conduct to highlight the responsibility of the inspector and provider to align duties with the equality act 2010 with a link to additional guidance
- inspectors reviewing governance information, including whether an interim executive board (IEB) is in place
- how to contact a senior Ofsted leader to raise any issues or concerns or to seek clarification about the inspection
- prompting inspectors to also ask any inspection team members if they require reasonable adjustments and adaptations
- inclusion bases delegated to the school by the local authority
- information required regarding pupils who are off-site
- inspectors also reviewing any records relating to disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006
- case sampling
- meetings with the designated safeguarding lead, SENCo and other relevant leaders who have an inclusion role, throughout the inspection
- indicative and/or provisional grades throughout the inspection
- who should attend the final feedback meeting
- fire safety concerns as part of evaluating safeguarding
- who inspectors must meet and talk with on inspection
- inspectors reviewing a school's risk assessment where adults live on the premises and a school's compliance with section 35 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act
- speaking to virtual school heads
- inspectors to record where no trustees were available to meet them during an inspection
- next steps may be identified even if the expected grade is 'expected standard' or

above

- how a school may be placed in a category of concern, what is meant by an acceptable standard of education and how capacity to improve is defined
- that the Department for Education (DfE) will be informed if a school is provisionally placed in a category of concern
- suspending an inspection
- the final feedback meeting, and that that information should not be shared at all by attendees until the inspection report card is published
- schools that are exempt from the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and taking this into account when selecting pupils to read
- the role of the governance professional and how inspectors may engage with them on inspection
- (where applicable) meetings with the chair of trustees (or their delegate), trustees and the CEO
- inspectors reviewing a safeguarding audit
- meetings with the designated safeguarding lead, SENCo and other relevant leaders who have an inclusion role should also include a discussion about any alternative provision
- Ofsted's definition of 'off-rolling' and what inspectors should do if off rolling is found or suspected
- inspectors challenging leaders about any usual patterns in the way attendance is recorded and potential impact on inspection grades
- specific circumstances where equalities must be considered on inspection
- the focus of learning walks, how leaders can be involved in joint activities and what activities inspectors must undertake to evaluate reading as part of a learning walk

School monitoring operating guide for inspectors

In this update, the following changes have been made to the School monitoring operating guide for inspectors.

Additional or updated wording to provide clarity on:

- equality duties on monitoring inspections
- the type of each monitoring inspection
- principles of monitoring inspections
- what type of monitoring inspection a school will receive (including if the last graded inspection was before the launch of the revised framework, or the school was already in a monitoring programme)
- the format and activities within each type of monitoring inspection
- grade changes on monitoring inspections (where applicable)
- removing a school from a category of concern on a monitoring inspection (where applicable)
- deeming of monitoring inspections to be a full inspection
- focused monitoring inspections where there are serious concerns about a school
- whether the school will receive a report or an update to their existing report card

Inspection information for state-funded schools

In this update, the following changes have been made to the Inspection information for state-funded schools document.

Additional or updated wording to provide clarity on:

- information about the School monitoring operating guide for inspectors
- when schools can expect their next inspection
- when other inspectors may be present on inspection, or monitor the inspection remotely
- meetings with the designated safeguarding lead, SENCo and other relevant leaders who have an inclusion role, throughout the inspection
- where the inspection has been previously deferred, a school can be notified on any day of the working week
- where inspectors will ask the school to confirm information about inclusion bases, before-and/or after-school care
- schools must provide documents relating to bullying, harassment, or directly or indirectly discriminatory or prejudiced behaviour based on religion or belief

- schools must provide the single central record and any other documents regarding disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006
- schools may choose to share a safeguarding audit with inspections, but this is not a requirement
- how the lead inspector will organise meetings throughout the inspection
- how we will usually monitor a school
- how we make a decision about placing a school in a category of concern
- any self-evaluation the school may have completed

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