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Guidance

Summary of changes

Updated 12 June 2026

Applies to England

Contents

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Further education and skills inspection toolkit

In this update, we have:

- added in the safeguarding evaluation area that appropriate safeguarding arrangements ensure leaders and staff identify learners and apprentices who are at risk of harm from mental health issues developing into safeguarding concerns
- clarified that leaders should have regard to personal education plans if any are in

place

- clarified the 'needs attention' indicators to make it clearer why a provider might receive this grade
- updated an inclusion expected standard to clarify the role of leaders and other staff in supporting looked-after children, and having regard to personal education plans if any are in place
- included how we will consider the Inclusive Mainstream Fund as part of the inclusion evaluation area

Further education and skills operating guide for inspectors

In this update, we have:

- added a link to the monitoring operating guide
- added information about equality duties on education inspections and clarified that requests for reasonable adjustments and/or adaptations applies to inspection team members as well as providers
- provided further clarity on case sampling
- updated wording about who inspectors must consider speaking to about inclusion on inspection. We've clarified the role of the nominee and provider leaders throughout the document. We've also clarified that the start of day 2 reflection meeting should be with the principal, CEO or equivalent or their delegate and the nominee
- clarified that the timings for each inspection day may be dependent on the provider's context
- added a prompt to reflect that inspectors may speak with any virtual school head(s) or their delegate(s)
- clarified that inspectors should also refer to the additional guidance to support inspection and evidence gathering throughout the inspection
- added an additional section on how inspectors should take account of new provision
- added an additional section on how inspectors identify evidence or an allegation of discrimination and/or breaches of the Equality Act

- clarified opportunities for leaders to accompany inspectors on learning walks

Further education and skills monitoring operating guide for inspectors

In this update, we have:

- changed reference to 'ongoing calls' to 'ongoing contact' with providers in a monitoring programme, to allow for more flexibility in how this is managed
- clarified what will be considered when a decision is made on whether or not to give notice of a focused monitoring inspection, and that these result in a report, rather than updates to a report card
- clarified the timing of a second monitoring inspection and subsequent full inspection where a provider improves all evaluation areas graded 'UI' to 'NA' at their first monitoring inspection
- clarified that if there are numerous 'needs attention' areas these may not all be covered during the monitoring programme
- clarified the safeguarding activities that inspectors must complete, and what to do where there may have been a decline in safeguarding standards
- clarified that inspectors cannot consider improving grades for any evaluation areas that are not within the scope of monitoring (that is, those at the expected standard or above)

Inspection information for further education and skills providers

In this update, we have:

- added further detail clarifying the timing of monitoring inspections
- updated the 'Scope of inspection' section to reflect changes in the responsibilities of government departments and changes to funding streams
- added an additional section on monitoring inspections to clarify the circumstances of when a provider will usually be monitored

- added wording to reflect who inspectors will engage with on inspection about the experiences and outcomes of disadvantaged learners and apprentices, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), those with high needs, those known or previously known to social care and those who may face any other barriers to their learning or wellbeing, including those without level 2 English and/or mathematics
- added an additional section on meetings and how attendees will be confirmed

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