



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE



Office for Standards  
in Education

# **GUIDANCE FOR THE INSPECTION OF DANCE AND DRAMA SCHOOLS 2004–2006**

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## CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>The inspection process</b>	<b>1</b>
	- Full and short inspections	1
	- Self-assessment and inspection	2
	- The role of the nominee	2
	- The inspection team – full and short inspections	3
<b>3</b>	<b>Timing and Notification</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Inspection Documentation</b>	<b>4</b>
	- Information required by inspectors prior to the inspection	4
	- Information required by the inspectors in the base room	4
<b>5</b>	<b>The Inspection Week – Full Inspections</b>	<b>5</b>
	- Inspection activities	5
	- Inspection team meetings	5
	- Observation of classes and other activities	5
	- The evaluation of students' work	6
	- Discussions with students	6
	- Discussions with staff	6
<b>6</b>	<b>The Inspection – Short Inspections</b>	<b>7</b>
	- Inspection team meetings	7
	- The evaluation of students' work	7
	- Discussions with students and staff	8
<b>7</b>	<b>Feedback and action plans</b>	<b>8</b>
	- Feedback on classes	8
	- Feedback to the principal	8
	- Reports and action plans	8
<b>8</b>	<b>Quality assurance of inspections</b>	<b>9</b>
	- The code of conduct	9
	- Complaints procedure	9
	<b>Appendix 1 – Inspection Grades</b>	<b>10</b>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This guidance applies to the third cycle of inspections and re-inspections, which started in January 2004 and will be completed by February 2006. The inspections are being carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). The inspections are at the direct request of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and will provide one of the sources of evidence used by the DfES to allocate places at private dance and drama schools that are part of the dance and drama awards scheme.

The overall aim of inspection is to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the provision of professional training in dance, drama and musical theatre at those private schools in receipt of public funds. The main purposes of inspection are to:

- give an independent public account of the quality of professional training, the standards achieved and the efficiency with which resources are managed
- help bring about improvement by identifying strengths and weaknesses and highlighting good and poor practice
- keep the Secretary of State and the DfES informed about the quality and standards of professional training in the schools
- promote and maintain a culture of self-assessment among providers, leading to continuous improvement or maintenance of very high quality and standards.

Many of the procedures and criteria for the third cycle of inspections are similar to those used in the first two cycles. Guidance in this booklet is based upon the *Common Inspection Framework for Inspecting Post-16 Education and Training*, published jointly by the ALI and Ofsted in February 2001. Additional guidance is required because of the small size and highly specialised nature of provision in dance and drama schools.

## 2. THE INSPECTION PROCESS

Inspectors will focus on the experiences of individual students through evaluation of:

- students' achievements, including their progress into work
- the standard of students' vocational skills
- the quality of teaching, training and learning
- other aspects of training, including course content, support for individual students, resources and assessment
- the effectiveness with which the provision is managed and its quality is assured and improved
- the extent to which provision is educationally and socially inclusive and promotes equality of access to professional training (this includes arrangements for any students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities).

As in the previous cycle, grades will be awarded on a five-point scale (see Appendix 1) for:

- achievement and standards and the quality of education and training, and
- leadership and management.

### Full and short inspections

It is expected that in the third cycle most schools will receive a week-long inspection of the kind experienced in the 2001–03 cycle.

However, Ofsted and the ALI recognise that schools that have been awarded the highest grades in the last cycle may not need a full inspection. Schools which are in this category may qualify for a short, two-day, inspection in the 2004–06 cycle. The purpose of the short inspection is to check that the achievement and standards and the quality of education and training are still outstanding and to regrade leadership and management. By reviewing documentation, interviewing staff and students and assessing the effectiveness of the quality assurance process, inspectors will assess whether there is any reason to doubt that previous high grades still apply. On a short inspection there will be no class observation and a grade will be given for leadership and management only.

If, on a short inspection, inspectors cannot be confident that previous high standards have been maintained, a reinspection will follow within the current cycle.

A school qualifies for a short inspection if all the following apply:

- in the last inspection, it was graded 1 for achievement and standards and the quality of education and training
- in the last inspection, it was graded 1 or 2 for leadership and management
- it is not new to the scheme nor has made substantial changes to its awards courses
- there have been no other significant changes since the last inspection (e.g. a new site, new senior management, significant staff changes)
- no concerns are revealed in the advance documentation.

### **Self-assessment and inspection**

Rigorous self-assessment and good development planning should be an integral part of an organisation's management. Schools may choose a process to meet their needs and may carry out the self-assessment at the point in the year which best suits their strategic and operational planning cycle.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that inspectors will make use of the self-assessment report in their judgements about the effectiveness of a school's quality assurance.

For schools qualifying for consideration for a short inspection, the self-assessment report will be particularly important. Schools in this category must ensure that their self-assessment reports include the following:

- detailed destination data for the past three years and an analysis of trends
- staffing data, noting changes since the last inspection
- details of any changes to the awards courses and evaluation
- details of action taken since the last inspection and an evaluation of its effectiveness
- a self-assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses under the seven headings of the *Common Inspection Framework*.

### **The role of the nominee**

Each school will be invited to nominate a senior member of staff to act as the school's main link with the inspection team. Inspectors will use the nominee's knowledge to assist with planning their schedule of meetings and their inspection of school documentation and students' work. The nominee should check that inspectors have sufficient evidence for their judgements and raise any concerns about the evidence base with the reporting inspector. The reporting inspector will keep both the nominee and the principal informed of developing issues and findings as the inspection proceeds.

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<sup>1</sup> For more detailed guidance, schools may wish to consult the relevant parts of the DfES publication *Self Assessment and Development Plans (2001)*.

The nominee should:

- have a detailed understanding of the school's programmes and operations
- be sufficiently senior to ensure the co-operation of staff at all levels before, during and after the inspection
- have authority to carry out the role with autonomy.

The nominee's rights and duties include:

- receipt of all pre-inspection documentation, including the pre-inspection commentary
- attendance at all team meetings except those at which grading is discussed
- co-ordination of feedback arrangements
- liaison over the team's use of school facilities
- ensuring that staff are available for meetings as scheduled and that the necessary documents are available for inspectors.

The nominee should respect the same conventions of confidentiality as other team members.

In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate, with the reporting inspector's agreement, for the principal to carry out the role of nominee, although generally it may be preferable for the nominee to be someone other than the principal.

### **The inspection team – full and short inspections**

The reporting inspector leads the inspection team, assisted by one, or occasionally two, associate inspectors. The reporting inspector will normally be responsible for the inspection of leadership, management and quality assurance; associate inspectors will be specialists in the school's core work and will inspect achievement and standards and the quality of education and training.

In leading the inspection, the reporting inspector will:

- ensure that judgements about the school are fair and accurate, based on secure evidence and cover the evaluation requirements
- ensure that key judgements are corporately agreed by the inspection team
- ensure that inspectors are consistent in their approach to collecting and recording evidence, in how they conduct themselves during the inspection and in their feedback to teachers and managers
- keep a careful check on the sampling of the school's work and the extent of lesson observation of individual teachers
- monitor and, if necessary, intervene in the work of individual inspectors to ensure that the framework is complied with and that evidence and judgements are secure
- plan the inspection
- ensure that members of the inspection team are fully briefed before the inspection begins
- establish an appropriate programme of team meetings
- ensure that the principal and nominee are informed of emerging issues throughout the inspection.

Prior to the inspection the reporting inspector will prepare a pre-inspection commentary for the team and the nominee based on information submitted by the school in advance of the inspection, the previous inspection report and the school's self-assessment report. The pre-inspection commentary will include:

- a summary of the school's main characteristics
- an evaluation of the pre-inspection evidence
- preliminary hypotheses about the school to be tested during the inspection.

### 3. TIMING AND NOTIFICATION

All schools will be inspected between January 2004 and February 2006. The timing of an inspection will mainly depend on:

- the date of the school's last inspection
- requests from the DfES
- the timing of award places allocations.

Schools receiving a full inspection will normally receive a letter of notification approximately ten weeks before their inspection. The letter will confirm the outline arrangements for the week, and the inspectors making up the team.

Schools which were eligible for a short inspection in this cycle were notified in November 2003 and submitted the documents listed below. A list of schools to receive short inspections was published in January 2004.

### 4. INSPECTION DOCUMENTATION

#### Information required by inspectors prior to the inspection

Inspectors will seek to minimise the information required from schools. For full inspections, about four weeks before the inspection the school will be asked to provide:

- the most recent self-assessment report and any associated planning documents
- the school's prospectus or brochure and any published information about welfare and guidance
- details of students' retention, achievement and progression for the previous three years
- details of current enrolments on each year of the course
- a course plan and timetables for the week of inspection
- equal opportunities and disability statements

Schools which have been notified that they may satisfy the criteria for a short inspection should submit the documents listed below **by 30<sup>th</sup> November 2003**.

- the most recent self-assessment report and any associated planning documents
- the school's prospectus or brochure and any published information about welfare and guidance
- details of students' retention, achievement and progression for the previous three years
- details of current enrolments on each year of the course
- a course plan
- equal opportunities and disability statements
- a short supporting statement.

For schools receiving a short inspection, no additional information will be required in advance.

#### Information required by inspectors in the base room

On all inspections, one copy of the following documents should be provided in the base room:

- details of staff qualifications and experience
- job descriptions for key staff
- course review reports or course self-assessment reports
- recent reports from the moderators from Trinity College London, and from moderators or assessors from the National Council for Drama Training or the Council for Dance Education and Training, where available

- course specification/course outline documents
- teachers' schemes of work, planning and assessment documents
- samples of students' assessed work, in any appropriate medium (e.g. videos, written work, audio cassettes, designs and artefacts)
- samples of students' records and reports, including tutorial
- details of support offered to students with additional learning needs
- any appropriate school policies
- details of any staff development activity in the last two years
- audition procedures and code of practice
- any other documents the school wishes the team to consider.

## **5. THE INSPECTION WEEK – FULL INSPECTIONS**

### **Inspection activities**

Inspectors will gather sufficient evidence to make judgements about the full range of the school's provision and its management. They will:

- observe lessons and, where necessary, undertake other observations outside the school, for example in rehearsal or performance
- analyse and evaluate data on students' retention, achievement and progression to employment
- evaluate a representative sample of students' current and recent work
- hold discussions with students, teaching staff and managers
- evaluate documents, including plans, policies, procedures and teachers' records of students' progress.

### **Inspection team meetings**

The team will meet for an initial briefing on the first morning of the inspection. It is important for the school's nominee to attend this meeting. At the initial briefing the reporting inspector will ensure that inspectors are aware of:

- the key issues to be covered during the inspection
- any issues raised by the school
- organisational and administrative arrangements.

Throughout the inspection the reporting inspector will meet inspectors to discuss emerging findings and review the evidence gathered. The school's nominee will normally attend these meetings.

At the end of the inspection the reporting inspector will hold the final team meeting. Its purpose is to arrive at accurate and secure corporate judgements about the school. In particular the meeting will enable the team to arrive at an overall view of quality and standards in the school and its effectiveness in meeting the education and training needs of its students. All inspectors will attend the meeting. The nominee will not normally attend. The team will specifically agree:

- the strengths and weaknesses of the school as a whole
- the draft section on student achievement and standards and the quality of education and training
- the draft section on leadership and management.
- the grade for student achievement and standards and the quality of education and training
- the grade for leadership and management.

### **Observation of classes and other activities**

Inspectors will concentrate mainly on observing classes and sampling students' work. This will be done in a way that minimises disruption to teaching or learning. Inspectors will not take part in classes. Classes observed should be part of the school's normal programme of work. When they enter a classroom, inspectors will ask the teacher for the register, the plan for the class and any supporting material. They may ask for information that enables students of different age groups or programme type to be identified. They will make written notes during the class and provide brief feedback to the teacher as soon as possible or at a mutually convenient time.

The sample of classes will cover a range of activities. It may include practical classes, group or individual activities, tutorials and contextual or supporting studies. The sample of teachers will be as wide as is practicable. Inspectors will not necessarily observe every teacher working in the curriculum area. The sample will include part-time staff and teachers with management responsibilities. Inspectors will not list in advance the classes that they will observe. Individual teachers may be observed more than once, in order to ensure a suitably representative sample of classes.

The time spent in classes will vary, but some whole classes may be observed. Inspectors will spend enough time in classes to enable them to make valid and reliable judgements on standards, teaching and learning. Normally this will not be less than 30 minutes. Each class observed will be assessed on the seven-point scale under three aspects, teaching, learning and the standard of work (attainment). Inspectors will not normally grade a course on the basis of fewer than 12 lesson observations (see Appendix 1).

### **The evaluation of students' work**

Students' practical work, in class, in rehearsal and performance and on video, provides essential evidence of their attainment and progress. Together with class observation and discussions with students it establishes the standards at which students are working. It also provides an insight into teaching and students' attitudes to work. It enables inspectors to evaluate the quality of assessment and the monitoring of progress.

The school is also asked to provide assessment details, criteria and records. Where appropriate, samples of students' written work should also be provided. Inspectors may also look at students' files when they observe certain kinds of classes.

Inspectors' analysis and evaluation of retention and achievement data also provides vital evidence of standards. Inspectors will look at data for students who have completed their programmes in the last three years. They will give more weight to more recent years. Where appropriate, they will look at the retention of current students and at the results of any external tests, examinations and course work.

### **Discussions with students**

Talking to students provides evidence about what they know, understand and can do. It helps inspectors to establish whether students are achieving as well as they could. Discussions may be with individuals or with groups of students. Inspectors will seek to find out students' views of the school, their attitude to work, their interests, the progress they have made and the extent to which they are effectively guided and supported. Sources of evidence include:

- arranged meetings with individuals or representative groups of students
- informal discussions with individuals or groups
- brief discussions with students during lesson observations, where appropriate.

Inspectors will also gather evidence from:

- students' contributions in lessons
- students' responses to their teachers' questions
- the quality of questions asked by students in lessons and in meetings with inspectors
- information from the school's surveys of students' views.



## **Discussions with staff**

Discussion with the principal, managers and teaching staff provides important evidence of roles and responsibilities, procedures and policies. It helps inspectors to establish the context for their observations. The reporting inspector and the nominee will plan meetings with managers and staff. Meetings may also be requested with support staff and visiting specialists, for example, guest teachers and directors, or physiotherapists. Inspectors will seek to avoid calling meetings at short notice. The following principles apply to all meetings:

- inspectors will introduce themselves and explain the purpose of the meeting
- inspectors will try to ensure that the needs of those with any disability are met so that they can play a full part in the meeting
- the length of meetings will be agreed in advance (normally meetings will not exceed one hour)
- inspectors will offer the opportunity for people attending the meeting to ask questions and make points
- inspectors will not attribute comments made in meetings to the individuals who make those comments.

## **6. THE INSPECTION – SHORT INSPECTIONS**

Inspectors will gather sufficient evidence to make judgements about the extent to which management and quality assurance have maintained high standards. They will:

- analyse and evaluate data on students' retention, achievement and progression to employment
- hold discussions with students, teaching staff and managers
- evaluate documents, including plans, policies, procedures and teachers' records of students' progress
- review any evidence of the standard of students' work offered by the school.

### **Inspection team meetings**

The team will meet for an initial briefing on the first morning of the inspection. It is important for the school's nominee to attend this meeting. At the initial briefing the reporting inspector will ensure that inspectors are aware of:

- the key issues to be covered during the inspection
- any issues raised by the school
- organisational and administrative arrangements.

At the end of the inspection the reporting inspector will hold the final team meeting. Its purpose is to arrive at accurate and secure corporate judgements about the school. In particular the meeting will enable inspectors to arrive at an overall view of the extent to which evidence shows that quality and standards in the school have been maintained. The nominee will not normally attend. The team will specifically agree:

- whether there is reason to doubt that high standards have been maintained
- what should be improved by the school
- the grade for leadership and management.

### **The evaluation of students' work**

On a short inspection, inspectors will not be able to observe students at work in classes. However, the school may wish to provide evidence in other forms, such as videotapes of performances, external examiners' reports, etc. The school is also asked to provide assessment details, criteria and records. Where appropriate, samples of students' written work should also be provided.

Inspectors' analysis and evaluation of retention and achievement data also provides vital evidence of standards. Inspectors will look at data for students who have completed their programmes in the last three years. They will give more weight to more recent years. Where appropriate they will look at the retention of current students and at the results of any external tests, examinations and course work.

### **Discussions with students and staff**

These will take place within the framework outlined for full inspections.

## **7. FEEDBACK AND ACTION PLANS**

The results of inspection are provisional until the school's receipt of the final report. Inspectors' findings should not be released to parents, the press or the public until the school has received the report. All oral feedback is confidential to those receiving it. The main types of feedback are described in the following four paragraphs. Whatever the type of feedback, inspectors will present their findings in a way which:

- emphasises, with reasons and examples, what has been done well and what could be improved
- allows opportunities for discussion and clarification of inspectors' findings
- avoids giving detailed advice to the school about how to tackle the improvements that are needed.

### **Feedback on classes**

Oral feedback will be offered to every teacher observed. It will not include grades or grade descriptors. Feedback will normally be given at the end of the lesson. In some cases feedback later in the day may be more convenient or appropriate. The objective is to let the teacher know what went well and what was less successful.

### **Feedback to the principal**

Each feedback meeting will normally last between 30 and 45 minutes, including questions. During feedback, the principal and the nominee will have the opportunity to read the first draft of the report and to check it for accuracy. Feedback will include:

- the overall judgement of the quality of provision and the provisional grade for the course (or courses)
- a summary of the evidence on which judgements are based, including inspection coverage, the profile of lesson observation grades, details of average class size and average attendance
- judgements about achievement and standards and the quality of education and training
- judgements about leadership and management.
- an opportunity for questions.

Judgements will be expressed as key strengths and weaknesses and in the body of the draft text. The timing of feedback will depend on the progress of the inspection, but will be no later than the Friday morning of inspection week.

### **Reports and action plans**

On full inspections, the draft report will be shared with the school during feedback to enable the accuracy of factual information to be checked. There will be an opportunity for the school to make a final check for accuracy immediately before publication. The report will be published on the Ofsted and ALI websites and

a copy sent to the school and the DfES. This will normally be within 12 working weeks from the end of the inspection.

When it receives a full inspection report, the school is asked to prepare an action plan in response to the report within two months. It must focus on action the school will take to bring about improvements in response to the inspection report under the heading 'What must the school do to improve further?'. It should also address the other weaknesses identified in the report. Copies should be sent to Ofsted or the ALI, and the DfES. The form of action plans will vary to suit the school. In general, action plans should indicate:

- that all of the weaknesses identified by inspection will be addressed
- the actions to be taken to address each weakness
- the person responsible for each action
- realistic target dates for completion of each action
- the intended outcome of each action
- any financial implications
- how the achievement of the outcome will be evaluated.

No action plans need be produced after a short inspection. A short report on leadership and management will be produced together with a statement about achievement and standards and the quality of education and training which will be sent to the school and published on the Ofsted and ALI websites.

## **8. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF INSPECTIONS**

Ofsted and the ALI review all inspections for which they are responsible. The main purpose is to ensure that an inspection provides an accurate and fair picture of the school and that it has been conducted well. As part of the process, schools will have the opportunity to evaluate aspects of their inspection. Quality assurance of inspections covers such matters as:

- the quality, standard and management of the inspection
- the competence, effectiveness and conduct of inspectors
- the quality and standard of inspection reports.

### **The Code of Conduct**

Inspectors will uphold high professional standards in their work. They will make every effort to secure the co-operation and confidence of those being inspected. They will carry out their duties according to the requirements of the framework and the guidance provided in this inspection handbook. The best interests of students will be a priority. In particular they will:

- be impartial and objective (they will have no connection with the school that could undermine their objectivity)
- report honestly and fairly
- be open and transparent in the way they work, providing feedback whenever appropriate and keeping senior staff informed of emerging issues and findings
- carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy and sensitivity
- adhere to principles of equality of opportunity
- be fully prepared for the inspections they undertake
- keep demands for information and other material to a realistic minimum.

### **Complaints procedure**

Ofsted and the ALI take complaints about inspection seriously. Concerns should initially be raised with the reporting inspector who will seek to resolve the issue. Where a complaint about judgements remains unresolved the school can request an initial review by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
 Post-compulsory Education Division  
 Ofsted  
 Alexandra House  
 33 Kingsway  
 London WC2B 6SE  
 Please refer to Appendix 2 for a copy of the Complaints procedure.

## Appendix 1

### The Inspections of Schools in the Dance and Drama Awards Scheme, 2004–2006.

#### INSPECTION GRADES

The following table shows the grades that will be used in inspection reports to denote the judgements made by inspectors

Summary judgements for lessons and other evidence collected during inspection		Summary judgements provided in inspection reports for curriculum areas and leadership and management	
Grade 1	Excellent	Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Very good		
Grade 3	Good	Grade 2	Good
Grade 4	Satisfactory	Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 5	Unsatisfactory	Grade 4	Unsatisfactory
Grade 6	Poor	Grade 5	Very weak
Grade 7	Very poor		

The inspection report will include the grades allocated by the inspection team to:

- achievement and standards and the quality of education and training, and
- leadership and management.

In some schools more than one curriculum area grade may be allocated. Grades for curriculum areas and leadership and management will be on the five point scale as defined in the right-hand side of the table.

Grades derived from the observation of classes will be allocated for teaching, learning and students' attainment, according to the seven-point scale on the left-hand side of the table. A summary of these grades will be included in the report.

## Appendix 2

# Complaints about the inspection of post-compulsory provision

## Internal review and complaints – information for providers and organisations

### Introduction

Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) take complaints about inspection very seriously. We view them as an important part of our quality assurance measures. They can alert us to difficulties in the system and they may lead us to issue new guidance to inspectors. Providers and organisations should be reassured that making a complaint will have no effect on our subsequent relationship with them.

Most inspections are carried out smoothly and without incident. However, Ofsted and the ALI recognise that some providers or organisations may feel dissatisfied with some aspect of their inspection or inspection report.

This leaflet sets out Ofsted's procedures for dealing with complaints about inspectors, their conduct, their judgements, the quality of inspection of the provider or organisation and the quality of the final report.

Inspections of post-compulsory educational providers include colleges that have students both under and over the age of 19 and fall within the joint remit of Ofsted and the ALI. This includes inspections of general further education, sixth form, tertiary, agricultural, independent specialist, and dance and drama colleges.

All these joint-remit inspections will be conducted under the direction of Ofsted which will also publish the report; some inspections will be carried out by Ofsted and the ALI together, or by just one inspectorate on behalf of both. The same complaints procedure will apply whether an inspection is conducted by one inspectorate or both. These procedures will apply to Area Inspections as well as those which fall solely within the remit of Ofsted, including the inspection of Connexions Partnerships and local authority youth services.

### Handling of concerns and complaints

Ofsted and the ALI will investigate any complaints rigorously and make every effort to resolve the issues as quickly as possible. Above all, we are concerned with the fairness of the inspection. We will acknowledge that we are mistaken, where the facts clearly prove this

to be so, or where we agree that there are serious omissions or factual errors. We will not, however, change our judgements because they are unpopular, because improvements are promised at some time in the future, or because of developments after the inspection has been completed.

### Who can make a complaint?

A provider or organisation which has concerns about any aspect of its inspection, including the conduct of the inspection team, may make a complaint or request an internal review using the procedures described in this leaflet.

A separate leaflet, *Guidance on Queries, Concerns and Complaints* (HMI 144, Ofsted, 2000), can be used by any other individual or organisation that wishes to complain. This can be found at [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### When can I complain?

It is essential that any areas of concern are raised **as soon as they arise** so that they can be properly considered and, wherever possible, resolved while the inspection is taking place. Whatever the cause for concern, it should initially be discussed with the lead inspector. In almost all cases, the inspection will be completed and the report published within the statutory timescale.

While Ofsted recognises that there may be valid reasons why complaints are not submitted at the time of, or immediately following, the inspection, **complaints will not normally be considered if received more than 20 working days (excluding bank holidays) after the formal feedback meeting.**

### How do I complain?

The person nominated to liaise with the inspection team should discuss the provider's or organisation's concerns with the lead inspector. The inspectorates value the work of the nominee and rely on them to raise areas of concern and to bring forward supporting evidence. It is essential that they talk to the lead inspector about any concerns that arise about an inspection at the earliest opportunity. Opportunities are given before inspection, at the planning stage, during inspection and at team meetings. The nominee will normally also be present after the inspection, during the formal feedback and involved with checking the accuracy of the report.

Concerns should be properly considered and, if possible, resolved while the inspection is taking place. It is often very difficult to resolve matters to the satisfaction of all concerned at a later date. We recognise, however, that some problems may only come to light after the inspection, for example during the compilation of the report and the formal feedback. These too should be raised with the lead inspector as soon as possible. The inspectorates regard constructive dialogue of this kind as an intrinsic part of the inspection process which assists them in reaching secure judgements.

There are two kinds of concern:

Internal review: a request for internal review of inspection judgements by the inspectorates.

Inspection review: a complaint about the conduct of the inspection or inspectors. If required, a provider or organisation may request an internal review or a formal complaint **or both**. In either case, you should indicate what action you would like to see taken to resolve the matter.

Before a concern of either of these kinds is raised, we would normally expect issues to have been raised with the person nominated by the provider or organisation to liaise with the inspectors. This will include detailed discussions with that nominated person.

### **Requesting an internal review**

If you wish to ask for an internal review, you should do so by writing to the Head of the Post-compulsory Education Division at the earliest opportunity, and no later than 20 working days from the date of the formal feedback meeting. You should set out your case clearly and provide supporting evidence. Disagreement with the judgements reached by the inspectors is not a sufficient reason to prompt an internal review; you must be able to demonstrate that material evidence has been presented to the inspector(s) and neglected.

The Head of the Post-compulsory Education Division will seek consideration of the available evidence. Any evidence submitted must be in writing, and you must be able to demonstrate that:

- it was in existence at the time of the inspection
- it was made available to the inspector(s) during the inspection
- it was not taken into account by the inspector(s) in reaching their judgements.

A senior inspector from the inspectorate that led the inspection will consider the evidence put forward. The senior inspector will consider the case and, where it is judged appropriate, visit the provider or organisation and collect additional evidence if necessary. You will normally receive a response within 20 working days of the receipt of the letter. The publication of a report will not normally be delayed even though a complaint has been made.

Requests for internal review should be addressed to:

Head of Post-compulsory Education Division  
Ofsted  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE

### **Complaint against the conduct of the inspection or an inspector**

A provider or organisation may make a formal complaint if it has evidence that the conduct of the inspection or a member of the inspection team did not meet the requirements of the inspectorates – as set out in the Code of Conduct in the inspection frameworks – and/or adversely influenced the judgements that were reached.

All complaints, whether they concern a joint- or single-remit inspection, should normally be made within 20 working days of the formal feedback meeting.

The grounds for complaint must be clearly stated in writing and all the information that you wish to be considered should be included at the outset. This will enable complaints to be dealt with more efficiently and will reduce the need to seek further information.

Ofsted will acknowledge complaints on the day they are received. The complaint will be investigated by a senior inspector in the same inspectorate as the lead inspector. However, the person responsible for the review of the complaint will not have been involved in the inspection and may visit the provider or organisation if necessary. A written response to the complaint will be made, including notification of any action which will be taken, normally within 20 working days of its receipt. Where consideration takes longer than 20 working days, Ofsted will keep you informed of progress and the reasons for delay. We will respect confidentiality, and will respond to complaints in a reasonable and even-handed manner. If your complaint is fully or partially upheld, the response will include an apology, an explanation and, if necessary, an indication of what steps have been or will be taken to put matters right. Where allegations or complaints are not upheld the response will say so, and explain why.

Formal complaints should be addressed to:

Head of Post-compulsory Education Division  
Ofsted  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE



## **How do I present my complaint?**

Structuring a request for an internal review or a formal complaint carefully will help us to deal with the issues raised more quickly and effectively. It is helpful if you provide full details of the complaint, confirm areas of dispute, where agreement has been reached and, finally, highlight those areas where agreement has not been reached. You may, therefore, wish to consider the following points:

- if one person takes responsibility for collating, co-ordinating and presenting all aspects of a complaint, it will help us to focus quickly on the issues and respond speedily
- it is also helpful if you can group the main areas of concern under headings, related, where possible, to the inspection framework
- a complaint should focus on the extent to which the inspection schedule – set out in the relevant framework – is thought to have been breached
- the degree of detail in a letter of complaint is, of course, a matter for your judgement. While it is important to ensure that we have all the necessary information, with all the points you would like recorded right from the outset, a very lengthy submission may not be the most effective way to present it
- all documentary evidence and statements should be forwarded to Ofsted at the outset, as far as possible.

## **What can Ofsted adjudicate on?**

There are limits to the extent to which Ofsted can adjudicate on complaints. We will not second guess judgements made during the inspection. We can, however, check whether there is consistency between the evidence presented in the report and the conclusions drawn. We may also call in and scrutinise the inspection evidence base. We can also consider evidence relevant to claims that inspectors have not followed the relevant inspection framework.

Where the complaint relates to matters of conduct, it may be difficult for Ofsted to rule in favour of one party or another if there are conflicting accounts, or differing perceptions of events. Our aim is to ensure that, as far as possible, both you and the inspector are given the opportunity to put forward your views and we will comment where we can.

## **Referral to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector**

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of an internal review or complaint about conduct you may write to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) to ask for a further review. HMCI will consider all the relevant available evidence, consulting with the Chief Inspector of the ALI where they have been involved at the earlier stage, and taking advice from an independent review team in Ofsted who have not been involved in the inspection. HMCI will normally respond within 20 working days of receipt of the request for a further review.

## **External review**

Should you be dissatisfied with the way the complaint has been considered, you may appeal to the Independent Complaints Adjudicator for Ofsted and the ALI. The adjudicator can consider the case only after a formal complaint has been considered in accordance with the procedures set out above. The adjudicator can investigate complaints about the conduct of the inspectorate's staff, implementation of inspection procedures, maladministration (for example, mistakes and delays), the quality of response provided to you or the management of a complaint. The adjudicator cannot investigate concerns about the judgements of an inspection team nor overturn an inspector's professional judgement.

The contact details for the Independent Complaints Adjudicator are:

Elizabeth Derrington  
9 Millfield Terrace  
Hexham  
Northumberland NE46 3EH  
Tel: 01434 603913  
Email: [e.derrington@adjudicator.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:e.derrington@adjudicator.fsnet.co.uk)

## **Where to go for advice**

Any queries relating to the content of this leaflet or the handling of complaints in general should be addressed to:

The Compliance Section

Ofsted

7th Floor

Alexandra House

33 Kingsway

London WC2B 6SE

Tel: 020 7421 6846/6653/6698/6538

Email: [jnorman@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:jnorman@ofsted.gov.uk)

Any questions about the handling of a particular complaint should be addressed to the Head of Post-compulsory Education Division in Ofsted.

## **2 Complaints procedure**

