

# Common Inspection Framework 2012

Consultation document – proposals for revised inspection arrangements for further education and skills providers from September 2012

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**Published:** September 2011

**Reference no:** 110070

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## Introduction

As a result of the 2006 Education and Inspections Act, Ofsted took over responsibility for inspecting the provision for further education and skills. Since then, we have inspected further education colleges, work-based learning providers, adult and community learning (ACL) provision, offender learning and skills, and Next Step provision. Inspections are all based on the Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills,<sup>1</sup> which applies to education and training in England for learners over the age of 16, except those in school sixth forms or higher education.

Ofsted's Strategic Plan 2011–15<sup>2</sup> states that Ofsted will 'streamline and simplify the Common Inspection Framework so as to focus it on areas that have most impact'. We now propose to revise the inspection framework for the further education and skills sector, which will result in more focused inspections with fewer judgements and grades, leading to reports on the most important aspects of learning and skills provision.

The Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills is devised by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) in line with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and informs all of Ofsted's further education and skills inspections.<sup>3</sup> It sets out the judgements that inspectors will make during the inspection of education and training in England for learners over the age of 16, except those in school sixth forms or higher education.

We have received positive feedback on the current framework from learners, stakeholders, providers, employers and inspectors. In light of this positive feedback, we propose to review and improve the framework, rather than radically change it. The framework has a strong influence on learning and skills providers and we do not change it lightly.

This consultation invites your views on our proposed changes to help us shape the revised inspection arrangements, which, subject to the successful passage of the Education Bill, will commence in September 2012.

The consultation runs from 1 September until 24 November 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> The further education and skills sector is a generic term for all provision in the learning and skills sector. This includes colleges, work-based learning providers, adult and community learning provision, offender learning and skills and Next Step provision. Ofsted inspects providers in England funded wholly or partly by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) or the Skills Funding Agency (SFA).

<sup>2</sup> *Raising standards, improving lives: The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills Strategic Plan 2011–2015* (110001), Ofsted, 2011; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/110001](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/110001).

<sup>3</sup> In accordance with section 133 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, it is a requirement that HMCI devises a framework applicable to inspections conducted under chapter three of the Education and Skills Act 2006 (inspection of further education and training). A framework is defined as a common set of principles applicable to inspections.

## Background to the consultation

In proposing revisions, we have taken into account changing government policy including the 2011 Education Bill and the schools White Paper *The importance of teaching*.<sup>4</sup> This includes:

- differences between pre- and post-19 learning; government changes driving separate approaches to the commissioning and funding of learning may require separate judgements on outcomes for these two different groups of learners
- greater further education reforms and freedoms; recently published proposals from the Department for Business Innovation and Skills signal the intention that further education and skills providers will be able to choose what they want to deliver from a menu of publicly subsidised learning, and even which types of customers they aim to serve
- the potential exemption of outstanding providers from routine inspection unless their performance drops
- increased self-regulation, which will require more assurance from inspection that the system has the capacity to improve itself and to self-regulate, and that learners and employers will continue to be well served
- the empowerment of learners, employers and parents; this greater emphasis will demand more attention to be paid to the interaction between users and services
- the rising importance of meeting the needs of the local community for many providers in the further education and skills system where they are key players in the delivery of local priorities; this will require inspection outcomes that relate to a provider's contribution to their area's priorities
- the critical importance of employability skills and progression towards sustainable employment and further learning as outcomes from many government-funded programmes, and the need to judge this alongside the achievement of learners
- the introduction of new, more flexible qualifications where it may not be possible to measure outcomes in the traditional ways over easily defined timescales
- the Comprehensive Spending Review and the need to reduce the costs of inspection and focus more proportionately on those providers whose performance is inadequate or failing to improve quickly enough.

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<sup>4</sup> *The importance of teaching – the schools White Paper 2010*, DfE, 2010;  
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/CM%207980>.

## Summary of the main proposals

Inspection should concentrate on the aspects that have most impact on improving outcomes for learners. The changes we are proposing will focus more sharply on the core purpose of the provider, with an even closer examination of teaching and learning, together with an evaluation of the impact of leadership. This will provide learners, employers and parents with reports that show more clearly how providers are performing their key functions.

We intend to continue to do those things that we believe work well and will still: take account of providers' self assessment; involve senior staff in the inspection process; and listen carefully to the views of learners, employers, staff and, where appropriate, parents when coming to a judgement about the provider's effectiveness. We will continue to make clear recommendations for the provider's improvement.

We have moved progressively over the years to be more proportionate and to target inspection where it will make the most difference. Our proposals here introduce new arrangements for providers exempt from inspection and an increased emphasis on promoting improvement in weaker providers.

We propose to align the Common Inspection Framework more closely with the inspection framework and guidance for schools to enable students and their parents to make easy comparisons and more informed choices.

From September 2012, we propose that learning and skills inspections will:

- report on the quality of provision of the further education and skills sector, giving priority to the following key headline grades to determine the **overall effectiveness** of the provider: outcomes for learners; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and the quality of leadership and management of the provider (see paragraph 2)
- report on **outcomes for learners** and the extent to which the provision meets the needs and ensures the achievement of all learners, and helps them progress into employment or further education and training (see paragraphs 3–5)
- judge the **achievement** of all learners, taking particular account of the **success and rates of progress** of different individuals and groups of learners (see paragraphs 3–5)
- promote higher standards for learners by focusing more on the quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** (see paragraphs 6–9)
- judge the **effectiveness of leadership and management** with a particular attention to the leadership of teaching and learning (see paragraphs 10 and 11)
- regard **capacity to improve** as implicit in leadership effectiveness and not make a separate judgement on this (see paragraph 12)

- report on **equality and diversity** under the three key headlines of: outcomes for learners; teaching, learning and assessment; and leadership and management (see paragraphs 13 and 14)
- continue to take account of **self-assessment** evidence, however it is presented by the provider (see paragraph 17)
- judge whether a provider is managing **safeguarding** arrangements to ensure that all learners are safe (see paragraph 15)
- continue to inspect a sample of **subject areas** but refer to these areas specifically in the body of the report rather than reporting separately (see paragraphs 18 and 19)
- **assess the performance and other risk factors** of all providers on an annual basis in order to make fully informed decisions about when a provider should be inspected (see paragraphs 20 and 21)
- take greater account of **the views of learners, employers, parents and carers** in deciding when a provider should be inspected (see paragraphs 21 and 26)
- **Prioritise inspection** where it is most needed by:
  - ceasing the routine inspection of most of those judged to be **outstanding providers** at their last inspection, unless their performance drops (see paragraphs 20 and 21)
  - inspecting those previously judged as **good providers** within six years of their last inspection (see paragraph 20)
  - strengthening the monitoring and inspection of **satisfactory providers** including introducing the possibility of unannounced monitoring inspections of some providers who have **failed to improve** over a number of inspections (see paragraphs 22 and 23)
  - targeting inspection to bring about more rapid improvement in those judged to be **inadequate providers** (see paragraph 24)
- respond more flexibly to **requests made by providers** for an inspection (see paragraphs 25–29).

## Proposals to revise the Common Inspection Framework

1. In the following sections, we discuss and seek views on the approach we propose to take to inspecting and judging each of the main aspects to be reported.

### Overall effectiveness

2. We will continue to arrive at a judgement about the quality of the provision and the overall effectiveness of the provider.

Judgements will continue to be made against the following scale:

- Grade 1 – Outstanding
- Grade 2 – Good
- Grade 3 – Satisfactory
- Grade 4 – Inadequate.

Currently, the Common Inspection Framework awards four headline grades, plus an **overall effectiveness** grade, as follows:

- capacity to improve
- outcomes for learners
- quality of provision
- leadership and management.

We propose to continue to judge the quality of the provider in terms of its **overall effectiveness**, but based particularly on judgements relating to:

- outcomes for learners
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- the effectiveness of leadership and management (incorporating capacity to improve).

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed overarching grade and three key headline grades?

### Outcomes for learners

3. Currently, the judgement about outcomes for learners has a headline grade and up to seven contributory grades. We wish to focus even more closely on learners' achievement, and their progression to higher level qualifications and into sustainable jobs. We propose that outcomes for learners has a single grade.

4. The inspection of outcomes is important because persistent patterns of low achievement affect learners' life chances, and have a deep and damaging impact on families and communities. Inspectors will focus even more on providers' success in closing the achievement gap for particular groups of learners.

5. Achievement gaps between some groups remain stubbornly large. We shall examine any differences of achievement between groups in the provider. These may be between learners from different social and ethnic groups and between males and females.

We propose to judge **outcomes for learners** by giving particular attention to how well:

- all learners achieve
- gaps are narrowing between different groups of learners
- learners develop personal, social and employability skills
- learners progress to higher level qualifications and into jobs that meet local and national needs.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to judging outcomes for learners?

## **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

6. The quality of provision is largely reflected in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. We intend for the revised framework, criteria and inspection methodology to place greater emphasis on direct observation of teaching, learning, skills development and assessment. This will help inspectors to form more incisive judgements of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning and progress.

7. We intend to continue to deploy subject specialist inspectors. Where teaching and learning are judged to be good or outstanding, we find strong subject knowledge together with effective teaching of the skills needed to learn and understand a subject effectively. Assessment of learning and progress is used well to inform subsequent teaching. Constructive dialogue and feedback between staff and learners help learners make progress. Good teaching and learning are also characterised by careful attention to the learning needs of individuals, high expectations and challenge for learners, and opportunities for them to develop and extend their learning. This is why we propose to continue to deploy subject specialist inspectors to focus on these aspects and take into consideration subject knowledge and the use of assessment as key contributory factors in judging the quality of teaching.

8. We shall evaluate the promotion of equality and diversity through teaching, learning and assessment, and the behaviour and attitudes of learners and staff.

9. We propose only to award a headline grade for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, dispensing with contributory grades. This one grade will take into account the impact of care, guidance, and support for learning. We recognise that where the curriculum is carefully designed, flexible and caters well for the range of needs, abilities and interests of the learners, motivation is increased and outcomes are better. How well the curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners will be considered as an aspect of leadership and management.

We propose to judge the quality of **teaching, learning and assessment** by giving particular attention to how well:

- staff demonstrate high expectations, enthuse, engage, support and motivate learners so that they learn and make progress
- staff set challenging tasks, build on and extend learning for all learners
- staff have appropriate skills and expertise to provide good quality teaching, learning, assessment and support for each learner
- staff assess learners' progress and provide for a range of needs including those learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- equality and diversity are promoted through teaching and learning
- teaching develops literacy, numeracy, language and functional skills, independent and lifelong learning to support the achievement of learning goals
- learning is effectively supported by appropriate and timely information, and advice and guidance on next steps in training, education and employment.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that inspectors should judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment as proposed above?

## The effectiveness of leadership and management

10. Leadership is second only to the quality of teaching in the impact it can have on learners' progress. We propose to focus more sharply on how well leadership and management improve the quality of teaching and learning, and raise learners' aspirations and achievements. Expectations on governors should be clear as they have a crucial role in challenging the provision and ensuring that it improves. We propose to retain these as key considerations when judging the effectiveness of leadership and management.

11. We propose to take into account the professional development of staff and the support they receive to improve their teaching. Effective leaders monitor teaching and learning rigorously, and track learners' progress meticulously, drawing on the outcomes in order to target areas where improvements are urgently needed. Their high aspirations, clear direction and attention to professional support and development build morale amongst all staff. Leadership responsibility is shared and staff members work as an efficient, cohesive team.

12. At present we award an overall grade for leadership and management, and a further grade for capacity to improve. We are proposing that in the revised framework, capacity to improve is subsumed in leadership and management. We would focus on the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in meeting the needs and interests of learners, raising expectations, promoting ambition and achieving high standards.

13. We propose to continue to consider equality of opportunity in every aspect of the inspection framework, but specifically take account of how effectively leaders and managers discharge this fundamental responsibility. We propose to remove the 'limiting' contributory grade and report paragraph on equality and diversity from leadership and management, replacing it with text in each of the three key headline grades (outcomes for learners; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and leadership and management). We will place greater emphasis on the impact for learners and reduce the focus on policies and procedures.

14. We know that in learning and skills provision, promotion and management of equality and diversity are important to learners' success. Learners cannot achieve well unless individual needs are met, the provider is inclusive, and equality and diversity are promoted well. Therefore, we want to focus the revised methodology even more closely on the impact of equality and diversity on learners. At the core of this is a sharp focus on the progress that all individuals and groups of learners are making over time, and whether providers are effectively narrowing the gap in achievement between potentially vulnerable learners and their peers. This key responsibility for leaders and managers reflects the raised expectations nationally to address disadvantage, to target support to those who need it and to have a greater impact on narrowing gaps in outcomes for learners.

15. We propose not to continue to include a 'limiting grade' for safeguarding. We are proposing to judge and report on whether a provider is meeting their statutory safeguarding responsibilities in leadership, taking into account the impact on learners of the provider's safety and safeguarding arrangements.

16. Under the new further education reforms and freedoms all providers can determine their own curriculum. We propose to inspect how well the curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners and the local community, and evaluate this as part of leadership and management. Providers should demonstrate their work with employers to offer courses that are proven to lead to employment. How well learners progress into work will be judged under outcomes for learners.

17. Effective leaders focus on developing and improving consistently good teaching and learning. Key to this is seeking and using feedback from learners to improve instruction. They stay focused on the aspects of teaching that make most difference to learning and progress. The ability to self-assess accurately and self-critically and to use self-assessment to constantly drive improvement will remain an important aspect.

We propose to evaluate the extent to which **leadership and management** including, where relevant, governors:

- raise expectations, promote ambition for learners and improve their outcomes
- improve teaching and learning
- ensure the appropriateness of the provision, including the curriculum in meeting the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local and national community
- deploy resources, including staff, accommodation, facilities and technologies to support learning effectively and provide value for money
- evaluate the provision through monitoring quality, including engagement with users and using their findings to make, promote and sustain improvement
- actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow any achievement gaps
- ensure the safeguarding and well-being of all learners.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that inspectors should judge the effectiveness of **leadership and management** as proposed above?

To what extent do you agree or disagree that **capacity to improve** is adequately represented by a judgement on the quality of leadership and management?

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to judging **equality and diversity**?

## Inspection of subject areas

18. Currently, we inspect and report on a sample of a provider's subject areas. We propose that although sampling will continue, grades and reports will be contained in the main section of our report rather than as separate sections for some of the subject areas offered by a provider. In addition, we propose that individual sector subject areas will be the focus of national thematic studies as part of our programme of survey reports. This will enable us to evaluate the quality of provision across a wider range of providers, including outstanding providers who are likely to be exempt from full inspection.

19. Inspecting subject areas adds real depth to inspection findings and helps inspectors make clear judgements on how effectively leadership and management, and policies and procedures impact on learning. The use of subject specialist inspectors means Ofsted can accurately identify how good the quality of teaching and learning is in the subject areas inspected.

We propose that we will:

- continue to inspect a sample of subject areas, and that subject specialist inspectors increase their focus on teaching and learning
- evaluate the outcomes for learners and the teaching and learning in subject areas
- award a grade for teaching and learning overall, which will be supported by our detailed findings on teaching and learning in subject areas
- stop writing a report on each of the subject areas sampled through inspection.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals to inspect and report on **subject areas**?

## Inspection proportionate to risk

20. The schools White Paper proposes that Ofsted will adopt a highly proportionate approach to inspection. Subject to the successful passage of the Education Bill, the routine inspection of providers previously judged to be outstanding will stop and inspection will only occur if there is evidence of significant decline in performance. Providers that were judged to be good at their previous inspection will continue to be inspected at approximately six-year intervals, unless we have concerns about their performance.

21. We currently assess the performance and other risk factors of all providers on an annual basis, regardless of their last inspection judgement, in order to make informed decisions about when a particular provider should be inspected. We propose to establish a secure web-based system for gathering the views of learners, employers and parents/carers between inspections and will ensure that these views are taken into consideration as part of risk assessment. We intend to devote a higher proportion of our resources to poorly performing provision. The White Paper asks Ofsted to differentiate within the broad 'satisfactory' category, between schools that are improving and have good capacity to improve further, and those that are 'stuck'. We intend to do adopt the same approach for further education and skills providers.

### **Satisfactory not improving providers**

22. We currently inspect satisfactory providers every four years. Satisfactory providers with a grade of satisfactory or inadequate for capacity to improve will also have received a monitoring visit two years after their last inspection. Despite these additional visits, the slow progress of some satisfactory providers remains a concern. Some satisfactory providers appear to be 'stuck' and unable to take the steps necessary to bring about clear and sustained improvements.

23. In the future, a previously satisfactory provider where a decline in performance is identified, or a provider that has been judged satisfactory in each of its last two inspections, will also be likely to have an additional unannounced monitoring visit. If the monitoring visit identifies that the provider has not made adequate progress in making improvements, or there are serious concerns over progress, then a full inspection will be brought forward.

### **Inadequate providers**

24. Currently, providers judged inadequate at their last inspection will receive a monitoring visit within 6–8 months of the inspection and then be re-inspected after 12–15 months. We propose to continue to do this.

We propose to:

- adopt a more targeted approach to **satisfactory and inadequate providers**, giving priority to undertaking monitoring visits to satisfactory providers where leadership and management was no better than satisfactory or where the areas for improvement include key areas such as outcomes
- bring forward a full inspection if the monitoring visit suggests that the provider has made limited progress in improving its performance
- establish a secure web-based system for **gathering the views of learners, employers and parents/carers** between inspections, and to ensure that these views are taken into consideration in all risk assessments.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should move to devoting a greater proportion of inspection effort to satisfactory and inadequate providers?

## Dealing with requests to inspect providers

25. The Education Bill provides HMCI with additional powers to agree to requests for providers, including schools, to be inspected and, in some circumstances, to charge a fee for such an inspection. Ofsted will welcome requests for inspection and it will be for HMCI to decide whether and when to inspect the provider. We anticipate that there will be two broad reasons for such requests.

### Requests to inspect because of concerns about the provider

26. Requests for inspection may relate to concerns about a provider's performance, for example, a marked decline in success rates or a significant deterioration in the quality of teaching and learning. Such concerns may be raised by a group of learners, employers, parents or governors. It will be for HMCI to consider the reasons for such requests, in coming to a decision about whether to inspect the provider.

### Requests from a provider to be inspected

27. It is possible that some providers that were previously judged to be outstanding and are exempted from routine inspection might ask to be inspected. Ofsted will welcome such requests but it will be for HMCI to decide whether and when to inspect the provider.

28. A good provider that has improved significantly since its previous inspection may feel that there is compelling evidence that it might be judged outstanding were it to be inspected. Where a future routine inspection will not take place for another two or three years, the provider may request an inspection. It will be for HMCI to decide whether and when to inspect the provider.

29. Given that such requests are made by providers themselves, we think that it is reasonable to charge a fee for such inspections. We anticipate that these inspections would be unannounced and that this would be acceptable to the providers given that they had requested them. We also anticipate that at least two years would have passed since the provider's last inspection before a request for another inspection could be considered.

We propose that Ofsted will welcome **requests for inspection** and it will be for HMCI to decide whether and when to inspect the provider. The Education Bill provides HMCI with additional powers to agree to requests for schools and providers to be inspected and to charge a fee for such an inspection.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that Ofsted should respond positively to most requests for inspection and charge for such inspections?

## The consultation process

30. We welcome your responses to the consultation questionnaire below and your views on any aspect of the inspection of further education and skills providers. Please use the comments section in the questionnaire to raise any additional points not covered by our questions. The consultation remains open until 24 November 2011.

31. We will meet with representative groups from the sector and, if possible, with learners, employers, parents and carers who have been involved in the sector.

## What happens next?

32. During 2012 we will try out our proposals, evaluate them and publish regular information on our website as the revised arrangements develop. We aim to ensure that the process is as clear and open as possible, so that people can see that their views have been considered and are aware of the changes that we decide to make.

33. We will publish a revised framework and evaluation schedule for the inspection of the further education and skills sector, taking full account of the responses to this consultation. We will publish a report on the responses to this consultation.

## **Sending back your questionnaire**

34. There are three ways of completing and submitting the questionnaire in the next section and/or sending us your comments.

### **Online electronic questionnaire**

35. You can complete and submit an electronic version of the questionnaire:  
<http://85.234.135.179/index.php?sid=77156>.

### **Print and post**

36. This document can be printed and completed by hand. When you have completed the questionnaire, please post it to:

Ofsted Learning and Skills Development Team  
Floor 7  
Aviation House  
125 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE.

### **Download and email**

37. This document can be downloaded and completed on your own computer. When you have completed the questionnaire, please email it to:  
[lands@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:lands@ofsted.gov.uk). Please put 'Common Inspection Framework 2012 consultation' in the subject line.

## Questionnaire for the Common Inspection Framework 2012 consultation

### Confidentiality

The information you provide will be held by us. It will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research to help us to become more effective, shape policies and inform inspection and regulatory practice.

We will treat your identity in confidence, if you disclose it to us. However, we may publish an organisation's views.

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Yes  please complete Section 1 and the following questions  
 No  please complete Section 2 and the following questions  
 No answer

### Section 1

If you are completing the consultation on behalf of an organisation and would like us to consider publishing the views of your organisation, please indicate this below.

Organisation: Association of School and College Leaders

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) represents over 15,000 members of the leadership teams of maintained and independent schools and colleges throughout the UK. This places the association in a unique position to consider this issue from the viewpoint of the leaders of both secondary schools and colleges. \_\_\_\_\_

I represent:

a GFE/tertiary college	<input type="checkbox"/>	an independent specialist college	<input type="checkbox"/>
a sixth form college	<input type="checkbox"/>	a local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>
an independent training provider	<input type="checkbox"/>	a school	<input type="checkbox"/>
a Next Step contractor	<input type="checkbox"/>	an inspection service provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
a higher education institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	a not for profit organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
No answer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please tell us) Professional association, please see above.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Section 2

Which of the below best describes you? Please tick one option.

I am:

an adult learner/student/participant	<input type="checkbox"/>	an employer with an SFA training contract	<input type="checkbox"/>
a parent or carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	an employer without an SFA training contract	<input type="checkbox"/>
a member of the public	<input type="checkbox"/>	an employee of a learning and skills provider or college	<input type="checkbox"/>
an inspector	<input type="checkbox"/>	a teacher/trainer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please tell us) Martin Ward, Public Affairs Director of ASCL. See above for ASCL.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### Key headline grades

We propose to continue to judge the provider in terms of its **overall effectiveness**, but based particularly on judgements relating to:

- outcomes for learners
- quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- leadership and management (incorporating capacity to improve).

Q1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed overarching grade and three key headline grades (paragraph 2)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

The alteration of 'quality of provision' to 'the quality of teaching, learning and assessment' allows for a more targeted approach to improvement. ASCL supports the greater emphasis on direct observation of teaching, learning, skills development and assessment that is proposed and welcome the intention to deploy subject specialist inspectors.

The omission of 'capacity to improve' from the overall effectiveness grade removes what may have been a useful lever that providers could employ to make far-reaching changes if necessary. This is essentially part of leadership and management and reflects a wider definition of it; but capacity to improve should be specifically referred to in the text of inspection reports for the reasons stated.

It is important that the role of governors should be retained as a key consideration.

## Outcomes for learners

We propose to judge **outcomes for learners** by giving particular attention to how well:

- all learners achieve
- gaps are narrowing between different groups of learners
- learners develop personal, social, and employability skills
- learners progress to higher level qualifications and into jobs that meet local and national needs.

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to judging outcomes for learners (paragraphs 3–5)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

There is an over-emphasis on straightforward achievement data. This makes it hard for providers, however good they are, serving disadvantaged communities or groups of learners to achieve high grades; and correspondingly can lead to complacency in providers serving well-supported learners. Inspectors should also take into account that learners' progress may be affected by socio economic factors beyond the influence of the provider. The use of postcode data to look at deprivation would help with this. There should also be a greater emphasis on progress made by learners rather than the absolute level of their achievement.

ASCL welcomes the convergence of school and college inspection regimes evident here, but that will be undermined if school and college data sets and benchmarks are not the same. This point is not addressed here, though it has not been well understood by inspectors (never mind by those who read inspection reports) in the past.

There will also be radical changes for adults taking place during the lifetime of the proposed CIF, including reductions in student support funding, introduction of FE fees to be paid through loans, and increased fees for attending university. Providers should not be penalised in inspection for decisions that have been made in a wider political arena.

## The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

We propose to judge the **quality of teaching, learning and assessment** by giving particular attention to how well:

- staff demonstrate high expectations, enthuse, engage, support and motivate learners so that they learn and make progress
- staff set challenging tasks, build on and extend learning for all learners
- staff have appropriate skills and expertise to provide good quality teaching, learning, assessment and support for each learner
- staff assess learners' progress and provide for a range of needs including those learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- equality and diversity are promoted through teaching and learning
- teaching develops literacy, numeracy, language and functional skills, independent and lifelong learning to support the achievement of learning goals
- learning is effectively supported by appropriate and timely information, and advice and guidance on next steps in training, education and employment.

Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that inspectors should judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment as proposed above (paragraphs 6–9)?

Strongly agree  <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree  <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree  <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know  <input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you have any comments or suggestions?

ASCL members have concerns about the inequalities that are evident between different areas of the country in relation to information, advice and guidance arrangements.

Inspection should also consider how the relevance, level, and range of individual provider provision meets the needs of and supports local young people that are not in employment, education or training.

The effort and effectiveness of the provider's strategic planning and partnership working locally in order to provide relevant opportunities should also be taken into account.

### The effectiveness of leadership and management

We propose to evaluate the extent to which **leadership and management** including, where relevant, governors:

- raise expectations, promote ambition for all learners and improve their outcomes
- improve teaching and learning
- ensure the appropriateness of the provision, including the curriculum in meeting the needs and interests of learners, employers and the local and national community
- deploy resources, including staff, accommodation, facilities and technologies to support learning effectively

- evaluate the provision through monitoring quality including engagement with users and using their findings to make, promote and sustain improvement
- actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow any achievement gaps
- ensure the safeguarding and well-being of all learners.

Q4. To what extent do you agree or disagree that inspectors should judge the effectiveness of leadership and management as proposed above (paragraphs 10–17)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

ASCL supports the removal of limiting grades and the focus on impact rather than policies and procedures (see question 6).

The importance of governors and "their crucial role" is rightly acknowledged in this section. The focus on leadership and management at all levels is welcomed.

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree that capacity to improve is adequately represented by a judgement on the quality of leadership and management (paragraph 12)?

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you have any comments or suggestions?

It is important that specific reference is made to the capacity to improve in inspection reports alongside the leadership and management grade (see earlier comments). This provides a powerful tool for change within an organisation. It also acknowledges the importance of all leadership and management in ensuring capacity in the necessary areas for improvement.

Q6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposed approach to judging equality and diversity (paragraphs 13 and 14)?

Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know <input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you have any comments or suggestions?

ASCL welcomes the reduction of focus on policies and procedures for equality of opportunity in order to place greater emphasis on how the three key headline areas are actually demonstrating it.

The removal of limiting grades for equality of opportunity and safeguarding is sensible and will focus providers' minds on embedding good practice in their provision rather than on ticking boxes.

## Inspection arrangements

### *Inspection of subject areas*

We propose that we will:

- continue to inspect a sample of subject areas, and that subject specialist inspectors increase their focus on teaching and learning
- evaluate the outcomes for learners and the teaching and learning in subject areas

- award a grade for teaching and learning overall, which will be supported by our detailed findings on teaching and learning in subject areas
- stop writing a report on each of the subject areas sampled through inspection.

Q7. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our proposals to inspect and report on subject areas (paragraphs 18 and 19)?

Strongly agree  <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree  <input type="checkbox"/>	Neither agree nor disagree  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Disagree  <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree  <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know  <input type="checkbox"/>
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Do you have any comments or suggestions?

As the proposals read, there might be an inspection of a skewed sample of subjects at a particular institution, but a report on teaching & learning as a whole, with an implication to the lay reader that all subjects have been inspected and are of that standard. This would be misleading. If the approach will be to inspect certain subjects in depth, why not report on that work?

Specific subject inspections can provide good opportunities for college principals to focus weaker and sometimes resistant subject areas on improvements, but as the requirement for annual self assessment has been removed it may be a matter of chance whether the subjects inspected will be weaker or stronger ones.

*Inspection proportionate to risk*

We propose to:

- adopt a more targeted approach to satisfactory and inadequate providers giving priority to undertaking monitoring visits, including unannounced visits, to satisfactory providers where leadership and management was no better than adequate or where the areas for improvement include key areas such as outcomes

- bring forward a full inspection if the monitoring visit suggests that the provider has made limited progress in improving its performance
- establish a secure web-based system for gathering the views of learners, employers and parents/carers between inspections, and to ensure that these views are taken into consideration in all risk assessments.

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree that we should move to devoting a greater proportion of inspection effort to satisfactory and inadequate providers (paragraphs 20–24)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

This is a sensible use of resources as long as exempt providers are included in subject and themed inspections so that Ofsted has a realistic view of college provision across the country. Otherwise there would be a danger that this approach could lead to a false picture of the overall quality of provision

There is concern about the idea of a web-based system for gathering views between inspections of employers, parents and carers. The version of this introduced for schools appears simplistic, not secure, and open to manipulation. This is not encouraging. It is likely that the proposed system would be much less sophisticated than the systems already used by many colleges to survey the views of parents, employers and other stakeholders.

Colleges would also like some reassurance that the assessment of any negative reports will be sensible and proportionate: twenty negative comments may well reflect a campaign of a tiny minority rather than any genuinely widespread concern. And twenty negative comments in the context of a college with several thousand learners should clearly have less impact than a similar number related to an institution with only a few hundred learners.

## Dealing with requests to inspect providers

We propose that Ofsted will welcome requests for inspection and it will be for HMCI to decide whether and when to inspect the provider. The Education Bill provides HMCI with additional powers to agree to requests for schools and providers to be inspected and to charge a fee for such an inspection.

Q9. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Ofsted should respond positively to most requests for inspection and charge for such inspections (paragraphs 25–29)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you have any comments or suggestions?

ASCL agrees with the proposed approach to inspections sought by institutions provided that the cost is not too great and that the fact of making a payment does not alter the relationship between the inspection team and the institution being inspected.

The possibility raised in paragraph 26 is not asked about here, but clearly requires very careful handling if institutions are not to be held to ransom by campaign groups threatening to invoke an inspection. As for the previous question it should be clear that account will be taken of the size of the institution when deciding how many learners, employers or parents are required to trigger an inspection. This would depend, of course, on the nature of the complaint, and whether other indicators tended to bear it out, but the point remains that it should not be possible for a tiny minority of a stakeholder group to bring on an inspection. Any inspections consequent on this clause should not be subject to a fee being charged to the institution

## What did you think of this consultation?

One of the commitments in our strategic plan is to monitor whether our consultations are accessible to those wishing to take part.

Please tell us what you thought of this consultation by answering the questions below.

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
I found the consultation information clear and easy to understand.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I found the consultation easy to find on the Ofsted website.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had enough information about the consultation topic.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would take part in a future Ofsted consultation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## How did you hear about this consultation?

- Ofsted website
- Ofsted News*
- Ofsted conference
- Another organisation (please specify, if known)
- Other (please specify) .

Is there anything you would like us to improve on or do differently for future consultations? If so, please tell us below.

These Word forms are not, in practice, particularly easy to complete, as Word behaves differently when the insertion point is inside a form field. An ordinary Word document would be easier for the user.

Thank you for taking part in our consultation.

## Additional questions about you

Your answers to the following questions will help us to evaluate how successfully we are communicating messages from inspection to all sections of society. We would like to assure you that all responses are confidential and you do not have to answer every question.

Please tick the appropriate box.

### 1. Gender

Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Are you living as the same gender as you were born in?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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### 2. Age

Under 14 <input type="checkbox"/>	14–18 <input type="checkbox"/>	19–24 <input type="checkbox"/>	25–34 <input type="checkbox"/>	35–44 <input type="checkbox"/>	45–54 <input type="checkbox"/>	55–64 <input type="checkbox"/>	65+ <input type="checkbox"/>
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### 3. Ethnic origin

(a) How would you describe your national group?

British or mixed British	<input type="checkbox"/>	Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
English	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

(b) How would you describe your ethnic group?

<b>Asian</b>		<b>Mixed ethnic origin</b>	
Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black African and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Caribbean and White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any other Asian background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other mixed ethnic background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Black</b>		<b>White</b>	
African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any White background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Any other ethnic background</b>	
Any other Black background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Chinese</b>			
Any Chinese background (specify if you wish)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

#### 4. Sexual orientation

Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/>	Lesbian <input type="checkbox"/>	Gay <input type="checkbox"/>	Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>
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#### 5. Religion/belief

Buddhist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim	<input type="checkbox"/>
Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any other, please state:	

#### 6. Disability

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
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