

Have your say on how Ofsted plans to inspect schools in the future

The young person's guide to *Inspection 2012*



What is this guide for?

We are from Ofsted, the organisation that sends inspectors to check how well schools are doing.

We are changing the way we do our inspections of schools. We want to find out what people think of our plans. Then we will try them out to see if they work. If all goes well, we will start inspecting schools in the new way next year, from January 2012.

This guide is to tell you how we are planning to inspect schools in the future, and to invite you to let us know whether you think we have got it right. We will wait to make our final decisions until we know what young people, and people generally, think of our plans.

We promise to take notice of what you tell us when we make those final decisions.

We will take on board any views you send us **by Friday 20th May** 2011.

So, you have got until Friday 20th May to tell us what you think of our plans and to make a real difference to how schools get inspected in the future.

How to tell us what you think

If you want to tell us what you think of our plans, or you want to make a suggestion about how we should inspect schools in the future...

You can fill in the questionnaire on our Ofsted website. Here is the link:
www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/110025.

Or you can send us an email at SIF_Consultation@ofsted.gov.uk.

How the law will be changing

We are making some of our changes because the law is changing what we must put in our reports about schools. A new law, if it is passed by Parliament, means that we will need to:

- stop writing in our reports how schools look after children generally
- stop writing in our reports how schools help their local communities
- write in our reports how well children are doing at school
- write in our reports how well the school is teaching its children
- write in our reports how well the school is run
- write in our reports how children are behaving at school
- write in our reports how safe children are at school

- write in our reports how the school helps children to develop as people
- write in our reports how the school helps disabled children
- write in our reports how the school helps children with special needs
- write in our reports how we think the school is doing overall.

What we are planning to change

- We will check on just the most important things, but we will look at those things in more detail than before.
- That means we will write about fewer things in our reports on schools.
- We will do more inspections of schools that are not doing so well.
- We will not inspect the best schools, unless we hear there is a problem.
- We will look even more closely at how well teachers are teaching and how well young people are learning.
- We will look more closely at young people's behaviour and safety.
- We will look more closely at how well schools are being run.
- We will stop writing separately in our reports about how well sixth forms, and work with very young children, are doing; we will include these in what we say about the whole school.
- We will stop giving schools a standard form to use when they check for themselves how they are doing. Instead, they can use any way they want of checking things for themselves.
- We will start asking parents to fill in a web survey each year to tell us how they think their children's school is doing, and we will use what they say to help us decide which schools we need to inspect next.

What we are planning to keep doing

- We will carry on asking schools to do their own check on how they are doing.
- We will carry on listening to what headteachers and school staff think of how their school is doing.
- We will carry on listening to what school governors think of how their school is doing.
- We will carry on listening to what young people think of how their school is doing.
- We will carry on asking parents what they think of how their school is doing.
- We will carry on saying what we think each school we inspect should change in order to do better.
- We will carry on watching for ourselves what happens in classrooms.

- We will carry on telling teachers what we think about what we see.
- We will carry on looking at information about schools to choose which ones most need to be inspected next.

The four most important things we will check on when we inspect any school in the future are:

- how well children are doing at school
- how well the school is teaching its children
- how well the school is being run
- how children are behaving and being kept safe at school.

Annex A

How inspectors will check how well children are doing at school

To do this, inspectors will look at how pupils are doing when they leave school. They will compare this with how pupils of their age are doing across the country. They will look at how pupils are doing when they leave the school compared with how they were doing when they started at the school. As well as this, they will look at how pupils are doing at the school and whether this is getting better or getting worse.

Reading is so important to doing well that, if the school is a primary school, inspectors will always check up on how well children are learning to read, and if the school is a secondary school, how good pupils are at reading. If they are inspecting a primary school, they will also look at how well the children are learning to deal with numbers.

As always, inspectors will look at the school's exam results and the results pupils get in tests. Inspectors will also visit some classes to see for themselves how children are doing. This is a very important part of inspection.

Inspectors will look at how the school is doing compared with other schools that have much the same groups of pupils in them. They will look at how children have been doing over the last three years.

Inspectors will also check on how different groups of children in the school are doing, and whether there is any particular group of pupils who are not doing as well as the others. If there is, they will want to know what the school is doing about that.

When they inspect a school, inspectors will look closely at how the school is meeting the needs of any pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. How these pupils are doing will count a lot in what inspectors say about how well the school itself is doing.

We plan to work out new ways for inspectors to check how schools are making sure that particular groups of children do well at school. For example, checking that boys and girls are both doing well, looking at how well looked after children are doing, and how well children from different backgrounds are doing.

How inspectors will check on how well the school is being run

To check on this, inspectors will ask the school to tell them how it is doing, and they will then check that the school has got this right. They will also check how well the school is taking action on things it knows need to be done better.

Inspectors will also check how well the people in charge of the school, like the headteacher, the senior staff and the governors, run things. They will be especially interested in how they: make sure the school runs in a way that helps its pupils to do well and be safe; try to make sure the school keeps doing its work better than

before; and support the school's staff. They will also check how well the school works with the parents of its pupils.

They will also check how the people running the school try to make sure that all the teaching that happens in the school is good, and that the school is doing its best for all of its pupils, not just some of them. They will check that the school makes sure each of its pupils has an equal chance to do well.

Inspectors will check whether the school teaches its pupils what they need to be taught.

Inspectors will also see whether the school is good at picking up good ideas from other schools and other organisations to help its pupils do well.

How inspectors will check how well the school is teaching its children

The main thing inspectors will do to check how well the school is teaching pupils will be to watch the teachers working with their pupils.

They will be looking to see whether teachers show they want their pupils to do well, how well they make their pupils want to learn, and whether teachers set good challenges for each of their pupils. They will also look to see how good the teachers are at helping pupils to understand things and to learn new skills. They will be looking to see whether lessons are well planned.

As well as all this, inspectors will look at how good the teachers are at checking how each of their pupils is doing, and at letting each pupil know how well they are getting on.

Two final things inspectors will very carefully check are: how good teachers are at making sure their pupils are good at reading; and how good teachers are at helping disabled pupils or pupils who have special educational needs at school.

How inspectors will check how children are behaving and being kept safe at school

Inspectors will check how the school is keeping children safe at school. A big part of this will be to check whether children are as safe as possible from bullying.

This goes along with schools having a stronger duty than they have had before to deal with bullying, and to check with their pupils about how much bullying there is at school.

To check on how well pupils behave at the school, inspectors will watch pupils during lessons and around the school. They will look at how pupils treat each other, and whether they show respect for each other and for adults. Inspectors will also ask pupils and parents what they think.

Other things inspectors will check are whether pupils attend school properly and whether they turn up on time for lessons.

Saying how well the school is doing overall

After looking at all these things, inspectors will decide and say how well they think the school is doing overall. They have to decide whether the school is:

- outstanding
- good
- satisfactory

or

- inadequate.

They will do this by putting together what they have found about the four important things they have checked on, plus how well they think the school is helping pupils develop as people.

How we will decide when to inspect each school

We will decide when we need to inspect each school in two ways. Firstly, by how well we thought it was doing last time we inspected it, and secondly, by looking at new information that has come in about the school.

If we said the school was outstanding the last time we inspected it

Then we will look at all the new information we have about the school three years after it was last inspected, and every year after that, to decide if we need to visit it again. Some of the information we will have for this will be how well its pupils are doing, how well pupils are attending the school, and anything people have told us about the school (such as any complaints that have been made to us). We also plan to look at what parents have said about the school in our new parents' web surveys each year.

If we thought the school was so good that it was outstanding last time we inspected it, we will not inspect it any more, unless the information we have got since the last inspection makes us think it needs to be inspected again. This is what the new law (if passed) will say we should do.

If we said the school was good last time we inspected it

We will carry on inspecting schools we thought were good last time we inspected them, at least once every five years. This is what we do now.

Out of the schools we thought were good (but not so good that they were outstanding) last time we inspected them, we will pick some schools at random each year for a new inspection. This is to help make sure that schools like this are still doing well.

Starting three years after we did its last inspection, we will also look every year at all the new information we have about each school we have said is good, just like we will with schools we have said are outstanding. We will inspect the school again whenever it looks as if it needs another inspection.

If we said the school was satisfactory last time we inspected it

If, at its last inspection, we said a school was only satisfactory (just doing OK) then we will do an inspection every three years, which is what we do now.

We will also do extra check-up inspections of a school like this if we have found that: the way the school is run is only just OK; the school's exam results are poor; the school has been found only just OK for the last two inspections in a row (and so has not been getting much better); nothing at the school was better than just OK; or if there are lots of complaints from parents.

We will do a new main inspection straight away, rather than a check-up one, if: the school's pupils are not doing well (especially in reading); there are big differences in how different groups of pupils are doing; or bad behaviour is getting in the way of pupils doing well.

If we said the school was inadequate last time we inspected it

If at its last inspection we said a school was inadequate (that is, not doing well enough), we will say how it must do better. If inspectors think that is unlikely to improve quickly, then we will do a check-up inspection about three months after that, and we will do a main inspection about six months later. This means that in the future we will be starting to do our extra inspections to check how the school is getting on more quickly than we do now.

We find that when we tell schools to do better, and then do more inspections to check whether they are doing better, things do usually get better.

If inspectors think that a school is inadequate and is unlikely to improve quickly, then we give the school special treatment with a check-up inspection every term. In future, we will do the first of these check-up inspections just a few weeks after the last inspection. This is earlier than we start doing them now.

Schools that were inadequate do usually start doing better after about five terms of this special treatment. If they don't, then we have to decide exactly what needs to be done to change things for their pupils.

And lastly – what we will do if we get asked to do an extra inspection

We might sometimes get asked to do an extra inspection of a school which we were not planning to do.

This might happen if the people running the school, or some of the parents of pupils at the school, are worried that things are beginning to go wrong, and they want inspectors to check on things and do a report to help them sort things out.

It might also happen if a school that is doing well wants inspectors to check that it is still doing well, or wants to see whether inspectors might say it has got so much better that it is now an outstanding school.

We will try to do extra inspections if we are asked to do them, though it will always be for us to decide whether to do them.

The new law (if it is passed) will let us charge the school a fee for doing an extra inspection it has asked us to do for it. What we plan to do is not to charge a school if it asks us to do an extra inspection because of worries that things are starting to go wrong, but to charge a school a fee if it asks us to do an extra inspection to see if it is doing particularly well.

Thank you for reading our guide to future inspections.

Please tell us what you think about how we plan to inspect schools in the future, or about any ideas you have for making our inspections better.