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The Common Inspection Framework

for education and training from 2005



Introduction

This *Common Inspection Framework* meets the requirements of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. It sets out the principles applicable to the inspection of post-16 non-higher education and training carried out under Part III of the Act. Inspections are carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). It comprises:

- the common inspection schedule
- procedures in the case that the provision is inadequate
- principles of inspection
- code of conduct for inspectors
- a procedure for making complaints about inspection.

Frameworks for schools and colleges and other post-16 providers will be published separately, but will have the common inspection schedule at their heart.*

Common inspection schedule

This schedule lists the questions inspectors must ask of every provider of education and training. Most of these questions are applicable to all providers, though a few are more relevant to particular age groups or particular types of provider. The common inspection schedule applies to schools, colleges, providers of work-based learning, adult and community learning, **learnirect**, welfare to work programmes, prisons and other centres of adult learning as identified in the:

- School Inspections Act 1996 (to be amended)
- Learning and Skills Act 2000 and the annual grant letters issued by the secretary of state for education and skills.

All inspections of settings, institutions or providers, except those making provision solely for adults, will contribute to the Joint Area Reviews which will be carried out in every local authority area in England over

a three-year period. These reviews will evaluate the extent to which for each area the following five outcomes for children and young people are being met:

1. Being healthy
2. Staying safe
3. Enjoying and achieving
4. Making a positive contribution
5. Achieving economic well-being.

Each of the evaluation requirements listed below is numbered according to the outcome to which it refers. Most refer to enjoying and achieving, but all five outcomes are covered. In judging leadership and management and the overall effectiveness of providers of learning for children, inspectors will consider the contribution made to all five outcomes.

* In the inspection of sixth form colleges of voluntary origin, the inspection team will include a member recognised by the appropriate church authority as being competent to inspect the denominational education and collective worship provided by the college, in accordance with agreed protocols.

Overall effectiveness

How effective and efficient are the provision and related services in meeting the full range of learners' needs and why?

What steps need to be taken to improve the provision further?

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the overall effectiveness of the provision, including any extended services, and its main strengths and weaknesses
- the capacity to make further improvements
- the effectiveness of any steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection

and, where appropriate,

- the effectiveness of links with other organisations to promote the well-being of learners
- the quality and standards in the Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form.

Achievement and standards

1 How well do learners achieve?

Inspectors should evaluate:

- learners' success in achieving challenging targets, including qualifications and learning goals, with trends over time and any significant variations between groups of learners (3)
- the standards of learners' work in relation to their learning goals (3)
- learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential, with any significant variations between groups of learners (3)
- the extent to which learners enjoy their work (3)

and, where appropriate,

- the acquisition of workplace skills (4,5)
- the development of skills which contribute to the social and economic well-being of the learner (2,4,5)
- the emotional development of learners (1)
- the behaviour of learners (1,2)
- the attendance of learners (2,3)
- the extent to which learners adopt safe practices and a healthy lifestyle (1,2,5)
- learners' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development (3,4)
- whether learners make a positive contribution to the community. (4)

The quality of provision

2 How effective are teaching, training and learning?

Inspectors should evaluate:

- how well teaching and/or training and resources promote learning, address the full range of learners' needs and meet course or programme requirements (3,4)

- the suitability and rigour of assessment in planning and monitoring learners' progress (3)
- the identification of, and provision for, additional learning needs (3)

and, where appropriate,

- the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning and development. (3)

The quality of provision

3 How well do programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners?

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the extent to which programmes or activities match learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience (3,5)
- how far programmes or the curriculum meet external requirements and are responsive to local circumstances (4,5)

and, where appropriate,

- the extent to which employers' needs are met (5)
- the extent to which enrichment activities and/or extended services contribute to learners' enjoyment and achievement (3,4,5)

- the extent to which the provision contributes to the learners' capacity to stay safe and healthy. (1,2)

4 How well are learners guided and supported?

Inspectors should evaluate:

- the care, advice, guidance and other support provided to safeguard welfare, promote personal development and achieve high standards (1,2,3)
- the quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance to learners in relation to courses and programmes, and, where applicable, career progression. (3,5)

Leadership and management

5 How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

Inspectors should evaluate:

- how effectively performance is monitored and improved through quality assurance and self-assessment
- how effectively leaders and managers at all levels clearly direct improvement and promote the well-being of learners through high quality care, education and training
- how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve their potential
- the adequacy and suitability of staff, including the

effectiveness of processes for recruitment and selection of staff to ensure that learners are well taught and protected

- the adequacy and suitability of specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation
- how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money

and, where appropriate,

- how effectively links are made with other providers, services, employers and other organisations to promote the integration of care, education and any extended services to enhance learning and to promote well-being
- how effectively governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities.

The common grading scale for all inspection judgements

A common grading scale will be used in making judgements for institutional inspection and for judgements relating to the five outcomes assessed for Joint Area Reviews.

Grade 1 OUTSTANDING

Grade 2 GOOD

Grade 3 SATISFACTORY

Grade 4 INADEQUATE

Provision causing concern

Inspectors must consider before the end of an inspection whether the provision is inadequate and is failing to give learners an acceptable standard of

education or care. If they believe this to be the case, they must state this clearly in the report.

Principles of inspection

The principles below apply to all inspections carried out by or on behalf of Ofsted or the ALI.

They are intended to ensure that:

- the findings of the inspection are valid
- the findings of inspection contribute to improvement
- the process of inspection promotes inclusion
- inspection is carried out openly with those being inspected.

The principles of inspection are that inspection of providers will:

- have the experiences of learners and outcomes for them at its heart
- provide judgements of provider contributions to outcomes, the quality and value for money of provision, the quality of its management and the prospects for improvement
- assess evidence and make judgements objectively against national standards, where applicable, and other published criteria
- be proportionate to risk and tailored to circumstances and needs
- ascertain and take into account the views of learners and, where appropriate, their parents and carers, and look to involve them in inspections in other ways

- make use as far as possible of the existing documentation and systems of the organisations inspected and avoid placing unnecessary burdens on them
- encourage rigorous self-assessment by the organisations inspected and make use of information from their processes of performance management
- evaluate the work of the inspected bodies in eliminating unlawful racial discrimination, promoting equal opportunities and encouraging good race relations
- report openly, clearly and fairly on the basis of secure evidence
- enable themes of national significance to be pursued and reported
- be designed to promote and support improvement, linking with action to follow up recommendations
- build quality assurance into inspection, respond fairly to complaints, carry out evaluation of the conduct and effectiveness of inspection and seek continually to improve it.

Code of conduct for inspectors

Inspectors must uphold the highest professional standards in their work, and ensure that staff of the provider are treated fairly and benefit from their inspection. These standards are ensured through a code of conduct for inspectors.

The code of conduct requires inspectors to:

- evaluate objectively, be impartial and have no connection with the provider which could undermine their objectivity
- report honestly, ensuring that judgements are fair and reliable
- carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy and sensitivity
- do all they can to minimise the stress on those involved in the inspection, and act with their best interests and well-being as priorities
- maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected, and communicate judgements clearly and frankly
- respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work.

Providers should be courteous and helpful to inspectors.

Complaints about inspectors

The vast majority of inspections are free of problems. Occasionally, providers or interested parties feel dissatisfied with some aspect of their inspection or inspection report. A complaints procedure sets out how providers can raise concerns about their inspection and what will happen with their complaint. The complaints procedure is available on the inspectorates' websites.

For further copies of the Common Inspection Framework contact:

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