

# Maintained schools



## Key findings

In 2009 Ofsted introduced a revised inspection framework for the inspection of maintained schools and academies and a more risk-based approach to inspection in which good and outstanding schools are inspected less frequently. In 2010/11 outstanding schools, with the exception of nursery schools, were not inspected if the annual risk assessment showed no evidence of a decline in performance and the fundamental nature of the school was unchanged. As a result, the schools inspected in any one year are now not representative of the whole population of schools.

- ✦ Fifty-seven per cent of the 5,727 schools inspected in the past year were found to provide their pupils with a good or outstanding education. This is a similar proportion to that found last year.
- ✦ A more representative picture of the 'state of the nation' is given by looking at the most recent inspection judgement for all schools in England. This shows that 70% of schools were found to have been delivering a good or better standard of education.
- ✦ Six per cent of schools inspected this year were judged inadequate. This is a decrease from the 8% of schools inspected last year. However, this masks differences between types of school. Secondary schools were most likely to be judged inadequate, at 8%.
- ✦ Schools are more likely to improve than decline between inspections. However, the proportion that decline is a concern. Around a third of all schools inspected during 2010/11 improved their performance compared with their previous inspection and nearly half maintained their performance. Nearly a fifth received a lower overall effectiveness grade. This is a slightly more positive picture than in 2009/10.
- ✦ Forty per cent of schools previously judged to be outstanding that were inspected this year declined. These schools, with the exception of nursery schools, were selected for inspection following a risk assessment or because the nature of the school had changed. The majority had experienced a decline in standards over time and a marked change in terms of senior leadership, staff turnover or the profile of their pupils. Three previously outstanding schools declined to inadequate.
- ✦ The proportion of previously satisfactory schools which improved increased from 42% last year to 46% this year. However, the slow progress of satisfactory or 'stuck' schools continues to be a cause for concern. Fourteen per cent of all schools inspected this year, which is nearly 800 schools, have been judged satisfactory for at least their last two inspections and have no better than satisfactory capacity to improve.
- ✦ There are now fewer schools in categories of concern than last year and the pace of their improvement has increased: schools took on average 18 months to be removed from special measures this year in comparison with 20 months last year. It is encouraging that over a fifth of schools judged inadequate at their previous inspection had achieved substantial improvement and were found to be good or better when inspected again this year.
- ✦ There remains a strong relationship between deprivation and weaker provision and the gap in the quality of schools between socially deprived areas and more advantaged areas is a continuing concern. Seventy-one per cent of schools serving the least deprived pupils were judged to be good or outstanding compared with 48% of schools serving the most deprived pupils. However, of the schools serving the most deprived pupils, 7% were judged to be outstanding, showing that it is possible to buck this trend.
- ✦ The quality of teaching is still too variable and too much is satisfactory. Teaching was found to be good or outstanding in only 60% of schools overall. However, this is a slight increase from 2009/10. The quality of teaching in secondary schools has also improved slightly from 51% good or outstanding last year to 54% this year.
- ✦ A key requirement of schools is that they teach pupils to read. Ofsted's survey evidence shows that primary schools that were most successful in teaching children to read by six had a very rigorous, systematic approach to teaching phonic knowledge and skills. This laid the foundations for successful reading, writing and spelling. The approach was applied with a high degree of consistency and was sustained.

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- ✘ The very large majority of schools are orderly places where pupils' behaviour is judged to be at least good: where teaching is good pupils' behaviour is usually at least good as well. Pupils' behaviour was good or outstanding in 87% of schools inspected this year compared with 86% last year. However, it was less strong in secondary schools, with 22% judged to have satisfactory behaviour and 2% inadequate behaviour.
- ✘ Leadership and management are good or outstanding in 67% of schools inspected this year, which is similar to the previous year. Given the importance of leadership and management in securing school improvement, there is an urgent need to build more capacity among school leaders in those schools that are not making enough progress, and particularly to tackle the variability in teaching within them.
- ✘ An important trend in education policy has been the increasing role that successful schools have played in supporting and working in partnership with less successful schools. Ofsted visited 10 federations of high-performing schools with weaker schools for a survey carried out this year. In all 10 such federations teaching and learning, achievement and behaviour had improved in the weaker schools and good outcomes had been maintained in the high-performing school.
- ✘ In 79% of all schools inspected this year safeguarding procedures were judged to be good or outstanding. It is now rare for inadequate procedures to be identified. This indicates that schools have considerably improved this area of their work and take their responsibilities in this area very seriously.
- ✘ Most of the academies inspected this year were sponsored academies where previously the school had experienced a history of failure or low performance. Of the 75 academies inspected this year, 40 were judged to be providing a good or outstanding education for their pupils and five were inadequate. The proportion of academies judged good or outstanding is similar to that for all secondary schools, although within this the proportion judged outstanding was higher at just over a fifth.

## Introduction

**73.** This has been a year of considerable change for the maintained schools sector, with further government policy developments designed to tackle underperforming schools, lever up standards and improve the quality of teaching. The publication of the White Paper in November 2010 highlighted more than ever the importance of good teaching if pupils are to make good progress and schools are to close the significant gaps in achievement between different groups of pupils.<sup>12</sup> This theme reflects a key message in last year's Annual Report, and is repeated again this year: that the quality of teaching is too variable and too much is no better than satisfactory.

**74.** The context in which inspections of schools take place is evolving. A major strand of the government's education strategy has been to increase the number of academies and to open up the possibility of becoming an academy to a wider spectrum of schools. In May 2010, the government invited all outstanding schools to consider the option of converting to academy status, and in November 2010 extended that invitation to good schools to become academies as part of a partnership of schools. This is leading to a rapid expansion of the number of academies in existence, and is beginning to change their nature. They are no longer exclusively schools in deprived areas with a history of underperformance. The number of academies inspected by Ofsted has increased to 75 this year from 43 in 2009/10 and this rise is set to continue. Eleven of the academy inspections carried out this year were of the new 'converter' academies.

**75.** A further theme of the White Paper is the role of highly effective schools in leading improvement and, in particular, supporting other less successful schools. Included in this Annual Report is some of Ofsted's emerging evidence on how school to school support is driving improvement in a small number of 'support federations' and the leadership implications for headteachers who are leading more than one school. It is likely that, as the number of academies grows and the role of local authorities in directly providing school improvement services diminishes, these school-to-

12. *The importance of teaching: schools White Paper*, Department for Education, 2010.

school support structures will become increasingly common and their effectiveness will be a critical determinant of school improvement.

**76.** The education system faces considerable challenges: to tackle the wide variability in teaching and in outcomes for all groups of pupils within and between schools; to sustain good performance; and to build capacity where provision is no better than satisfactory. Much of this variability is persistent and slow to change. For many years Ofsted has reported that the quality of education offered by schools serving the most deprived communities tends to be poorer, on average, than those schools serving the least deprived communities. This has serious implications for social equity and mobility and remains a key issue identified by inspections carried out this year.

**77.** From April 2011 schools have received the new pupil premium, which is additional funding provided to schools specifically to support pupils who are eligible for free school meals. It is too early to tell, from inspection, what the impact of this additional funding will be. However, inspection has identified a wealth of evidence about those schools that offer consistently outstanding education in very challenging circumstances, that are absolutely committed to supporting every individual pupil to succeed, and that, as a result, achieve outstanding progress for their pupils and weaken the link between deprivation and underachievement. The lessons from these outstanding schools may help to inform how schools choose to direct the additional funding from the pupil premium.

**78.** Inspection continues to evolve to meet these challenges and they are given even more priority and emphasis in the new inspection framework to be introduced in January 2012. Within this changing landscape Ofsted's inspections offer a critical insight on what matters most in schools – the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' achievement. In the following section the key features and differences of school performance are highlighted. Ofsted's increasingly proportionate approach to inspection over recent years has reduced the number of higher performing schools that are inspected each year and that therefore contribute to the inspection evidence used for the Annual Report. As a result, the schools inspected in any one year are now not representative of the whole population of schools, and comparisons with previous years are not straightforward.

## Overall effectiveness

**79.** This more proportionate approach to inspection introduced in the 2009/10 framework means that for the last two years less successful schools have been prioritised for inspection. Ofsted now carries out a risk assessment of all schools, apart from nursery schools, previously judged to be outstanding or good starting three years from the end of the academic year in which they had their previous inspection.<sup>13</sup> The risk assessment for primary and secondary schools takes into account pupils' attainment, progress and attendance over three years; the findings from any survey visit carried out by Ofsted since the last inspection; and any significant issues brought to Ofsted's attention, including safeguarding concerns and qualifying complaints.<sup>14</sup>

**80.** Since 1 September 2010 previously outstanding primary and secondary schools have only been selected for inspection if concerns are identified through this risk assessment process, and good schools are only inspected once in a five-year cycle unless such concerns are identified.<sup>15</sup> This year Ofsted carried out 2,772 risk assessments of primary and secondary schools previously judged to be good or outstanding. In 2,659 of these there was no evidence to suggest that performance had deteriorated and Ofsted published an interim assessment confirming this. Following the publication of an interim assessment, outstanding schools were informed that Ofsted would not be inspecting them but would continue to carry out annual risk assessments and good schools were informed that they would not be inspected for at least a year. Interim assessments of 47 special schools and pupil referral units previously judged to be outstanding were also published and the schools were informed that they would not be inspected in the next academic year.

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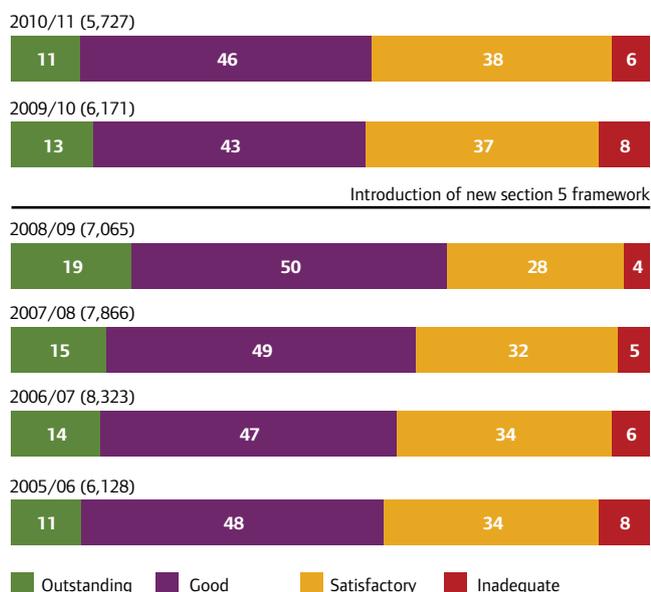
13. Schools that have experienced a fundamental change to their nature, such as an amalgamation, are selected for inspection prior to the risk assessment process taking place.

14. Ofsted has specific powers (under section 11A-C of the Education Act 2005, as amended) to investigate certain complaints, known as qualifying complaints.

15. Ofsted also inspects a random sample of previously good schools in order to check that the risk assessment process is working effectively. In 2010/11 Ofsted inspected 59 schools for this purpose. Where there has been a fundamental change in the nature of the school inspection may also be brought forward.

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**Figure 19** The overall effectiveness of schools inspected between 1 September 2005 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)<sup>16</sup>



Figures in 2010/11 include pilot inspection outcomes.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

**81.** This was the second full year of inspections using the school inspection framework introduced in 2009/10. Figure 19 shows that the percentage of schools judged good or outstanding this year is similar to last year. There has been a fall of two percentage points in the proportion of schools judged to be outstanding, which has been offset by a three percentage point increase in the proportion of schools judged to be good. The fall in outstanding provision will have been influenced by the increasingly proportionate approach to inspection. This year only 3% of the schools selected for inspection had previously been judged to be outstanding compared with 8% last year. Six per cent of the schools inspected this year were found to be inadequate. The two percentage point fall compared with last year is encouraging.

**82.** The impact of risk assessments on the sample of schools inspected in any one year is that many fewer previously outstanding and good schools are inspected than would be the case if a proportionate approach to inspection were not employed. The sample is therefore not representative of the performance of all schools in the country. A more representative picture is given by looking at the most recent inspection results of all schools. Although in some cases these inspections took place a number of years ago, this nonetheless provides an indication of the overall performance of schools, as well as trends over time. Figure 20 shows the most recent inspection result for all schools open on 31 August 2011 compared with all schools open on 31 August 2010.

**Figure 20** The most recent overall effectiveness judgements for all schools open on 31 August 2011 compared with the most recent inspection judgement for all schools open on 31 August 2010 (percentage of schools)



Figures in 2010/11 include pilot inspection outcomes.

Data include inspection outcomes for predecessor schools that have converted to academy status in 2010/11.

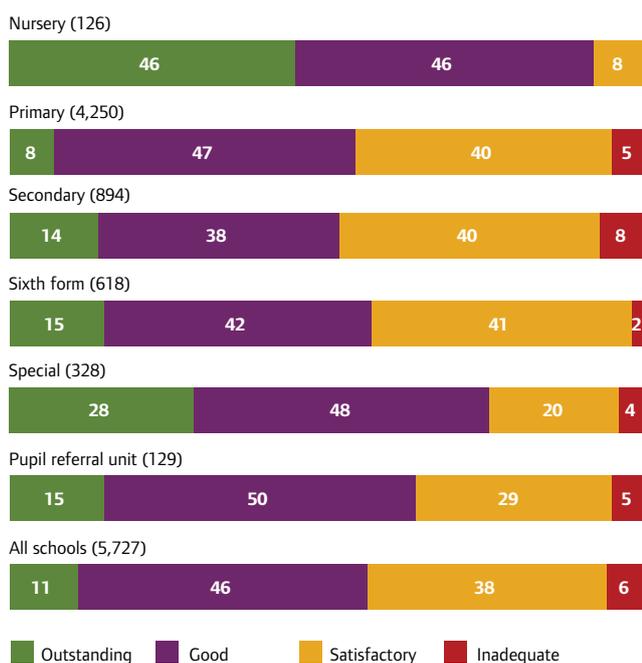
Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Six per cent of the schools inspected this year were found to be inadequate. The two percentage point fall compared with last year is encouraging.

16. This year Ofsted also conducted 145 pilot inspections to test the new inspection framework for January 2012. The overall effectiveness outcome is included in data for this academic year. All other judgements are excluded.

**83.** Figure 20 illustrates two important features. First, it shows that 70% of schools were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. This is a considerably higher proportion than the 57% of schools judged good or outstanding this year (see Figure 19) and provides an indication of the impact of the risk-assessment process on the sample of schools inspected. Second, it shows that the profile of performance for schools in their most recent inspection changed little between 31 August 2010 and 31 August 2011, although there was a slight increase in the proportion judged outstanding and a slight decrease in the proportion judged satisfactory or inadequate. It is also a similar profile of performance to inspection judgements for those schools inspected in 2008/09, the final year of the previous inspection framework. In other words, the quality of schools overall has remained relatively stable over the last three years. However, it must be recognised that this analysis includes the outcomes of inspection undertaken several years ago and against the criteria set out in previous inspection frameworks and that the majority of schools would not have been inspected between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

**Figure 21** The overall effectiveness of schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures include pilot inspection outcomes.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

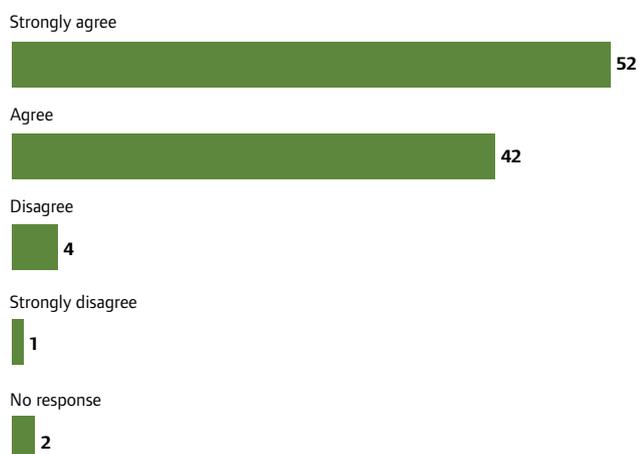
**84.** Figure 21 sets out the overall effectiveness of the sample of schools inspected during 2010/11, in which weaker schools were deliberately targeted for inspection. The inspection framework introduced in 2009 also sets a higher bar for performance than the previous inspection framework. The inspections undertaken this year continue to show considerable differences in overall effectiveness between different types of school. In particular Figure 21 shows the following.

- ✦ The very high proportion of nursery schools being judged outstanding or good continues to be a strong feature. Unlike other types of school, nursery schools are not subject to risk assessment.
- ✦ The lowest proportion of outstanding provision was once again in the primary phase. This year there was a one percentage point fall in the proportion of primary schools judged outstanding compared with 2009/10. The proportion of provision judged no better than satisfactory for this phase remained similar to last year.
- ✦ The performance of secondary schools is more polarised than that of primary schools, with both a higher proportion of outstanding provision and a higher proportion of inadequate provision.
- ✦ Secondary schools are still more likely to be judged inadequate than any other type of school. However, the proportion of inadequate secondary schools fell from 11% last year to 8% this year.
- ✦ Only 2% of sixth forms are judged inadequate, but a large proportion of provision is only satisfactory.
- ✦ Special schools and pupil referral units performed well overall, with 76% and 65%, respectively, being judged good and outstanding, although in both sectors the proportion of outstanding provision dropped sharply in comparison with last year – by seven and six percentage points, respectively. This is likely to be influenced by the fact that 2010/11 was the first year in which risk assessments were carried out for special schools and pupil referral units and previously outstanding providers were selected on the basis of risk.

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**85.** As part of each inspection, parents are asked to inform the inspection team of their views about the school. They can inform inspectors through a variety of methods, including the use of a confidential parents' and carers' questionnaire. Inspectors take these comments and responses into account as they carry out the inspection. In 2010/11 Ofsted received responses from parents or carers of over one-quarter of the pupils in the schools inspected.

**Figure 22** Parents' responses to the statement 'Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school' (percentage of parents responding)



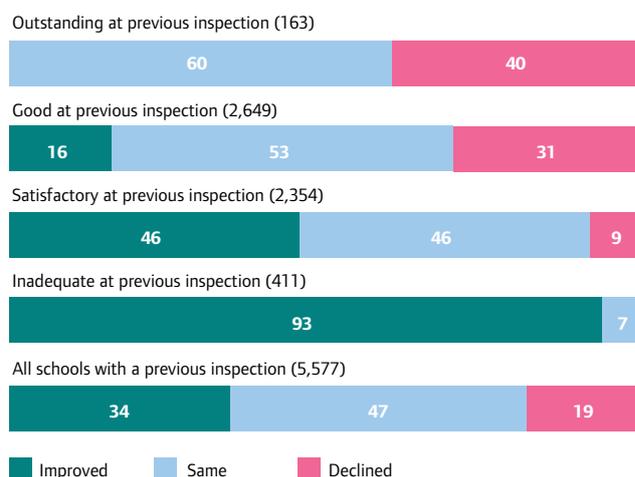
Based on proportion of parental questionnaire returns (315,182).

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

**86.** Overall, parents remain very positive about the quality of education that their child receives. An analysis of 315,182 parental questionnaires returned from 3,679 inspections shows that 94% of the parents who responded were positive overall about their child's schooling. These results are consistent with the previous year, when 93% expressed a positive opinion overall. The lowest proportion of strongly positive comments came in response to the question, 'The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns', but even here 85% of parents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

**87.** Through the questionnaires parents are also asked how able they feel to support their child's learning. Although parents who respond are generally very positive about this, 8% of parents disagreed with the statement 'The school helps me to support my child's learning'. However, parents' dissatisfaction with other aspects of the same schools, such as behaviour, tended also to be high and many of the schools with these issues were found to be inadequate overall at their inspection.

**Figure 23** Change in overall effectiveness of schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 compared with their previous inspection (percentage of schools)



This figure includes the 5,577 schools with a previous section 5 inspection judgement.

Schools that were previously outstanding and inspected this year include nursery schools, which are subject to routine inspection; primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units that have been selected on the basis of risk; and schools selected because of a change in their fundamental nature.

Data exclude 10 academy converters.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

**88.** Figure 23 compares schools' overall effectiveness this year with their previous inspection. Overall around a third of schools inspected this year had improved since their previous inspection, under half had maintained their performance and just under one fifth had declined. This represents slightly better performance than last year when 29% of schools improved and 23% declined.

**89.** Nearly a third of those previously good or outstanding schools inspected were unable to sustain their performance. This figure reflects Ofsted's policy of selecting good and outstanding schools in which performance is less secure for inspection on the basis of risk assessment.

**90.** Of the 40% of outstanding schools which had declined since their previous inspection, the large majority are now judged to be good. However, 11 schools declined to satisfactory and three were judged inadequate. In the three schools that declined to inadequate, pupils' achievement had fallen substantially, the quality of teaching was no better than satisfactory and inspectors identified major weaknesses in both governance and safeguarding procedures. In 59% of the schools which declined this year from outstanding to good or satisfactory, standards of attainment had also declined. The majority had experienced a significant change in terms of senior leadership, the stability of their staffing, or the profile of their pupils. As a result, priority had been given to stabilising management or teaching, so that the drive for continuous high quality had faltered. In most cases inspectors made recommendations to refocus energies on key processes such as monitoring and evaluation, or ensuring the consistency of assessment in order to improve teaching. This underlines the fact that a previous track record of success is no guarantee that schools will continue to flourish. For all outstanding schools the challenge is to sustain their high levels of performance.

**91.** In a sector with a generally high level of performance and stability, 12 nursery schools declined from outstanding to good at this year's inspection. In many cases, this coincided with additional pressures on the senior leaders such as building works, sharing in the leadership of another centre or uncertainties over the school's future. Governing bodies sometimes failed to recognise the impact of such pressures on the normal delivery of high-quality practice, and a lack of rigour in school monitoring and self-evaluation then allowed decline to set in – for example when the extent of lesson observation fell so that a decline in the quality of teaching was not noticed. In these schools, senior leaders tended to be having only a limited impact on teaching so that weaknesses in planning and assessment were beginning to emerge. In some cases these weaknesses were leading to less effective development of pupils' language and communication skills.

**92.** This year the quality of a small but notable number of successful special schools also declined, including 10 which declined from outstanding and 35 from good. Most of these schools declined to good or satisfactory, but six were judged inadequate. The schools which declined from outstanding were varied in nature, including some serving pupils with severe and multiple learning difficulties and others where pupils had behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. In approximately a third of these schools there had been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection and in many cases a lack of precision about the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle leaders was also a factor contributing to the deterioration in quality. Several of these schools were not well enough informed about the quality of teaching and did not address emerging weaknesses with anything like enough urgency. Most commonly, the governing body knew too little about the school because monitoring was not rigorous or because overgenerous self-review judgements were accepted without sufficient challenge; at times of change and in an inherently challenging sector, they accepted too much on trust.

**93.** The challenge for all schools is to either improve their performance or maintain it at a high level over a sustained period of time. It is therefore encouraging that the proportion of satisfactory and inadequate schools that have improved is slightly higher, in both cases, than last year. Not only have more inadequate schools improved, but they have done so faster than last year; the average time taken for schools to be removed from special measures was 18 months this year compared with 20 months last year. This corresponds to a substantial increase in the proportion of schools coming out of special measures after two Ofsted monitoring inspections and a substantial decrease in the proportion of schools coming out of special measures in four or more monitoring inspections.

**94.** Nonetheless, it remains a serious concern that over half the schools previously judged satisfactory and inspected this year remain stuck at satisfactory or have declined. This represents over 1,250 schools. In just over three quarters of these schools their capacity to improve is also judged no better than satisfactory.

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**95.** Under the inspection arrangements introduced in 2009, Ofsted carries out monitoring of satisfactory schools which provides critical evidence of what these schools need to do to improve. Schools may receive a monitoring visit if the capacity to improve judgement at their previous inspection was only satisfactory, if an element of their provision was judged inadequate, or if pupils' standards or progress are significantly below average. There were 770 schools previously judged to be satisfactory which received a monitoring visit this year to evaluate their progress in making improvements and demonstrating a better capacity to improve.

**96.** Last year's Annual Report found that the progress being made by satisfactory schools that had received a monitoring visit was too slow. This year the picture is slightly better, but not good enough overall: in 40% of these visits schools' progress was judged to be good compared with less than a third of schools visited last year. However, only five schools were making outstanding progress and in 64 schools, just over 8%, progress was judged to be inadequate. Therefore, although the picture is better this year, there still remains considerable scope for improvement, as teaching is not being improved sufficiently to drive pupils' progress.

**97.** In schools where progress was judged good, there had been a substantial shift in the rate of pupils' progress. This was typically due to improved teaching. Teachers were expecting more from the pupils; they were engaging more effectively with them and greater attention was being given to carefully assessing and then meeting their learning needs.

**98.** The leadership of the headteacher and the senior management team was also crucial in securing improved outcomes for pupils at schools that had been stuck at satisfactory. In previously stuck schools making good progress there had been a transformation in their approach to professional development and their drive for consistency, especially in teaching. These schools had created an environment where key leaders focused relentlessly on improving the consistency and quality of teaching and ensured that staff learnt continually from the influence of the best practice in and beyond the school. There was a clear understanding among staff that the senior leaders saw teaching, and its impact on learning, as the major business of the school.

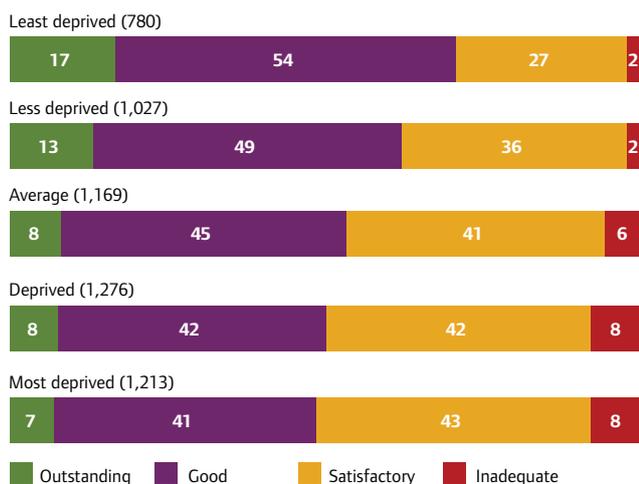
**99.** In the schools where progress was only satisfactory, while there may have been some improvements in pupils' achievement, these were not found consistently across the school. Some attention had been given to improving the quality of teaching and some teachers had benefited greatly from these approaches. In other cases, the efforts to improve teaching had not brought about the desired results. This was often due to schools not being sufficiently clear about what needed to be improved and trying to make too many changes without the necessary consideration and prioritisation.

**100.** In the schools judged to be inadequate in making improvements, there remained significant difficulties in improving standards. In primary and secondary schools the efforts of senior managers to improve the quality of teaching were taking too long to have a positive impact. Frequently these schools had an insecure understanding of what constituted effective teaching and this created difficulties when monitoring was undertaken by senior staff. In addition, weaknesses which are common in many schools making satisfactory progress, such as in assessing pupils' progress and planning carefully for individual needs, were more significant and more deeply rooted in schools in which progress was inadequate. These problems were sometimes exacerbated by local factors such as the absence of the headteacher or an inability to appoint enough highly skilled and experienced staff.

Last year's Annual Report found that the progress being made by satisfactory schools that had received a monitoring visit was too slow. This year the picture is slightly better, but not good enough overall.

## The relationship between deprivation and the quality of schools

**Figure 24** Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 by deprivation (percentage of schools)



This chart is based on the deprivation of pupils on the school roll in January 2011 as measured by the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) 2010. The chart groups schools by quintiles of deprivation. 'Most deprived' indicates the 20% of schools with the most deprived pupils.

Nurseries, pupil referral units and hospital schools are excluded from this analysis because the IDACI measure is not available for these schools.

Figures are rounded and may not add exactly to 100.

**101.** Deprivation continues to be a significant factor influencing the quality of schools. Figure 24 shows that the proportion of schools judged good or outstanding declines steeply as the proportion of deprived pupils at the school increases. A school serving the most deprived pupils in the country is four times more likely to be inadequate than a school serving the least deprived. At the other end of the spectrum 17% of the schools serving the least deprived pupils were outstanding compared with 7% of schools serving the most deprived communities. This variation in performance continues to have a significant impact on the life chances of many pupils, reinforcing inequality and reducing social mobility. Addressing this is one of the key challenges for the education system.

**102.** However, the 7% of schools serving the most deprived pupils that were judged outstanding demonstrate that it is clearly possible to buck the trend. Almost all of these outstanding schools serving deprived communities were from urban areas and over a third were located in the London area.

**103.** A complex range of factors contributes to the difference in the quality of schools according to deprivation. However, Ofsted inspection and survey evidence has consistently shown that sustained and committed ambition on the part of school leaders and governors, with high levels of expectation for pupils irrespective of low prior attainment and a determination to deliver good teaching for all, are critical factors in breaking down barriers to achievement. These schools achieve very high levels of consistency in teaching and learning, and have excellent professional development in place for their staff. Where senior leaders lack this commitment and ambition, or have limited capacity to drive up standards, schools serving deprived pupils struggle to make sustained progress.

## The quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage

**104.** Schools which have children below the age of five currently receive a separate overall effectiveness judgement for their provision of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This judgement contributes to the grade awarded for the overall effectiveness of the school. Provision for the early years was judged to be good or outstanding in 75% of primary schools inspected and in 92% of nursery schools.

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**105.** Despite these particularly strong outcomes there was a substantial difference in the percentage of different types of school being judged as outstanding for the Early Years Foundation Stage. In nursery schools, which form a relatively small and specialist sector and are not subject to risk assessment, 47% of foundation stage provision was judged to be outstanding compared with 9% in primary schools. The quality of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage in nursery schools was considerably better than that found in primary schools. Where leaders have been most effective in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they have focused on developing a common approach to promoting children’s early learning and development that has been articulated clearly and implemented consistently throughout the school. This tends to lead to more effective teaching and results in better rates of progress by the children.

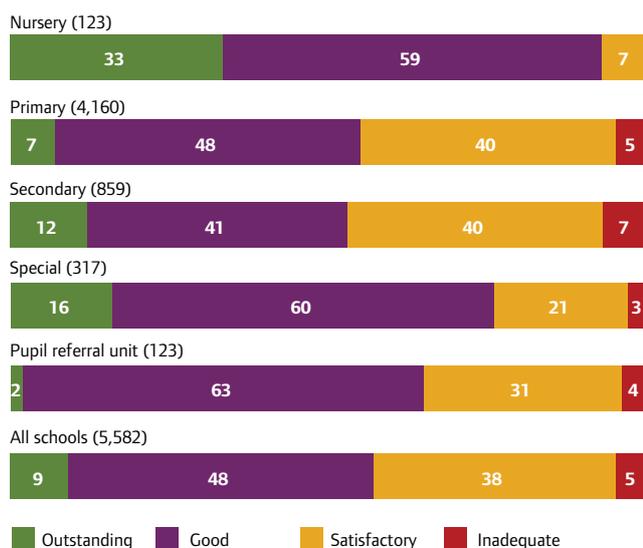
**106.** Inspectors make judgements about pupils’ achievement by combining their evaluation of the progress made by pupils with an assessment of their standards of attainment. This is a key judgement and in most schools it correlates with the judgement made about the overall effectiveness of the school. While inspectors’ judgements on pupils’ attainment form an important part of the overall judgement on achievement, the rates of progress that pupils make from their starting points are often more significant and reflect the impact of what the school does. Attainment judgements are based on how well pupils perform in national tests and examinations over a three-year period as well as the attainment levels observed by inspectors in lessons and in their scrutiny of the pupils’ work. The historical data are considered alongside what the school is currently achieving for its pupils. Progress is also looked at over time so that inspectors can consider the school’s track record as well as the progress achieved for the pupils currently being educated by the school.

**107.** A judgement that pupils’ progress is good will often lead to a similar judgement about achievement, even where standards of attainment are below average or low. In these cases the schools are making a significant difference for their pupils and good and improving rates of progress are reflected in an improving trend in attainment, with ambitious and convincing improvement targets for the future. Of the schools inspected this year, 57% were judged to be good or outstanding for pupils’ achievement, a similar figure to last year. However, in too many schools the attainment and the progress of pupils are not good enough.

**108.** The close correlation between the judgement made for pupils’ achievement and that for the overall effectiveness of the school identified in the 2009/10 Annual Report has continued this year. In over 94% of inspections the same judgements were made for both aspects of a school’s performance. However, the correlation between the grades awarded for pupils’ attainment and schools’ overall effectiveness continues to be much less strong. The same judgement was made for attainment and overall effectiveness in just 56% of schools. In comparison, in 38% of schools the judgement for overall effectiveness was higher than that for attainment. In the large majority of these schools both pupils’ progress and their achievement were good or outstanding.

## Pupils’ achievement

**Figure 25** Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

**109.** In 130 schools inspected this year attainment was judged to be above average or high, but overall effectiveness was judged to be either satisfactory or inadequate and pupils' progress was not good enough. The key factor in many of these schools was that there was a level of complacency about the standards attained by pupils, who were not achieving their potential. Their above-average attainment did not reflect good enough progress and many pupils were consequently not achieving the higher standards of which they were capable.

**110.** In June 2011 the government announced its intention to set more challenging 'floor standards' or minimum performance expectations for schools. In 2010/11 the expected floor standard for secondary schools was 35% of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics. This floor standard is rising to 40% in 2011/12 and then to 50% in 2015. The government has also introduced a progress measure so that schools will be considered to have not met the floor standard if a lower proportion of pupils than the national average make the expected amount of progress in mathematics and English from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4, and the school is performing below the minimum expectations of attainment.

**111.** Of the 894 secondary schools inspected this year, 96 fell below the 35% floor standard. The new floor standards set for 2011/12 and 2015 will present a challenge and a further impetus for improvement for many secondary schools. For example, 38% of the sample of secondary schools inspected this year were performing below the 2015 floor standard, in the context of a proportionate approach to inspection in which weaker schools were selected for inspection.

**112.** The large majority of secondary schools inspected this year and not achieving the 40% floor standard are judged to be no better than satisfactory, and nearly a quarter of these are inadequate. These schools need to make significant improvements and accelerate their rate of progress. However, a very small minority of schools which fell below the 40% floor standard were judged to be good or outstanding. Most of these schools were on a rapidly improving trajectory in terms of both pupils' attainment and progress, in many cases as a result of strengthened leadership or governance arrangements, or structural changes such as federation. In these rapidly improving schools evidence from lesson observations and the school's own data indicated that pupils were beginning to make more rapid progress from previously low starting points. Four of these schools were academies that had just received their first full inspection and one had recently emerged from special measures.

**113.** Inspectors draw on a wide range of evidence when evaluating the achievement of pupils and consider whether all are making the best progress possible. This includes identifying whether there is significant variation in the progress made by different groups of pupils, for example: pupils with special educational needs; those from minority ethnic backgrounds; boys and girls; gifted and talented pupils; pupils from low income backgrounds; or pupils speaking English as an additional language. Overall, the quality of pupils' learning and their progress were judged to be good or outstanding in 58% of schools inspected this year.

**114.** There continues to be much discussion about how schools can help to 'close the gaps' by ensuring that pupils with low prior attainment make accelerated progress. Secondary schools which receive pupils with low prior attainment who then make very rapid progress have a number of common characteristics.

The close correlation between the judgement made for pupils' achievement and that for the overall effectiveness of the school identified in the 2009/10 Annual Report has continued this year.

## Maintained schools

**Secondary schools that wish to 'close the gaps' by ensuring accelerated progress for all need to consider:**

- ✦ senior leadership that is ambitious, relentless and openly articulates a philosophy of excellence for all pupils irrespective of their starting points
- ✦ middle leaders who fully sign up to the vision of their leaders and who transmit this to all colleagues and ensure that it is reflected in the quality of teaching
- ✦ a governing body that knows the school well and continues to challenge the senior leaders to improve
- ✦ systems for monitoring and evaluation that identify any emerging areas of underperformance so that they can be tackled, and that also link seamlessly into high-profile staff development programmes
- ✦ the involvement of groups of staff in planning and taking responsibility for improvements
- ✦ sophisticated systems to ensure that the issues facing every pupil are known, tailor-made support is provided and failure is never seen as an option
- ✦ a high-profile approach to promoting better attendance and setting high standards of behaviour, consistently followed by all staff at the school
- ✦ investment in developing partnerships with parents that enhance parents' ability to support their children's learning
- ✦ a challenging but flexible curriculum, which provides stimulating and relevant learning and genuine and worthwhile choices in learning pathways; in many schools, the specialisms add a distinctive extra flavour to the options available
- ✦ a sharp focus in the younger year groups, in particular on basic skills, especially literacy, with targeted intervention for those students with low levels of attainment in reading and writing
- ✦ a rich diet of extra-curricula activities to engage students' wider interests

- ✦ teaching that is of consistently high quality because of teachers' own enthusiasm, deep subject knowledge, ability to use effective learning activities and adroit use of assessment techniques to ensure constant challenge for all students
- ✦ well-planned transition and induction arrangements for students with effective partnerships underpinning students' transition into further education, training and employment.

**115.** A specific judgement is also made for the quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress. This forms an important aspect of inspectors' overall judgement on achievement, and was judged good or outstanding in 63% of schools inspected this year. This is a slight fall compared with last year, when 65% of schools were good or outstanding.

**116.** Despite the fact that in the majority of schools inspected this year progress made by pupils with special educational needs was judged to be good or outstanding, inspections revealed substantial variations in how well schools supported pupils with special educational needs. In those schools which were least effective teachers lacked clarity about why pupils were underachieving and, although interventions and 'catch up' were used effectively in Year 6, day-to-day provision and intervention in other years were not good enough and as a result pupils were making insufficient progress. In these schools poor achievement was related to teachers' low expectations of what pupils could do, weak ongoing assessment of their progress and, in some, a lack of differentiation in teaching. These weaknesses mirror some of the concerns set out in Ofsted's *Special educational needs and disability review* published last year.<sup>17</sup>

17. *The special educational needs and disability review* (090221), Ofsted, 2010.

**117.** In contrast, in the most effective schools teachers had high expectations of what all pupils, including those with special educational needs, could do and achieve. Specifically, teachers understood what ‘high expectations’ should look like for pupils progressing from different starting points. Careful assessment and tracking of pupils’ progress meant that schools could respond quickly with targeted interventions if there was any indication of underachievement. These schools tended to have strong links with parents and carers about learning as well as pastoral issues. In outstanding secondary schools, in particular, the curriculum had been effectively designed and developed to match the needs of pupils and, where an alternative curriculum was in place, this was rigorously quality assured to ensure effectiveness.

**118.** Although teaching has been judged to be inadequate this year in just 3% of schools, it is a serious concern that teaching in over 40% of primary and secondary schools is no better than satisfactory and is only outstanding in around 4%. The quality of teaching is a key focus of the inspection framework, and these figures show little improvement on the outcomes from inspections last year. Ofsted inspections and surveys provide a clear insight into what constitutes good or outstanding teaching and, conversely, the key weaknesses that contribute to teaching which is no better than satisfactory or inadequate. These characteristics differ very little between different types of school.

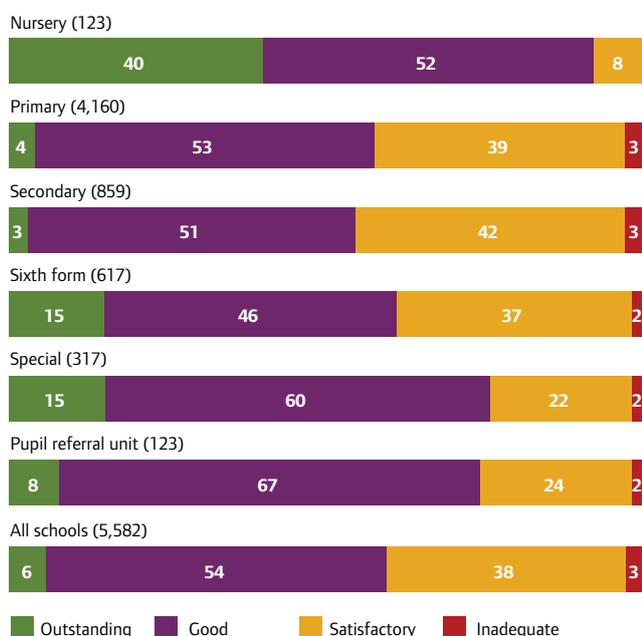
**119.** The following paragraphs focus on three different dimensions of outstanding teaching. The first dimension explored in this section is the effectiveness with which lessons are planned, structured and executed, and how this process is informed by high expectations. The second is the quality of interaction and dialogue that takes place in the lesson. The final dimension examined here is how teachers make very good use of assessment to understand pupils’ learning needs and starting points, to make adjustments to teaching and learning during lessons and over time, and provide ongoing feedback to pupils to guide them in the next steps in their learning.

**120.** Good-quality teaching depends on effectively planned lessons, the right mix of activities chosen to sustain pupils’ concentration and develop their understanding and the way in which lesson planning and execution are consistently informed by high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. In schools where teaching is outstanding:

- ✦ teachers have high expectations of all pupils’ learning and seek to ensure that the strengths and needs of pupils of all abilities are given appropriate support and challenge
- ✦ the pace of learning is well-judged and there is no wasted time in lessons
- ✦ the sequence of lessons and activities is well planned, and teachers use a good range of resources to ensure secure progress in learning and acquisition of the skills required for mastery of the subject

## The quality of teaching

**Figure 26** The quality of teaching in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



There is no individual judgement on the quality of teaching in sixth forms. This chart shows the judgements on the quality of provision in the sixth form for which the evaluation of teaching is a key element.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Maintained schools

- ✧ lessons are interesting, may deal with contemporary issues and developments of relevance to the pupils, and include a range of activities, including practical sessions and out-of-classroom activities, which help to motivate pupils and maximise learning
- ✧ imaginative and effective use is made of the internet, interactive whiteboards and other technical resources to bring variety to lessons and to gain access to a wealth of resources.

**121.** In contrast, where teaching is no better than satisfactory, planning tends to be too focused on covering content during lessons rather than being clear what the pupils should learn and how the lesson fits into a sequence of work. Activities tend to be insufficiently challenging, are not well matched to the needs of the pupils and often based on procedural and descriptive work. The level of challenge for more able pupils is a particular issue. Lessons and learning are not well-paced, with time lost on unproductive activities such as copying out the objectives for the lesson, completing exercises without sufficient reason, or simply spending too long on one activity. Pupils' work often shows that, although there are episodes of effective learning, there is an emphasis on low-level tasks which do not develop their knowledge and understanding systematically.

**122.** Where teaching is least successful, the tasks set occupy pupils rather than engage and challenge them and develop understanding. This is particularly the case in some schools where there is an over-use of worksheets and an over-reliance on a narrow range of textbooks. There are times when it is difficult to assess, from watching and listening to them, what the pupils really know and understand because the teaching does not give them an opportunity to show it.

**123.** The next key characteristic which distinguishes effective from poor teaching is the quality of dialogue and interaction that takes place in the classroom. Where teaching is outstanding:

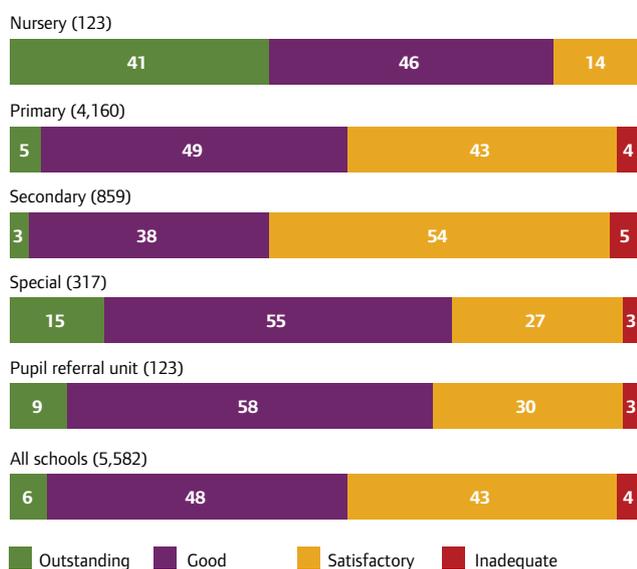
- ✧ based on good subject knowledge, teachers explain things clearly, anticipate pupils' misconceptions, select their teaching strategies judiciously, and target the use of high-quality questioning so that all pupils are involved and understanding is developed

- ✧ there is a creative and appropriate balance between teacher-directed learning, which sets the framework in which the learning takes place, and independent learning, which allows pupils to explore questions and solve problems in more depth
- ✧ where appropriate, there are good opportunities for pupils to make choices, ask questions, find answers, collaborate, listen, discuss, and debate and present their work to their peers so that others can comment. This adds depth to pupils' understanding and develops confidence and communication skills
- ✧ the interaction between the teacher and the pupils is positive but challenging and relationships are well managed: teachers take care to build up pupils' confidence and encourage them to take on new challenges in their learning
- ✧ support staff, where available, are well directed, have clear roles and provide good support for individuals and groups, which deepens their understanding.

**124.** Lively interaction tends to be lacking where teaching is no better than satisfactory. In these lessons pupils listen to the teacher for too long, and there is not enough emphasis on getting pupils to speak and participate meaningfully. Too often teachers' weak subject knowledge is reflected in explanations and responses to pupils that add little to their understanding. There are not enough opportunities for enquiry through research, discussion, collaboration and allowing pupils to use their initiative. In the weaker lessons observed, a tendency to ask closed questions means that pupils give simply factual low-level responses. In these cases the teachers themselves elaborate on a pupil's initial response rather than probing them to explore the ideas more deeply, and debate or share views. Teachers' questions can often be focused on low-level cognitive activity and not sufficiently on extending or reinforcing pupils' understanding.

**125.** The final element of good or outstanding teaching is the quality of assessment and the way in which teachers use assessment to differentiate their teaching to the needs of the individual pupils in their lessons. Assessment that clearly identifies pupils' starting points and understanding, checks progress, establishes what has been learnt and can inform the next steps in learning is at the core of good and outstanding teaching. Effective assessment within lessons enables pupils to demonstrate their understanding and ensures that teachers can adapt their teaching 'in real time' to the needs of the pupils. Where assessment is good pupils receive clear feedback and understand what they need to do to improve. Assessment has long been reported by Ofsted as one of the weakest elements of teaching and this remains the case in inspections conducted this year.

**Figure 27** The use of assessment to support learning in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

**126.** As Figure 27 shows, assessment was judged to be good or outstanding in just 54% of schools inspected this year, which is similar to last year. There is a very strong link to the judgement for teaching, and the highly effective use of assessment by teachers is at the heart of the best teaching observed by inspectors. Where it is used well, teachers:

- ✦ monitor pupils' progress carefully during lessons and regular assessment, which may include peer- and self-assessment, enables pupils to know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve
- ✦ make very effective use of activities to bring the whole class together to test learning, monitor progress and redirect the lesson if necessary
- ✦ have the ability to adjust the direction or pace of learning within a lesson and for particular individuals, based on the feedback they have received from pupils about the lesson, together with an accurate assessment of their learning.

**127.** However, this is too rarely the case. In schools where assessment, and consequently often the quality of teaching overall, is only satisfactory, there is poor monitoring of progress during lessons, including teachers' readiness to assume that because one pupil has answered a question successfully, the rest of the class is ready to move on. In addition, assessment is insufficiently focused on subject-specific objectives, especially in relation to progression in skills and understanding. In some cases, particularly in the primary sector, teachers' own weaknesses in subject knowledge mean that they are not able to assess pupils' progress accurately. At secondary level, poor assessment is often compounded by the imprecise marking of written work, lacking subject-specific comments to help pupils to improve. Where assessment is not effective, it directly affects the quality of teaching. A weak understanding of pupils' different levels of progress means that work is generally pitched only towards the average level of the class.

**128.** Ofsted's survey of excellence in English provides an insight into how schools can struggle with using assessment effectively to structure learning.<sup>18</sup> The survey notes that differentiation is a challenging but essential task for teachers. It points out that some teachers struggle to ensure that individual lessons and schemes of work meet the very different needs and interests of all pupils, with continuous assessment in the classroom leading to adjustments in teaching so that all pupils make progress. The most common practice noted in inspections of English, particularly in secondary schools, is that teachers identify the

18. *Excellence in English – what we can learn from 12 outstanding schools* (100229), Ofsted, 2011.

## Maintained schools

progress to be made by different ability groups of pupils at the planning stage but then do nothing different for these groups and simply rely on students to make the expected progress, based on their prior attainment.

**129.** Some distinctive features set apart good-quality teaching in the early years and for older students in sixth forms. The highest proportion of outstanding teaching observed this year is in nursery schools, where it is judged to be outstanding in 40% of schools. The high quality of teaching in nursery schools has been identified in previous Annual Reports. Key strengths continue to be based on well-informed and planned questioning, and imaginative approaches to learning that capture the interest and enthusiasm of pupils. In recent years, significant improvements have been made to outside environments. Outstanding teaching often capitalises on these improvements in an imaginative and exciting way and takes every opportunity to maximise learning, both inside and outside the classroom.

**130.** Importantly, in the most successful nursery schools, teachers and teaching assistants provide a supportive environment for parents and carers to meet and discuss particular issues at the beginning and end of each day. Furthermore, the approaches to learning adopted by the staff and the way they communicate with the children can provide a helpful model for some parents and carers; they regularly report to inspectors that they have learned a great deal about how to help their children develop from just watching the adults in the classroom.

**131.** A key requirement of education is to teach pupils to read. The success of the 12 schools featured in the report *Reading by six – how the best schools do it* was based on their determination that every child would learn to read.<sup>19</sup> High-quality provision for speaking and listening underpinned reading and writing, especially in the early years. The schools had a very rigorous, systematic approach to teaching phonic knowledge and skills. This laid the foundations for successful reading, writing and spelling. The approach was applied with a high degree of consistency and was sustained. Pupils were given opportunities to apply what they were learning to their reading and writing and practised their decoding skills by reading aloud to adults.

**132.** At the other end of the age range, in 15% of school sixth forms teaching is outstanding and in 46% it is good.<sup>20</sup> However, this general picture does not describe the considerable difference in quality that can be found across subjects and courses in single institutions. When teaching is outstanding, it is often characterised by teachers sharing a genuine love of and interest in their subject. Students respond positively because they feel that there is much that they can gain from listening to and engaging with their teacher. The tasks set by teachers flow smoothly from the introductory stage of the lesson and build up knowledge and understanding sufficiently to ensure that students are confident of the subject matter when homework is set. Such lessons do not always have a rigid structure, which instead is tailored to the material being taught and kept interesting for the students.

**133.** Weaker teaching in school sixth forms is too often based on the teacher talking for too long and not checking students' understanding regularly. Insufficient attention is given to the balance and appropriateness of activities and tasks expected of students during lessons. This approach does not support students' specific learning needs and can result in some wanting to work hard but not being sufficiently advanced in some core skills to succeed.

**134.** The variability of the quality of teaching within schools, as well as between schools, remains a persistent issue. Lesson observations carried out by inspectors this year, for example, demonstrate the considerable variability in the quality of teaching between year groups. Inspectors do not observe a random sample of lessons, and therefore these findings may not be representative of all teaching nationally. Nonetheless, it is particularly striking that in primary schools the greatest proportion of good and outstanding teaching was observed in the Nursery and Reception years, and in Years 2, 5 and 6, indicating a tendency for schools to focus strongly on positioning the best teaching at the end of each key stage. This approach runs the risk that progress can dip in the intervening years, with too much satisfactory or inadequate teaching in Years 1, 3 and 4 in particular. In secondary schools, the best teaching in lessons was seen in Years 11, 12 and 13 with the weakest in Years 8 and 9. This is clearly illustrated in Figure 28.

19. *Reading by six – how the best schools do it* (100197), Ofsted, 2010.

20. There is no individual judgement on the quality of teaching in sixth forms. Data are based on judgements on the quality of provision for which the evaluation of teaching is a key element.

**Figure 28** Quality of teaching in lesson observations by year group, between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Data are based on primary (53,978) and secondary (26,678) schools lesson observations.

Based on 4,155 primary and 871 secondary school inspections.

Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

**135.** Achieving consistently outstanding or good-quality teaching across year groups and across subjects remains a challenge for schools. Getting this right requires the attention and focus of the whole school. Senior leaders and managers play a central role in creating this environment. The most successful demonstrate a genuine interest in the work of pupils and teachers and promote professional dialogue that is focused fully on pupils' learning and progress. They encourage teaching staff to consider different teaching approaches that extend the repertoire of teaching techniques that can be deployed effectively. Classroom observation and discussion of practice are seen as important elements of professional development. In some of these successful schools staff observe each other's lessons, which are planned together and sometimes taught together. Meetings focus on pedagogy rather than administration. In one outstanding school, for example, the headteacher spoke of the:

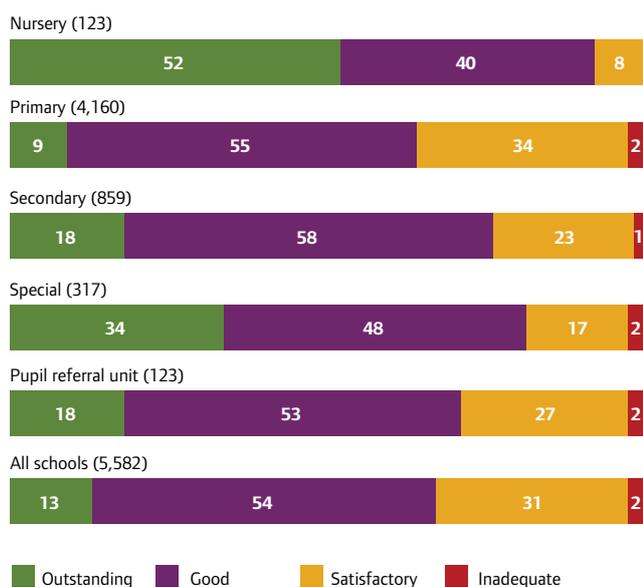
'...relentless focus on the quality of teaching and learning and how to raise standards further. All action plans and meetings are tightly focused on this agenda, resulting in meetings and discussions being characterised by high-quality teacher talk. Dialogue is focused on pedagogic practice. Peripheral issues are sidelined.'

Achieving consistently outstanding or good-quality teaching across year groups and across subjects remains a challenge for schools. Getting this right requires the attention and focus of the whole school.

## Maintained schools

## Curriculum

**Figure 29** The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships, in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

**136.** In just over two thirds of schools inspected this year, the curriculum is good or outstanding at meeting the needs of pupils. The impact of an effective, flexible and relevant curriculum in schools can be seen in improving attainment and progress made by pupils, supporting good standards of behaviour, attendance and punctuality and developing pupils' willingness to work hard and persevere. In the 13% of schools where the curriculum was judged to be outstanding there was a clear drive for improvement with headteachers and staff articulating their ambition that the curriculum should flexibly respond to the needs of all pupils. The same judgement was made for the quality of teaching and the quality of the curriculum in 75% of schools inspected this year.

**137.** Ofsted published a number of detailed triennial subject surveys in 2010/11. These highlight common features of effective and less effective provision in both primary and secondary schools in science, modern foreign languages, history, geography, and design and technology. They consider the challenges in ensuring sufficient curriculum time for all these subjects, especially in secondary schools, to allow all pupils access to a range of opportunities. Ofsted also published a survey of good practice in English which focused in detail on a smaller number of schools. The following section identifies some key messages from a selection of these surveys.

## English

In the 12 schools visited for the Excellence in English survey each school had identified what was needed to engage their own pupils, constructed a distinctive and original curriculum that met their needs, and then worked hard to keep the curriculum fresh as pupils' needs changed.<sup>21</sup>

All the schools stressed the need to engage and motivate pupils. This did not mean that the curriculum in these schools was 'dumbed-down' to keep pupils interested. They successfully engaged all their pupils without losing rigour and challenge. This meant that the schools were highly successful at developing the knowledge, skills and understanding in English that pupils need. They achieved this in different ways.

In one school a central principle of the English curriculum was that all pupils should experience classic texts from the literary tradition, even though many of the pupils had severe special needs. Another school emphasised visual literacy, which is the ability to 'read' and derive meaning from pictures and images, and independent learning as ways of meeting the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language. In a third school staff had come to understand the significant role that speaking and listening could play in 'giving pupils a voice', thereby developing their confidence and raising their aspirations.

21. *Excellence in English – what we can learn from 12 outstanding schools* (100229), Ofsted, 2011.

## Science

Ofsted's three-year evaluation of science education has identified a number of changing trends in how the science curriculum is structured in schools.<sup>22</sup> In the very large majority of the primary schools visited, science was taught regularly each week. This regular exposure to, and consideration of, phenomena through scientific enquiry was important in building pupils' skills and confidence. Where the curriculum was outstanding the activities that were planned supported pupils' progress in their knowledge and understanding of science, and allowed them to develop their science skills in increasingly demanding situations. This concern for progression was not so evident in the less effective schools, and pupils had fewer opportunities to plan and carry out investigative activities.

An increasing number of secondary schools have adopted a two-year Key Stage 3. An important benefit of this is that it provides an extended period of time, up to three years, to teach GCSE sciences in a more enriched way. Schools making the most of this opportunity were able to ensure greater engagement and relevance to pupils. They planned to ensure that the pupils experienced 'how science works'.

Over the last three years there has also been a dramatic increase in the proportion of students studying triple science at GCSE. In many cases, particularly where students studying triple science were allocated time for three subjects in the curriculum, inspectors found this was leading to higher levels of interest and motivation. Double award science can equip pupils with the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to study science at A level. However, data from the Department for Education and qualitative evidence from inspection visits suggest that students who study three separate sciences are much more likely to choose to study science at A level and beyond.

## Modern languages

Ofsted's recent report on modern languages looked at the provision for modern languages in schools over the last three years.<sup>23</sup> The survey found that take-up in Key Stage 4 was much improved in the schools visited when pupils had enjoyed purposeful experiences in Key Stage 3. These included being able to say what they wanted to say and opportunities to talk to or work with native speakers. However, too often, the teaching was not inspiring and did not bring the language to life for pupils. The key barriers observed to further improvement in Key Stages 3 and 4 were teachers' lack of use of the language being taught to support their pupils' routine use of the language in lessons and providing opportunities for them to talk spontaneously and to develop their reading.

At primary level, characteristics of an outstanding modern language curriculum included all Key Stage 2 pupils learning a language; a clear focus on one main language (or even two) but frequent, planned, references to other languages, especially to those used by the schools' pupils; and integration of languages with other subjects. The most successful schools ensured that pupils received discrete language teaching once each week and short daily integrated sessions of language learning. These schools planned for progressive skills development focused on listening and speaking, with reading and writing underpinning these skills. They also provided opportunities for pupils who spoke other languages to demonstrate and/or teach these to other children.

22. *Successful science* (100034), Ofsted, 2011.

23. *Modern languages, achievement and challenge 2007–10* (100042), Ofsted, 2011.

## Maintained schools

**History**

Ofsted's recent survey of history teaching in primary and secondary schools found that most pupils reached the end of Key Stage 2 with detailed knowledge derived from well-taught studies of individual topics.<sup>24</sup> However, some pupils found it difficult to place the historical episodes they had studied within any coherent, long-term narrative. They knew about particular events, characters and periods but did not have an overview. The survey identified a pressing need for the curriculum in primary schools to ensure that pupils study an overview as well as in-depth topics, so that they can develop a coherent chronological framework for the separate periods and events that they study.

In the secondary schools visited, effective teaching helped students to develop their ability to support, evaluate and challenge their own views and to challenge the views of others. In these ways the teaching of history is helping pupils to develop important and broadly applicable skills. However, decisions about curriculum structures within schools have placed constraints on history and other foundation subjects at Key Stage 3. In 14 of the 58 secondary schools visited between 2008 and 2010, whole-school curriculum changes were reducing the curriculum time for history teaching. Furthermore, although history has been one of the most popular optional GCSE and A level subjects, in some of the schools visited the students had been steered towards subjects at GCSE which were perceived to be less demanding than history.

**Geography**

In the primary schools visited for Ofsted's recent survey most of the teachers surveyed were not sufficiently secure about geography to be able to interpret effectively an outline curriculum, and to ensure that high-quality experiences for learning geography were interwoven into the topics they were teaching.<sup>25</sup> As a result, many of the teaching units did not provide a clear and sequential structure that would enable pupils to develop and improve their geographical knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, in many primary schools the focus on a curriculum that integrated subjects through topic-based work did not generally promote good progress in pupils' geographical learning. Often geography was peripheral within a topic, or there was too great a focus on skills, rather than on knowledge and understanding.

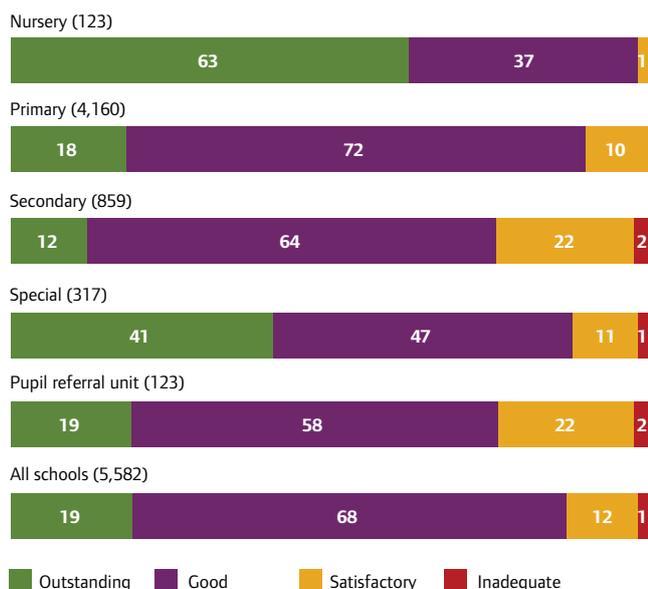
At secondary level the most successful schools had thought carefully about creating a more relevant curriculum at Key Stage 3, with a greater emphasis on topical concerns such as sustainability, globalisation, interdependence, poverty and wealth, as well as a fieldwork programme which showed clearly how students should progress in terms of their geographical skills. However, in less successful schools schemes of work emphasised geographical content too much and lacked relevance to modern geography. In just over half the schools visited there were insufficient opportunities for enquiry-based work.

24. *History for all: history in English schools 2007–10* (090223), Ofsted, 2011.

25. *Geography – learning to make a world of difference* (090224), Ofsted, 2011.

## Behaviour and attendance

**Figure 30** Pupils' behaviour in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

**138.** Pupils' behaviour is good or outstanding in 87% of schools inspected this year compared with 86% last year. Overall, this remains one of the most positively judged aspects of provision, although the proportion of schools in which behaviour was judged outstanding fell to 19% this year from 24% last year. Behaviour is not as good in secondary schools as in other types of school, apart from pupil referral units. It is good or outstanding in over three quarters of secondary schools, but over a fifth of secondary schools are judged to have only satisfactory behaviour and in 2% behaviour is inadequate. This is a better profile of performance than last year when behaviour was judged no better than satisfactory in 30% of secondary schools, but improvement is still needed in these schools.

**139.** Inspection shows a critical link between poor behaviour and weak teaching. In all the schools in which behaviour was judged to be inadequate, teaching was no better than satisfactory, and in two thirds, it was inadequate. Similarly in 94% of schools where behaviour was judged to be only satisfactory, the quality of teaching was also no better than satisfactory. Where behaviour is poor, the quality of teaching is also likely to be poor. Where teaching does not meet pupils' needs or does not engage pupils sufficiently they can lose attention, demonstrate poor attitudes to learning and eventually interrupt the learning of others. In these cases teaching can then focus too much on continually managing low-level disruption at the expense of providing interesting and relevant opportunities for pupils to learn. Poor behaviour also makes it more difficult to teach well. However, it is also the case that in just under three quarters of schools where teaching is only satisfactory behaviour is judged to be good or better. This indicates that in the majority of schools pupils behave relatively well, even when teaching is less than inspiring.

**140.** In schools where behaviour is good or outstanding, expectations of pupils' behaviour are made clear and behaviour across the school is managed in a consistent fashion. Leaders and managers ensure there is a positive ethos of achievement and support for pupils, consistent application of agreed policies and procedures and an appropriate balance of rewards and sanctions which are applied in a constructive way to support improvement. Pupils themselves understand the system of rewards and sanctions and feel safe from bullying and harassment. Teachers have a clear understanding of individual pupils' needs and provide interesting activities that are carefully tailored to engage and challenge them. This helps to ensure that pupils do not become restless and disruptive. Data about behaviour are analysed carefully so that well targeted actions can be taken. Careful intervention, often involving individual mentoring and adaptations to the curriculum, helps to ensure that pupils with challenging behaviour have their needs addressed and steadily improve.

## Maintained schools

**141.** In most schools, pupils generally say that they feel safe and that bullying is not common; they believe that teachers deal promptly and effectively with any incidents of bullying that occur. In a minority of the schools where behaviour is satisfactory or inadequate, parents and pupils expressed concern to inspectors about the school's failure to address incidents of bullying. In many cases where behaviour is inadequate, an element of bullying contributes to this judgement, and forms part of the poor behaviour.

**142.** In 22% of the secondary schools inspected this year, behaviour in the school and the attitudes to learning demonstrated by pupils were only satisfactory. Based on a review of the inspection reports of over 100 of these secondary schools, in more than a third inspectors noted that learning in the school was passive because teaching was not interesting and engaging enough and was not matched to the abilities of pupils. Inspections also identified weaknesses in these schools in applying behaviour policies consistently. Parents and pupils raised concerns about bullying in around a tenth of these schools. Very occasionally, boisterous behaviour outside the classroom when adult supervision was absent intimidated some pupils.

For the most part, parents who responded to the questionnaire sent out as part of the inspection are positive about how schools manage behaviour.

**143.** Behaviour was outstanding in 32% of schools serving the least deprived pupils compared with 11% of schools serving the most deprived pupils. This pattern of better behaviour in schools serving less deprived pupils was also observed in last year's Annual Report. The quality of teaching is also less likely to be judged good or outstanding in schools serving the most deprived pupils. However, behaviour was judged good or outstanding in 82% of schools serving the most deprived pupils. The success of these schools effectively demonstrates that deprivation and disadvantage need not be a barrier to good behaviour.

**144.** For the most part, parents who responded to the questionnaire sent out as part of the inspection are positive about how schools manage behaviour. However, 13% of parents of students in secondary schools and 9% of parents of pupils in primary schools either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement; 'The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour.' As one might expect, this figure varies considerably in line with the overall quality of behaviour at the school. Parents in schools where behaviour was judged inadequate or satisfactory are three times more likely to think that the school does not deal effectively with poor behaviour than parents in schools where behaviour was judged outstanding.

**145.** The percentage of pupils subject to either a fixed term exclusion or a permanent exclusion has fallen each year for the last four years. In 2006/07 5.7% of pupils were excluded for a fixed period compared with 4.5% in 2009/10.<sup>26</sup> This year Ofsted carried out a survey of the use made by schools and pupil referral units of alternative provision.<sup>27</sup> For the purpose of this survey, alternative provision was defined as something in which a young person participates as part of their regular timetable, away from the site of the school or the pupil referral unit and not led by school staff. Schools can use such provision to try to prevent exclusions, or to re-engage students in their education.

26. *Permanent and fixed period exclusions from schools in England 2009/10*, Statistical First Release (SFR17/2011), Department for Education, 2011.

27. *Alternative provision* (100233), Ofsted 2011.

## Alternative provision

Between September and December 2010, inspectors visited 23 schools and academies and 16 pupil referral units to explore their use of alternative provision. The survey visit was followed up with visits to 61 alternative provision placements that were being attended by students from the schools or units surveyed. The students' placements were varied and included practical courses in motor mechanics or hairdressing, work placements in shops and old people's homes, and experiences in music studios and on farms. The students surveyed spent between half a day and five days out of school each week attending such provision.

Alternative provision is a largely uninspected and unregulated sector. Beyond pupil referral units and other full-time provision, there is no requirement for the majority of alternative providers to register with any official body and no consistent arrangements to evaluate their quality. Of the 61 providers visited for the survey, only 17 were subject to any inspection regime.

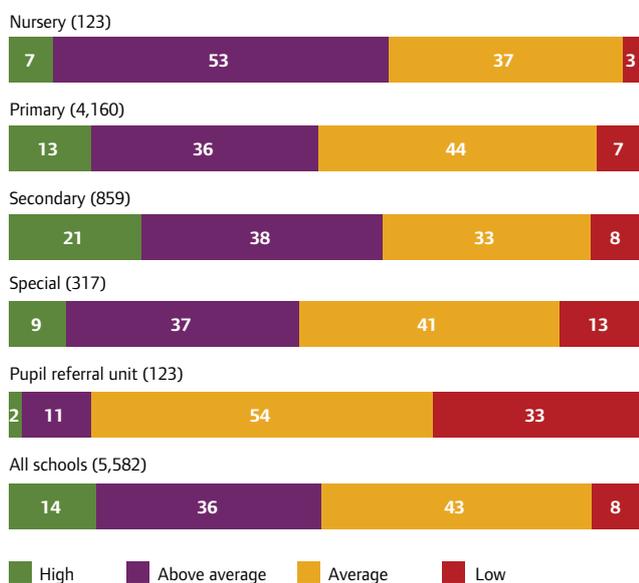
Despite this lack of regulation and accountability, some students spend a significant proportion of their week away from their school or unit attending an alternative provision. It can be the case that the school's or unit's staff visit infrequently or not at all. In this survey 11 of the providers had never received a visit from a member of staff from the school or unit. Across the 39 schools and units surveyed, over 10% of students in Years 9–11 were attending alternative provision away from the site of their school or unit for at least part of each week. Occasionally, students were placed with an alternative provider full time and played no part in school life.

The survey found that at its best, alternative provision was selected carefully by schools and units, was used well to support learners as part of their whole curriculum, and was valued by the students. Such placements helped to re-engage students in learning. Where communication was good, the school or unit shared relevant information with the provider and agreed what information the provider would collect to show a student's progress. The school or unit then used this information well to celebrate success or intervene when things were not going well. Staff in these schools and units visited students at their provision regularly. Students' timetables at school were planned carefully so that they did not miss key lessons when they were out at their placement, or at least they were given good-quality additional teaching to keep up. In these conditions, students were usually motivated by their placement and started to see the point of their work in school; many gained appropriate qualifications.

However, this was not always the case. Some of the schools and pupil referral units visited, saw alternative provision as very separate from their own work and as a 'last resort' for a challenging student. These schools and units were less effective at fitting placements into the rest of their students' timetables, and made poor arrangements for them to catch up with work they had missed from their core subjects. In too many cases there was no transfer of written information about the students' needs from the schools to the providers. Where communication between schools and alternative providers was weak, the providers lacked the information that they needed to work effectively with the student, and the schools did not know enough about their student's progress. For the student, this meant that there was sometimes little coherence between their time at the placement and their time back at school. Opportunities were missed to capitalise on the new skills, confidence, and sometimes the qualifications, they were gaining.

## Maintained schools

**Figure 31** Pupils' attendance in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

**146.** Attendance for all schools is judged in relation to national averages and the grades awarded are high, above average, average and low. Ofsted's assessment of how well schools are promoting attendance makes an important contribution to the judgement for the quality of the school's care, guidance and support.

**147.** Overall, the judgements made by inspectors for attendance are more positive than those made last year. However, this more positive picture is not true for all types of schools. In nursery schools and special schools in particular the proportion judged to have low attendance has increased.

**148.** As with behaviour, there is a strong correlation between deprivation and poor attendance. In 17% of schools serving the most deprived pupils attendance was judged to be low compared with just 1% of schools serving the least deprived pupils. Similarly, attendance was more than three times as likely to be high or above average in schools with the least deprived pupils compared with schools with the most deprived pupils. Nonetheless, 20% of these schools achieved attendance that was judged high or above average.

**149.** In last year's Annual Report particular attention was drawn to the importance of a number of additional factors that support good attendance. These included a curriculum that interests and excites pupils, opportunities to undertake work outside the classroom and excellent relationships between teachers and pupils, in which caring adults in school show an interest in the issues in pupils' lives. These important aspects remain key to a school's success in ensuring that pupils attend regularly, combined with rigorous monitoring of patterns of attendance, clearly explaining the link between achievement and attendance to pupils and parents, immediate follow-up to absence and targeted approaches to supporting the attendance of individual pupils, such as:

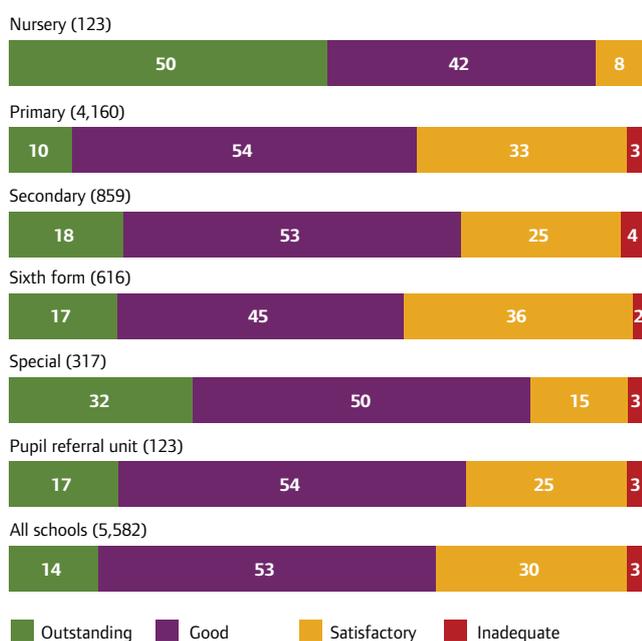
- ✘ prevention of the problem by ensuring that the quality of teaching is focused on the individual's needs
- ✘ identifying quickly a trend in poor attendance
- ✘ early notification of the problem to parents and carers
- ✘ reinforcing the importance of the issue to parents and carers
- ✘ close liaison with local agencies, including the education welfare service and police.

**150.** Data show around two-thirds of pupils' absence overall is due to illness or medical or dental appointments. However, the taking of term-time holiday accounts for around 12% of total pupil absence in primary schools and 5% in secondary schools.<sup>28</sup> This is despite schools' clear messages to parents that this is not in the best interests of pupils and that parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends.

28. *Pupil absence in schools in England: autumn term 2010 and spring term 2011*, Statistical First Release (SFR25/2011), Department for Education, 2011.

## Leadership and management

**Figure 32** The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement in schools inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (percentage of schools)



Figures are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

**151.** The quality of leadership and management for schools inspected this year was similar to those inspected last year. In 67% of schools inspected this year it was judged to be good or outstanding compared with 65% of schools last year. Just under 90% of parents and staff who returned questionnaires to Ofsted from the schools inspected this year agreed or strongly agreed that their school was well led and managed. It is striking that the leadership in secondary schools was almost twice as likely to be judged outstanding this year as leadership in primary schools. This difference has been observable for a number of years, but has become particularly marked this year. It is also apparent that leadership and management in school sixth forms was no better than satisfactory in well over one third of those inspected and was graded lower than leadership and management in the school as a whole in 28% of those inspected.

**152.** In 82% of schools inspected this year the same judgement was given for the quality of leadership and management and the school's overall effectiveness. However, in a small number of schools leadership and management were judged to be weaker than their overall effectiveness. Many of these were schools of below average size, typically having gone through a period of significant staff change including the appointment of a new headteacher. Nonetheless, a number of these schools had features that were clearly holding them back, or were starting to put their continued good performance at risk, so their capacity to improve was also graded below their overall effectiveness. Typical weaknesses were in the monitoring and evaluation of performance leading to internal judgements of teaching being too generous; the limited role of the governing body in self-evaluation; and inconsistent school systems for making use of assessment to accelerate learning. The lack of leadership from middle managers, for example in improving the quality of teaching or ensuring the systematic monitoring of pupils' progress, was also a common weakness, although this was sometimes due to the failure of senior leaders to delegate responsibility or ensure that middle management was effective.

**153.** The quality of leadership and management makes a critical contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. The same judgements for the quality of leadership and the quality of teaching were made in 80% of schools inspected this year.



## Maintained schools

**154.** On the surface, processes for leading and managing teaching and learning are broadly similar between those schools judged satisfactory and those judged outstanding. Lesson observations take place on a regular cycle and the attainment of learners is also monitored regularly. However, it is the effectiveness with which these processes are implemented that makes the difference. In the satisfactory schools, the evaluation of teaching is often over-generous, and places too little emphasis on exploring what pupils are actually learning and the progress that they are making, focusing rather on the activity of the teacher. The overall quality of teaching varies widely and best practice is not shared effectively. Weaknesses that emerge in the monitoring are not pursued, and whole-school professional development programmes are sometimes not based on the insights gained in the monitoring. The systems for collecting data on pupils' progress mean that all schools are now data-rich, but in the schools judged satisfactory this is not always used efficiently to intervene and support pupils who are falling behind. Middle leaders are often unclear about their role or are ineffective.

In the schools where the leadership and management of teaching and learning are judged outstanding, self-evaluation is sharp and accurate.

**155.** By contrast, in the schools where the leadership and management of teaching and learning are judged outstanding, self-evaluation is sharp and accurate. Senior leaders draw on a range of evidence to arrive at this understanding, probably the most significant of which is their own direct observation of teaching and learning. Where weaknesses are found in teaching, they are dealt with rigorously and effectively: outstanding school leaders can provide examples of teachers whose performance has improved enormously. All available data are analysed carefully and this analysis provides a good basis for early intervention with pupils and for planning individual and whole-school programmes to improve teaching. In these schools middle leaders are often a significant strength and have a strong sense of their accountability for the progress of pupils. These are schools where the curriculum is exciting, where learning is active and enjoyable, and above all where there is a strong and widely shared ethos that every pupil can succeed and a determination to make this happen.

**156.** An important trend in education policy over the last five years has been the increasing role that successful schools have played in supporting and working in partnership with less successful schools. This year Ofsted published two reports which examined different aspects of this trend. The first report identified the strategies used in 24 successful schools, deemed National Support Schools, to develop effective leadership skills and build capacity to sustain excellence.<sup>29</sup> The second report looked at the implications for leadership and improvement in schools which have federated, including 10 federations between a high-performing school and a school causing concern.<sup>30</sup>

29. *Developing leadership: National Support Schools* (090232), Ofsted, 2011.

30. *Leadership of more than one school* (100234), Ofsted, 2011.

## National Support Schools

The report found that the National Support Schools gave their staff a wealth of opportunities to take on leadership roles and provided them with high-quality support and training.<sup>31</sup> The highly effective leaders understood the changing needs of their schools and their staff. They planned ahead to sustain excellence, ensuring that leaders at all levels developed the skills to meet those needs. They recruited and retained high-quality staff and focused very specifically on professional development, in particular on developing and training their own leaders. Teaching and support staff were given opportunities to undertake new leadership responsibilities in areas that were relevant to them. These opportunities developed their leadership skills systematically. The staff were supported by good-quality mentoring and coaching to ensure that they reflected on and learned from their experiences. Typically, all this was underpinned by good leadership training programmes, tailored for staff at different stages of leadership development.

There were mutual benefits for both National Support Schools and the schools they were supporting, including opportunities to reflect and challenge across the partnership and to observe and adapt good practice. In particular, partnerships provided the National Leaders of Education with good opportunities to share and refine their own skills.<sup>32</sup> Their staff gained additional and valuable experiences of leadership through working in another school, often in a very different context.

31. National Support Schools are selected by the National College for School Leadership. In order to become a National Support School, a school must have been judged outstanding for overall effectiveness and other sub-judgements at their most recent inspection, its performance data must show a clear upward trend or consistently high levels of attainment, and it must have outstanding senior and middle leaders who have demonstrated the capacity to provide significant and successful support to underperforming schools within a school-to-school partnership, federation or chain.

32. National Leaders of Education are designated by the National College for School Leadership. Designation requires evidence of successful school leadership, sustained high standards, significant added value, a record of effective support to other schools and strong leadership at school, senior and middle leadership levels.

The leadership and the capacity to improve in schools which were receiving support also typically got stronger as a result of working with leaders, at all levels, from a successful school. Senior leaders in client schools were supported to:

- ✧ develop their organisational skills
- ✧ distribute leadership roles and responsibilities more widely
- ✧ build leadership capacity at all levels.

## Federations to support school improvement

Ofsted has also identified benefits to schools causing concern which are federated with high performing schools. In all 10 such federations visited as part of a recent survey, teaching and learning, achievement and behaviour had improved in the weaker schools and good outcomes had been maintained in the high-performing school. These improvements were, in all cases, being driven by the executive headteacher of the successful school, and involved a number of common strategies including:

- ✧ implementing extremely rigorous procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning
- ✧ successfully dealing with behaviour problems in the early stages of federation
- ✧ introducing targeted training to improve teaching
- ✧ eradicating inadequate teaching swiftly, often resulting in some teachers leaving the school
- ✧ strengthening procedures to assess pupils' progress.

In all the federations visited, effective leadership was critical to their success in building good capacity for sustained improvement. Federation leaders were very aware that there was a danger that staff morale in the weaker school would be undermined and took care to raise staff confidence.

For example, in two federations headteachers made sure that the strengths in the weaker schools were identified and built upon and the good practice adopted by the stronger schools. However, they did not shirk from their responsibility to eradicate weak teaching. In all cases, teachers in the weaker schools were involved in professional development.

## Maintained schools

Staff from the successful schools shared good practice and senior and middle leaders had the role of coaching staff. Professional development was mandatory and closely linked to the individual development needs of teachers and performance management procedures that held them to account for improvements.

However, despite the clear benefits of partnership and federation both reports acknowledged that creating a strong and effective partnership is not straightforward and requires careful planning and preparation. The surveys also found that there was less evidence that the leadership skills and effectiveness of governors were being developed as thoroughly through these partnerships, for example by providing them with opportunities to work together directly and share effective practice.

**157.** Inspections this year identified considerable variations in the quality of governance across different types of school. Governance was judged good or outstanding in 58% of schools inspected this year overall, but this varied between 53% in pupil referral units and 55% in primary schools, to 64% in secondary schools and 71% in special schools. Although in the majority of schools the governing body acts as a critical friend, inspection findings show that where governance is less effective a lack of transparency and accurate information restricts the ability of the governing body to monitor the work of the school systematically.

**158.** In 2011 Ofsted published a survey which identified the key features of outstanding governing bodies.<sup>33</sup> These included the following.

- ✦ Positive relationships between governors and school leaders are based on trust, openness and transparency. Information about what is going well and why, and what is not going well and why, is shared. Governors consistently ask for more information, explanation or clarification. This makes a strong contribution to robust planning for improvement.
- ✦ Governance supports honest, perceptive self-evaluation by the school, recognising problems and supporting the steps needed to address them.

- ✦ Absolute clarity about the different roles and responsibilities of the headteacher and governors underpins the most effective governance.
- ✦ Effective governing bodies are driven by a core of key governors such as the chair and chairs of committees. They see themselves as part of a team and build strong relationships with the headteacher, senior leaders and other governors.
- ✦ School leaders and governors behave with integrity and are mutually supportive; school leaders recognise that governors provide them with a different perspective that contributes to strengthening leadership; the questions they ask challenge assumptions and support effective decision-making.
- ✦ Governors are able to take and support hard decisions in the interests of pupils; to back the headteacher when they need to change staff, or to change the headteacher when absolutely necessary.

**159.** In 79% of schools inspected the safeguarding procedures were found to be either good or outstanding. Furthermore, safeguarding was judged to be at least satisfactory in 99% of schools. Nearly all schools now give priority to this area of their work and meet safeguarding requirements. The survey *Safeguarding in schools: best practice* highlighted some of the key features of outstanding practice, most of which are found, to a greater or lesser extent, in all effective schools with outstanding safeguarding arrangements.<sup>34</sup> The common features of these schools include:

- ✦ high-quality leadership and management that make safeguarding a priority across all aspects of a school's work, including a strong focus on training in safeguarding
- ✦ stringent vetting procedures in place for staff and other adults and robust site security
- ✦ rigorous safeguarding policies and procedures and child protection arrangements in place which are clear, coherent and accessible; pupils and families, as well as adults in the school, know who they can talk to if they are worried
- ✦ a curriculum that is used to promote safeguarding, not least through teaching pupils how to stay safe, how to protect themselves from harm and how to take responsibility for their own and others' safety.

33. *School governance: learning from the best* (100238), Ofsted, 2011.

34. *Safeguarding in schools: best practice* (100240), Ofsted, 2011.

**160.** In 45 schools, less than 1% of those inspected, the safeguarding procedures were judged to be inadequate. All of these schools were placed in a formal category of concern. In 35 of these 45 schools, the effectiveness of leadership and the governing body was also judged to be inadequate, weaknesses were not tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities were not met; in over two thirds of these schools pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning were also inadequate. Only seven schools were judged inadequate solely on the basis of weaknesses in their safeguarding.<sup>35</sup>

## Academies

**161.** As more schools change to academy status, the range and types of schools that fall within the 'academy family' are shifting to include more good and outstanding schools. Initially sponsor-led academies were set up to replace schools that had a history of failure or low performance, and these schools make up the large majority of the sample of academies inspected this year.

**162.** Forty academies inspected this year were judged to be good or outstanding and five inadequate for overall effectiveness. The proportion of academies judged good or outstanding is similar to that for all secondary schools, although within this the percentage of outstanding judgements is higher. A slightly higher proportion of academies inspected this year have been judged good or outstanding than academies inspected last year.

35. In these seven schools weaknesses in safeguarding led to inadequate judgements for safeguarding, care, guidance and support, and governance and they were given a notice to improve. No other sub-judgements were graded inadequate.

**163.** Of the 75 academies inspected this year, 11 are schools which have converted to academy status. The predecessor schools of 10 of these were judged good or outstanding. All of these academies except one continued to be judged good or outstanding this year. One academy had declined to satisfactory. One of the converter academies inspected was an amalgamation of two schools judged satisfactory and inadequate, respectively. This academy has now been judged inadequate.

**164.** Forty-five of the academies inspected were linked to other academies. In every case this was through an overarching multi-academy trust providing shared governance or management. Of the 45 academies in a multi-academy trust, 23 were judged good or outstanding.

**165.** Fifteen of the sponsor-led academies inspected this year have previously been inspected by Ofsted. In general these demonstrate a strongly improving trend: 10 of these academies improved and three maintained their good performance. However, two academies have declined since their previous inspection – one from good to satisfactory and one from satisfactory to inadequate.

**166.** The pupil populations of almost three quarters of academies inspected this year are more deprived than the national average, based on the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). However, the 19 academies serving pupils that are less deprived than average, have very different characteristics. Figure 34 shows that more than half of the academies judged to be outstanding served pupils with lower than average levels of deprivation. Some of these academies also had very high levels of attainment on entry.

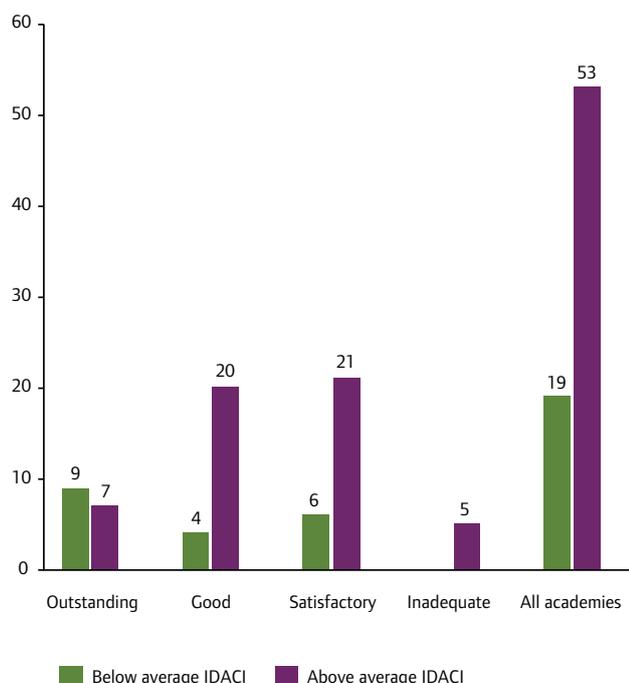
**Figure 33** Overall effectiveness of academies inspected between 1 September 2006 and 31 August 2011 (number of academies)

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
<b>Outstanding</b>	1	3	5	11	16
<b>Good</b>	1	5	12	9	24
<b>Satisfactory</b>	6	2	8	20	30
<b>Inadequate</b>	0	0	5	3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>75</b>

Figures in 2010/11 include 11 academy converters.

## Maintained schools

**Figure 34** Academies above and below the national average for deprivation, based on IDACI, grouped by overall effectiveness, inspected between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011 (number of academies)



Data include both academy converters and sponsor-led academies.

Data exclude three satisfactory academies that have IDACI values that match the national average.

**167.** Around half the academies inspected this year that have above-average levels of pupils from a deprived background have been judged good or better. There is some evidence that these schools are successfully weakening the link between deprivation and poorer outcomes. One academy serving a deprived community made extremely swift progress from special measures to being judged outstanding. The inspection noted that 'This remarkably rapid turnaround has been achieved by exceptional leadership, robust support from external partners and an almost obsessive desire on the behalf of all staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning.' Like other good or outstanding schools in deprived areas the academies that are successfully 'closing the gap' between their students' performance and national averages show several common features; of these, the most notable is the unflinching commitment to ensuring the academic and personal achievement of every individual pupil. Reports have noted the improved attendance in these schools as aspirations

rise, underpinned by rigorous monitoring, leading to much improved progression into further and higher education.

**168.** In the best academies the quality of teaching and learning is consistently high because, as stated elsewhere in this Annual Report, teachers work relentlessly to implement agreed strategies for behaviour management, lesson planning and assessment. Assessment information is used effectively to pitch work at the correct level for nearly all pupils. As a consequence, learning is sharply focused, skilfully managed, well paced and free from disruption. New technologies are used well in lesson planning and delivery. In the best lessons, questioning is used effectively to test understanding, to challenge thinking and to focus pupils' thinking. Regular checks are made throughout the lessons to make sure that all students understand the work and are making good progress. Specialist reading support programmes and other literacy initiatives have been very effective at ensuring that lower attaining students have the necessary skills to succeed in other subjects.

**169.** The staff in the best academies are well led and have a clear and accurate understanding of where things work well and where they need improving. Self-evaluation is based upon comprehensive data about every student's progress and current levels of attainment. Detailed information about the quality of teaching and learning is gathered frequently through a searching process of observations, monitoring and discussions. Subsequent analysis is rigorous and leads directly to carefully planned and usually successful actions. In particular, the plans support individual students who appear to be making less progress than might be expected of them and support subject areas in which performance appears to be less successful than for other subjects.

**170.** The commitment to 'closing the gap' in successful academies is always underpinned by curriculum planning that is both committed to the basics – literacy and numeracy are always prioritised – but also creative and flexible. For example, many of these schools make very effective use of partnership arrangements often linked to the academy's trustees or sponsors, and put in place enrichment programmes which widen horizons and develop confidence in pupils. Managers ensure that assessment and tracking

of progress are constant and accurate, while trustees articulate the vision through promoting strong partnerships with the community and employers.

**171.** However, not all academies have made as rapid progress in overcoming barriers to learning and turning around a history of poor achievement. In 25 academies inspected this year, the learning and progress of pupils was only judged to be satisfactory. Many of these schools were on an upward trajectory in terms of pupil attainment, and some were moving out of categories of concern. There was evidence from inspection that the quality of teaching was becoming more consistent, and most of these schools could demonstrate pockets of good and outstanding practice. However, there was still too much teaching that was not good enough. In these lessons activities were often not tailored sufficiently to provide challenge or support for all students; opportunities were missed to use assessment strategies to check progress and adapt activities to enable learning to proceed briskly; and teachers tended to spend too much time talking, allowing insufficient time for students to develop their speaking skills or explore issues for themselves and consolidate their understanding. Consequently, the pace of the lesson slowed, and at times students' interest waned and they became distracted.

## Schools causing concern

**172.** Schools judged to be inadequate overall are either given a notice to improve or are deemed to require special measures. There were 321 schools judged inadequate this year, which represents 6% of all schools inspected. Of these, 165 schools required special measures to secure further improvement and one school remained in special measures. Schools serving deprived communities continue to be more likely to be placed in a category of concern. Of the schools requiring special measures, 6% were serving the least deprived communities whereas 29% were serving the most deprived communities.<sup>36</sup>

**173.** It is encouraging that the percentage of schools inspected during the year and judged inadequate has reduced from 8% last year to 6% this year. Furthermore, the total number of schools in categories of concern has also decreased from 553 as at 31 August 2010 to 451 as at 31 August 2011. This reduction includes 12 previously inadequate schools which have now closed. Of the 384 schools which were removed from categories of concern this year, 90 schools made exceptional progress and were judged good or outstanding rather than satisfactory.<sup>37</sup>

**174.** In schools judged inadequate the progress that pupils make is too slow, and in many cases attainment has been too low for several years. Inadequate progress is the result of teaching that is not good or consistent enough in its quality. In many of these schools there are pockets of good teaching, but this is let down by inadequate teaching in other years or subjects, or by satisfactory teaching that is not good enough to raise low attainment quickly. The weaknesses observed in teaching are usually very clear. Teachers have low expectations of what their pupils can achieve, and they do not make use of assessment information, so that work is not well-matched to pupils' abilities. In secondary schools, especially those going into special measures, this is often accompanied by widespread but low-level disruptive behaviour on the part of students during lessons, and this depresses learning further. Sometimes poor behaviour is also evident around the school.

In schools judged inadequate the progress that pupils make is too slow, and in many cases attainment has been too low for several years.

36. Data exclude three pupil referral units as they do not have an associated deprivation figure.

37. Three schools in notice to improve were given another notice to improve and one further school in special measures remained in special measures upon reinspection this academic year. These schools are not deemed to have been removed from a category of concern.

## Maintained schools

**Figure 35** Number of schools placed in, and removed from, each of the categories of concern in inspections between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011; and those that closed while in these categories at 31 August 2011

Special measures	In	Out	Closed	Average months in SM of those removed
Nursery	0	0	0	-
Primary	124	119	3	18
Secondary	30	31	2	19
Special	8	7	0	20
Pupil referral units	3	8	2	19
<b>All schools</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18</b>

Notice to improve	In	Out	Closed	Average months in Ntl of those removed
Nursery	0	2	0	13
Primary	104	169	1	13
Secondary	38	56	2	13
Special	6	12	1	13
Pupil referral units	4	3	1	13
<b>All schools</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>

The definition of categories of concern is set out in the Glossary.

Data exclude one school that remained in special measures after reinspection and three schools that remained in notice to improve after reinspection.

School closing information based on Edubase as at 31 August 2011.

**175.** Weaknesses in leadership and management also contribute to the inadequate progress that pupils make. Leaders lack drive and ambition, undertake self-evaluation that is too generous and fail to analyse the wealth of information potentially available. Day-to-day 'fire-fighting' replaces effective strategic plans to raise attainment. Middle and senior leaders are ineffective in their roles. Inadequate teaching is not tackled. Governing bodies do not have an accurate view of the school and fail to hold the school leaders to account. However, schools given a notice to improve often had a new or restructured leadership team, and had been able to demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to improve. In some schools deemed to require special measures there had been several recent changes in headteacher due either to school reorganisation or interventions by local authorities, but these had not had time to effect material improvement by the time of the inspection.

**176.** It is very encouraging that the average time taken for schools to be removed from special measures has fallen from 20 months last year to 18 months this year. This corresponds to a substantial increase in the proportion of schools coming out of special measures after two Ofsted monitoring inspections and a substantial decrease in the proportion of schools coming out of special measures in four or more monitoring inspections. However, these averages mask a wide range of performance. Seventeen schools ranging from those in the least deprived to the most deprived communities were removed from special measures after 12 months or fewer. For nine schools, almost all in the north of England, it took between 26 and 28 months to be removed from special measures. This is far too long, and is likely to have had a very considerable impact on the progress made by pupils at those schools.

**177.** Eight academies have been removed from a category of concern this year – five from notice to improve and three from special measures – all of which served pupils from areas of above-average deprivation. Of the three academies which were removed from special measures, one was removed after just 10 months, which represents very swift progress. The other two academies took 20 months and 23 months, respectively, to be removed, which is longer than the national average for secondary schools.

**178.** In schools where improvement from special measures was most rapid, the school quickly accepted the judgement and put into place a rigorous and robust improvement plan. A number of common features explain the often dramatic improvements in these schools. Where the leaders remained in post, they responded positively to the challenge of being in special measures. More often there were changes in leadership. In some cases this was achieved through the appointment of a new headteacher or other senior leaders. In other cases an executive headteacher was appointed as a result of collaboration or federation with another school. Alongside these changes in senior leadership there were often changes to the composition of the governing body, occasionally through the appointment of an Interim Executive Board. Many schools which made rapid improvement had received support from a partner school or through intervention from their local authority. The strengthening of leadership across the schools then secured:

- ✦ raised expectations, greater ambition and a clear vision for improvement
- ✦ better monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by senior staff
- ✦ actions to develop teachers' skills and challenge any underperformance
- ✦ rigorous self-evaluation and ambitious target-setting at the heart of development planning.

**179.** In schools where progress out of special measures was slower, a major weakness was the inconsistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Too often pupils were experiencing teaching that was uninspiring and lessons which were poorly planned and delivered. A key weakness was the inaccurate and often uncommitted approach to assessment. This resulted in work being set for pupils that they found too difficult, too easy or repeated their previous learning. In these schools senior leaders were not fully focused on responding to the weaknesses that had been identified and did not provide clear guidance and support for teachers to enable them to improve the quality of teaching. Often these schools moved too slowly from being reactive to strategically addressing the priorities for improvement. The impact of these deficiencies was that pupils underachieved.

## Warning notices

**180.** Local authorities have the power to issue a warning notice to a school because standards at the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so; because there has been a serious breakdown in management or governance which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, standards of performance; or because the safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown in discipline or otherwise).

**181.** From April 2007 to 31 August 2011, 64 local authorities issued a total of 144 warning notices. The majority of these notices (85) were issued because of local authority concerns about standards. Of these, 20 also included concerns about the effectiveness of leadership and management at the school; two of these were issued because of concerns about standards, leadership and management, and the safety of pupils or staff at the school. Ofsted has received a total of 23 appeals against warning notices, of which just three have been upheld. This shows that when local authorities do use warning notices most are using the power appropriately.

## Maintained schools

**182.** During this year, 41 warning notices have been issued by 28 different local authorities. This is an average of over three warning notices each month. Warning notices averaged one each month in 2007/08, three each month in 2008/09, and four each month in 2009/10. Although there has been an increase since 2007, use of the power to issue warning notices remains variable. There are still 88 local authorities which have never made use of warning notices, while one local authority had issued eight by the end of August 2011. Just over one quarter of the local authorities that have never issued a warning notice have had 10 or more schools judged to be inadequate during the same period (April 2007 to August 2011).

**183.** There are 52 schools in total that have been issued a warning notice on the basis of low standards and that have subsequently been inspected by Ofsted. In 32 cases the inspection took place within nine months of the warning notice being issued. In 22 of these schools, the large majority, their overall effectiveness was found to be inadequate. In the remaining schools overall effectiveness was satisfactory apart from one in which it was good. In this school the inspection report commented on the very rapid progress that had been made and how the leadership of the school had embraced the challenge of improvement. In contrast the performance profile of schools where the inspection took place more than nine months after the warning notice was issued was much more positive. Seventeen of these 20 schools were judged either satisfactory or good and only three were inadequate. This evidence suggests that warning notices, where used well and given time to take effect, can make a contribution to stimulating improvement in schools and preventing failure. It is therefore of some concern that warning notices are so seldom used by some local authorities when a school is in decline.

## Looking forward

**184.** Many of the themes for improvement in this Annual Report are picked up and given even greater priority in the new school inspection framework published in draft on 30 September 2011, which will be implemented, subject to Royal Assent being granted, from January 2012. It builds on the strengths of the existing inspection framework and will continue to involve senior leaders in the inspection process, for

example in joint lesson observations with inspectors and in attending the inspection team meetings. There is also a commitment to take even more account of the views of pupils, parents and staff.

**185.** Under the new framework, inspectors will concentrate on four key areas: the achievement of pupils; the quality of teaching and learning; the effectiveness of leadership and management; and standards of behaviour and safety in schools. This slimmer framework and sharper focus will enable inspectors to look more closely at what matters most in schools, spending even more time observing lessons, including listening to children reading in primary schools, assessing the progress of pupils and taking a closer look at behaviour.

**186.** There will be greater focus on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and progress. Schools will be held even more to account for the rates of progress achieved for all groups of pupils and whether they are succeeding in narrowing gaps in attainment. The new framework will be more demanding of schools in ensuring that variability is addressed in outcomes for pupils and in the consistency of teaching. There will be higher expectations that teaching and other support for pupils will be effective in accelerating progress for those who need it most and ensure that pupils with special educational needs in particular make good progress. Inspectors will also focus on whether schools are meeting, or exceeding, the government's revised floor standards.<sup>38</sup>

**187.** The new framework will consider even more carefully the capacity of leadership and management to bring about the necessary improvements, especially in teaching and learning. Inspectors will consider how relentlessly the leaders, managers and governors pursue a vision for excellence, and how well they evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and use their findings to promote improvement. Inspectors will look for evidence that the behaviour observed during the inspection is typical of the school at all times and that pupils do not have their learning disrupted and are free from bullying and harassment.

38. Floor standards refer to the expected levels of performance set by the government in relation to standards of attainment at Key Stages 2 and 4; and the proportion of pupils exceeding the threshold for the number of National Curriculum levels of progress made in English and mathematics between Key Stages 1 and 2 or between Key Stages 2 and 4.



**188.** Ofsted will continue to focus inspection on weaker schools where improvement is needed most. Inadequate schools will be visited sooner by inspectors to help to speed up the pace of recovery. Evidence shows that monitoring visits to inadequate schools have a good impact on their improvement. Satisfactory schools that have only satisfactory leadership and management or have been satisfactory for more than one inspection will be monitored more frequently, and where progress is limited they will be identified for an earlier inspection.

**189.** National expectations for our education system are rightly increasing and inspection has an important role to play in challenging schools to improve further, recognising their success, holding them to account, and aiding their improvement by identifying their strengths and weaknesses. A majority of schools inspected this year improved or sustained their performance since their previous inspection. There remain, however, major challenges to sustain outstanding performance and secure greater improvement in good and satisfactory schools, address persistent low performance and reduce the wide variation in the quality of teaching. Ofsted will continue to focus on these priorities.