



FAQs on Ofsted's 2019 Education Inspection Framework

What is the Ofsted framework?

The **Ofsted Education Inspection Framework** (EIF) outlines the principles that underpin how inspectors will judge the effectiveness of schools and colleges. There are individual handbooks for inspectors which go into greater detail about the process of inspection and how inspectors will collect and evaluate evidence.

When does the new framework take effect?

The 2019 Education Inspection Framework will take effect from the start of September of the 2019/20 academic year.

What are the main judgements schools will receive from September 2019?

From September 2019, the judgements schools and colleges receive under section 5 full inspections will be:

- overall effectiveness
- quality of education
- behaviour and attitudes
- personal development
- leadership and management

Plus, depending on the phases offered by a school, they may also receive judgments for:

- Early Years
- sixth form

Are there any limiting judgements?

- In order for a school to be judged good for overall effectiveness, it must be judged at least good for quality of education.
- In order for a school to be judged outstanding for overall effectiveness, it must be judged outstanding for quality of education.
- In order for a school to be judged good or better, then safeguarding must be deemed to be effective. While ineffective safeguarding will usually lead to an inadequate judgement (as per the previous framework), the new EIF allows inspectors, under certain circumstances, to issue an RI judgement.

Paragraph 269 explains:

"269. When safeguarding is ineffective, this is likely to lead to an inadequate leadership and management judgement. However, there may be circumstances when it is appropriate to judge a setting as requires improvement, rather than inadequate, if there are minor weaknesses in safeguarding arrangements that are easy to put right and do not leave children either being harmed or at risk of harm."

What about schools already judged to be good?

As now, schools already judged to be good will usually receive a lighter touch inspection (known as a section 8 inspection). The purpose of this inspection is to confirm whether the school remains good and that safeguarding is effective. However, it is worth keeping in mind that for around 20% of good schools deemed highly likely to need a full inspection, Ofsted give them a full (section 5) inspection from the outset.

If both full inspections and section 8 inspections of good schools usually last two days, what will be the difference?


Section 8 inspections for good schools differ from full inspections in two main ways:

- There will be fewer inspectors on-site during section 8 inspections of good schools (see paragraph 50 of the section 8 handbook for more details).
- Inspectors will focus primarily on the quality of education during a section 8 inspection of a good school (see paragraphs 53-69 of the section 8 handbook)

Under section 8 inspections for good schools, inspectors make only two judgements:

- Is the school continuing to be good?
- Is safeguarding effective?





What's happened to 'short inspections'?

Ofsted can only change judgements under a section 5 full inspection. Sometimes inspectors will inspect a good school under section 8 in the first instance but determine that more evidence needs to be collected and that the school should be considered against the criteria for a full inspection. In such circumstances, Ofsted will do one of three things:

- Write to the headteacher, explaining the school may be outstanding and that a section 5 full inspection will happen in the next year or so.
- Write to the headteacher, explaining the school may not be good anymore and that a section 5 full inspection will happen in the next one to two years.
- Consider that there are significant problems in the school and that the inspection must immediately be converted to a full section 5 inspection.

The new EIF does not change any of these processes. However, whereas most good schools used to receive a 'short' section 8 inspection (lasting just a day), from September 2019, section 8 inspections of good schools will last two days.

The only exception to this is for inspections of very small schools (with fewer than 150 children), which will last one day.

I've heard that inspectors will focus more on the curriculum. Is this true?

The curriculum is central to the quality of education judgement. As such, inspectors will thoroughly consider the 'intent', 'implementation' and 'impact' of the curriculum and how this contributes to the quality of education the school provides. However, it is worth noting:

- there is no specific 'curriculum' judgement. It is the quality of education inspectors are judging
- there will not be separate judgements for 'intent', 'implementation' and 'impact'. The quality of education judgement is a holistic evaluation of all three elements

There seems to be a lot of talk about the three 'i's of curriculum: intent, implementation and impact. Should we be using these words too?

They might be useful ways of talking about and evaluating a curriculum, but they are not necessarily strategies for leading a school and they may not tell you much about how to construct a good curriculum.

Be cautious about how you use the terminology, particularly when it comes to operational matters. For example, it may not be appropriate to appoint someone as 'Head of Intent' because curriculum intent is something that resides in all parts of the curriculum, within each subject as well as at whole school level. Structurally separating your curriculum intent from how it is implemented is likely to be disjointed and unhelpful.

How can we ensure we are well placed for inspection of our quality of education?

If you can explain to inspectors your rationale for why the curriculum is shaped as it is, if inspectors can see the curriculum being taught effectively, and if pupils are learning the curriculum, then you'll be well placed for inspection.

This does not mean schools must overhaul their curriculum. But it is likely that inspectors will want to understand the reasons for curriculum decisions made at school and subject level. Schools should expect inspectors to probe the curriculum by asking questions such as:

- Why do you teach that?
- Why do you teach it in that order/ Why do you teach it then (at that particular point)?


What is this 'transition year' I've heard about? Will inspection work differently during this period?


The 'transition year' Ofsted has incorporated refers only to the Quality of Education judgement. Under the 'intent' criteria it includes the following wording:

- [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]

In effect, it means that while inspectors will continue to judge the quality of education as it is, they will give credit to schools for their plans to improve the curriculum. This was introduced following close consultation with ASCL to reflect the fact that schools and colleges wishing to undertake curriculum change need to be given time to do so and that inspectors should be mindful of this. It does not mean that schools and colleges should change their curriculum – that's for schools to decide.

The transition period will last at least until the end of the 2019/20 academic year, upon which Ofsted will review it to determine if it should be extended.





Will Ofsted require schools to teach a three-year Key Stage 3?

There is nothing in the handbook that says definitively that schools must teach a full three-year Key Stage 3. Indeed, Ofsted has said it “does not intend to dictate the length of key stages in schools.”

However, there are numerous references in the handbook to the need for schools to ensure the curriculum retains breadth through Years 7 to 9. Such as:

“If a school has shortened key stage 3, inspectors will look to see that the school has made provision to ensure that pupils still have the opportunity to study a broad range of subjects, commensurate with the national curriculum, in Years 7 to 9.”

Inspectors are likely to dig into a shortened Key Stage 3. Schools wishing to continue with a shortened Key Stage 3 may find it useful to consider how they will explain:

- why they’ve taken this decision
- how breadth is maintained so that the curriculum has not been narrowed
- what the risks to the curriculum might be
- how these risks are mitigated

What does the handbook say about the EBacc?

Wording in the final version of the handbook has been tweaked to include the following statement under paragraph 175:

“Inspectors will not make a judgement about the quality of education based solely or primarily on its progress towards the EBacc ambition.”

Ofsted has also clarified that:

“The government’s national ambition that 75% of Year 10 pupils in state-funded mainstream schools should be starting to study EBacc GCSE courses nationally by 2022...is an ambition, and not a target for any individual school.”

Therefore, while inspectors will consider the school’s EBacc entry as part of the quality of education judgement, it should not dictate it on its own.

Is it true that inspectors won’t look at internal data?


It is true that inspectors won’t consider non-statutory internal data in relation to progress and attainment. However, it is our expectation that other forms of internal data, such as attendance, will be considered by inspectors.

Important points regarding internal achievement data and assessment:

- While inspectors won’t consider the data itself, they will be interested to know how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Therefore, you can legitimately share insights you’ve gleaned from internal data and other sources, and what you’ve done with it, even if the data itself won’t be considered. Paragraph 194 says: “Inspectors will be interested in the conclusions drawn and actions taken from any internal assessment information, but they will not examine or verify that information first hand.”
- Inspectors will want to know how teachers use assessment to embed knowledge and identify next steps for pupils (para 183).
- *“If a school’s system for data collection is disproportionate, inefficient or unsustainable for staff, inspectors will reflect this in their reporting on the school.”* (Para 186)

Are schools allowed to gather and use internal data?

Yes. Ofsted’s handbook refers to inspection. The fact that inspectors won’t use schools’ internal data does not mean schools can’t or shouldn’t use such data themselves – that is for leaders to decide. However, as noted above, inspectors will seek to understand how this information is used.



How will inspectors pull together evidence from lesson observations, work scrutiny and other sources?

Ofsted has outlined a new inspection methodology it has termed 'deep dives'. This will see inspectors investigate identified subjects in detail:

- 4-6 subjects in secondary
- 3-5 in primary schools, always including reading.

The methodology will move from school leaders' top-level picture to middle leaders' rationale and then an exploration of how the curriculum is implemented in the classroom and how well pupils are learning curriculum content.

This will include:

- discussions with senior leaders
- discussions with curriculum leaders
- 4-6 lesson visits per deep dive subject
- 6+ workbooks reviewed per deep dive subject, per year group and more detailed work scrutiny from at least two year groups
- discussions with teachers about the curriculum
- discussions with pupils about what they have learned

Details can be found [here](#).

How will inspectors gather evidence about behaviour?

Much evidence gathering practice in relation to behaviour will remain the same as in previous frameworks and discussions with pupils will continue to be a key element.

However, there is a particular addition to note. Paragraph 206 of the section 5 handbook explains that inspectors will want to speak to staff who, according to research, tend to be most affected by challenging behaviour. This includes trainees, supply staff, NQTs, administration support staff, and catering staff.

While this should may not change day to day practice in schools, leaders might find it useful to seek the views of these staff as part of their usual cycle of workforce surveys etc. This will make it less likely that inspection will throw up something unexpected and will allow leaders to respond to any concerns in advance of inspection.

Will it be more difficult to receive an outstanding judgement?

This remains to be seen but there are clues which suggest it will be more difficult to achieve an outstanding judgement.

In order to achieve outstanding schools must first 'securely and consistently' meet all the criteria for good and then be judged to be 'exceptional' by meeting the outstanding criteria on top of that.

Further Information

Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/education-inspection-framework#handbooks-and-framework>

Inspecting the curriculum, Ofsted <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-the-curriculum>

If you have any queries not covered by these questions and responses, in the first instance, please contact the ASCL hotline on 0116 299 1122 or hotline@ascl.org.uk

ASCL Curriculum and Inspection Specialist Stephen Rollett