

School inspection update

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Message to inspectors from the National Director, Education

Welcome to the twenty-first edition of the 'School inspection update' (SIU) and the first since the roll-out of the education inspection framework (EIF) in September 2019. This slimmer-than-usual edition focuses on the minor changes to the section 5 and section 8 handbooks following the first two months under EIF.

We will not make a habit of amending the handbooks throughout the school year, but are taking the opportunity, following initial teething issues and queries that inspectors have been brought to our attention, to make minor corrections and updates. We have included a summary of the changes we have made in this edition.

We also include information on the release of key stage 4 checking data.

It's early days, but inspections are going well so far. We have had some really positive feedback from those that have been inspected under the new system. We're glad that our new approach is a constructive experience for many schools. We have heard about schools genuinely feeling refreshed at the quality of professional dialogue they are able to have with inspection teams and of leaders being able to celebrate the work that their teams are doing on behalf of young people, which they feel was not recognised under the previous framework.

We have also heard how some leaders have not properly understood the methodology at the start of the inspection, but do so by the end. For example, one leader told us: 'I knew what you'd be doing, but I didn't totally get how it works. I now utterly see the usefulness and power of the methodology. Working through it with you has shown me exactly why my school is as it is.' Another said: '..in 30-plus years of being in education, this was by far the best inspection experience, even if the outcome is not what we had hoped'.

On the flip side, we have heard some concerns about 'deep dives'. Inspectors use deep dives to explore the quality of the curriculum, not the quality of teaching or the subject in isolation. Inspectors do not judge individual lessons, but connect evidence through lesson visits, scrutinising work and conversations with curriculum leaders, pupils and teachers. A deep dive does not lead to a judgement about that particular subject. Rather, the evidence from four to six deep dives enables inspectors to form hypotheses about which factors are systemic – that is, relate to the quality of education provided by the school as a whole. Inspectors have had extensive curriculum training over the last two years, including on how to manage curriculum discussions while being conscious of the pressures that inspection can put on school leaders and teachers. Drawing on this, inspectors are well equipped to make judgements about the quality of the curriculum without specialist knowledge of every subject.

We will continue to pay close attention to the impact and effectiveness of our inspections under EIF over the coming weeks and months to ensure that they meet our requirements.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean Harford".

Sean Harford HMI
National Director, Education

Official release of key stage 4 checking data

The key stage 4 checking data was released on 17 October. Inspectors are reminded that briefing on the headline data will be provided in team rooms by the analyst support team. No data from third-party suppliers should be considered from this point.

Section 8 inspections in primary schools

When we are inspecting smaller schools, either:

- one inspector is on-site for two days
- two inspectors are on-site for one day.

Some schools have said they are concerned about subject/curriculum leads having to spend extended time out of class, when those curriculum leaders oversee multiple subject areas – as can often be the case in small schools – and are also teaching.

We are therefore asking lead inspectors to be sensitive in selecting deep dives in these schools. When inspectors choose the set of three to five deep dives with school leaders, please can you ensure that no subject/curriculum lead has to cover more than one deep dive with you/your team inspector.

This is the approach that several lead inspectors have already taken and is proving constructive and useful.

In rare cases, there may be a pressing educational or logistical reason that means this approach is not possible, and lead inspectors will need to use their judgement. But in most cases, this approach will be possible and should be used.

Summary of changes made to the section 5 handbook

Paragraph 58

Said:

This conversation will normally last up to 90 minutes. It will help inspectors and school leaders to establish a rapport before inspection and give them a shared understanding of the starting point of the inspection. It will also help inspectors to form an initial understanding of leaders' views of the school's progress and to shape the inspection plan. Our experience from piloting the **new framework** shows that this is the part of preparation that school leaders and inspectors often find to be the most helpful and constructive.

Now says:

This conversation will normally last up to 90 minutes. It will help inspectors and school leaders to establish a rapport before inspection and give them a shared understanding of the starting point of the inspection. It will also help inspectors to form an initial understanding of leaders' views of the school's progress and to shape the inspection plan. Our experience from piloting the **EIF** shows that this is the part of preparation that school leaders and inspectors often find to be the most helpful and constructive.

Paragraph 68

Said:

'A school may request a deferral of its inspection. It may make a request to the inspection support administrator when it is notified of the inspection, or to the lead inspector on the day it is notified of the inspection. We will not normally consider deferrals if we receive them after 4.30pm on the day the school is notified. The inspection support administrator or lead inspector must immediately contact the regional duty **desk**. We will decide whether this should be granted in accordance with our deferral policy.'

Now says:

'A school may request a deferral of its inspection. It may make a request to the inspection support administrator when it is notified of the inspection, or to the lead inspector on the day it is notified of the inspection. We will not normally consider deferrals if we receive them after 4.30pm on the day the school is notified. The inspection support administrator or lead inspector must immediately contact the regional duty **staff**. We will decide whether this should be granted in accordance with our deferral policy.'

Paragraph 70

Said:

'If a school is within six months of confirmed closure, but the school does not request a cancellation when the inspector makes contact, the inspection support administrator will call the regional duty **desk** to highlight this and get advice about whether the inspection should still be carried out. Decisions will be made case by case.'

Now says:

'**The deferral policy makes clear that the absence of the headteacher and/or proprietor is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.** If a school is within six months of confirmed closure, but the school does not request a cancellation when the inspector makes contact, the inspection support administrator will call the regional duty **staff** to highlight this and get advice about whether the inspection should still be carried out. Decisions will be made case by case.'

Paragraph 78

Said:

'The views of pupils and staff in schools are gathered through online questionnaires. The inspection support administrator sends online links to the school with the formal notification of inspection. The school is asked to encourage staff and pupils to complete the online questionnaires, **apart from those pupils in any boarding provision, whose views will have already been sought through the point-in-time survey.** Pupils and staff should complete their questionnaires by 3pm on the first day of the inspection.'

Now says:

'The views of pupils and staff in schools are gathered through online questionnaires. The inspection support administrator sends online links to the school with the formal notification of inspection. The school is asked to encourage staff and pupils to complete the online questionnaires. Pupils and staff should complete their questionnaires by 3pm on the first day of the inspection.'

Paragraph 85

Said:

'Inspectors will **observe** lessons; scrutinise pupils' work; talk to pupils about their work, gauging both their understanding and their engagement

in learning; and gather pupils' perceptions of the typical quality of education and other aspects of life at the school in a range of subjects.'

Now says:

'Inspectors will **visit** lessons; scrutinise pupils' work; talk to pupils about their work, gauging both their understanding and their engagement in learning; and gather pupils' perceptions of the typical quality of education and other aspects of life at the school in a range of subjects.'

Paragraph 90

Said:

'Inspectors will meet NQTs where possible and may wish to **observe** lessons given by NQTs...'

Now says:

'Inspectors will meet NQTs where possible and may wish to **visit** lessons given by NQTs...'

Paragraph 91

Said:

'Inspectors will meet any trainees employed by the school on the School Direct (salaried) route to assess their support, mentoring and induction. Inspectors will not **observe** lessons given by trainees.'

Now says:

'Inspectors will meet any trainees employed by the school on the School Direct (salaried) route to assess their support, mentoring and induction. Inspectors will not **visit** lessons given by trainees.'

Paragraph 110

Said:

'The role that governors and trustees play in the school's performance is evaluated as part of the judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management, and each report will contain a separate paragraph that addresses the governance of the school.'

Now says:

'The role that governors and trustees play in the school's performance is evaluated as part of the judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and

management, and each report will contain, **if appropriate**, a separate paragraph that addresses the governance of the school.'

Paragraph 118

Said:

'The on-site inspection ends with a final feedback meeting with the school. Those connected with the school who may attend include:

- the headteacher and other senior leaders, agreed by the lead inspector and headteacher
- for maintained schools, the chair of the school's governing body and as many governors as possible
- for academies, including academies that are part of a MAT, the chair of the board of trustees and as many trustees as possible
- in an academy that is part of a MAT, the CEO or their delegate or equivalent
- a representative from the local authority (for maintained schools) sponsor and/or the designated responsible body
- in an aligned or integrated inspection, social care regulatory inspectors and education inspectors will feed back together to both education and residential staff.

Due to the diverse nature of school governance, in some schools a single individual may have more than one of the above roles.'

Now says:

'The on-site inspection ends with a final feedback meeting with the school. Those connected with the school who may attend include:

- the headteacher and other senior leaders, agreed by the lead inspector and headteacher
- for maintained schools, the chair of the school's governing body and as many governors as possible; **the clerk of governors, or their delegate, may also attend to take notes**
- for academies, including academies that are part of a MAT, the chair of the board of trustees and as many trustees as possible
- in an academy that is part of a MAT, the CEO or their delegate or equivalent
- a representative from the local authority (for maintained schools) sponsor and/or the designated responsible body

- in an aligned or integrated inspection, social care regulatory inspectors and education inspectors will feed back together to both education and residential staff.

Due to the diverse nature of school governance, in some schools a single individual may have more than one of the above roles.'

Paragraph 119

Said:

'During this meeting, the lead inspector will ensure that the headteacher, those responsible for governance and all attendees are clear:

- about the key findings from the inspection, as summarised in the final summary evaluation. The lead inspector must give sufficient detail to enable all attendees to understand how judgements have been reached and for those responsible for the governance of the school to play a part in beginning to plan how to tackle any areas for improvement
- if the school is being placed in a category of concern, that they may make comments on the judgements in the draft report during quality assurance. That is, they are not limited to factual accuracy comments.'

Now says:

'During this meeting, the lead inspector will ensure that the headteacher, those responsible for governance and all attendees are clear:

- about the key findings from the inspection, as summarised in the final summary evaluation **card**. The lead inspector must give sufficient detail to enable all attendees to understand how judgements have been reached and for those responsible for the governance of the school to play a part in beginning to plan how to tackle any areas for improvement
- if the school is being placed in a category of concern, that they may make comments **both** on the judgements **and on factual accuracy** in the draft report during quality assurance.'

Paragraph 125

Said:

'If, by the end of the first day of the inspection or during day 2, the lead inspector thinks it is possible that the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate and that it might be judged to have serious weaknesses or to require special measures, they must ring Ofsted's regional duty **desk**.'

Now says:

'If, by the end of the first day of the inspection or during day 2, the lead inspector thinks it is possible that the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate and that it might be judged to have serious weaknesses or to require special measures, they must ring Ofsted's regional duty **staff**.'

Paragraph 126

Said:

'The lead inspector will be asked for their name and the name and URN of the school. They will then be put through to one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) on duty. In this call, the lead inspector must talk through the evidence used by inspector(s) in reaching an emerging provisional judgement of inadequate. The overall effectiveness judgement is not confirmed at this point. The lead inspector must record the main points of the conversation on an **evidence form**.'

Now says:

'The lead inspector will be asked for their name and the name and URN of the school. They will then be put through to one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) on duty. In this call, the lead inspector must talk through the evidence used by inspector(s) in reaching an emerging provisional judgement of inadequate. The overall effectiveness judgement is not confirmed at this point. The lead inspector must record the main points of the conversation on an **evaluation card**.'

Paragraph 127

Said:

'During the second day of the inspection, the lead inspector may contact the regional duty **desk** again to discuss emerging findings. If the inspection team has made the provisional judgement that the school is inadequate and has serious weaknesses or requires special measures, the lead inspector must telephone the regional duty **desk** before the final oral feedback meeting with the school. The lead inspector will be prepared to explain briefly the reasons and underpinning evidence for the inadequate judgement.'

Now says:

'During the second day of the inspection, the lead inspector may contact the regional duty **staff** again to discuss emerging findings. If the inspection team has made the provisional judgement that the school is inadequate and has serious weaknesses or requires special measures, the lead inspector must telephone the regional duty **staff** before the final oral feedback meeting with the school. The lead inspector will be prepared to

explain briefly the reasons and underpinning evidence for the inadequate judgement.'

Inadequate grade descriptors, following paragraph 200

Said:

'Inadequate (4)

The quality of education is likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies...**Pupils with SEND do not benefit from a good-quality education. Expectations of them are low**, and their needs are not accurately identified, assessed or met.'

Now says:

'Inadequate (4)

The quality of education is likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies...**Expectations of pupils with SEND are low**, and their needs are not accurately identified, assessed or met.'

Paragraph 223

Said:

'Provision for the cultural development of pupils includes developing their...interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, **accept, respect and celebrate diversity**. This is shown by their respect and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.'

Now says:

'Provision for the cultural development of pupils includes developing their...interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, **accept and respect diversity**. This is shown by their respect and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.'

Paragraph 228

Said:

'Good (2)

- The school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain effectively, developing their understanding of the fundamental British values

of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, **tolerance and respect**.

- The school promotes equality of opportunity and diversity effectively. As a result, pupils understand, appreciate and respect difference in the world and its people, **celebrating** the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities.'

Now says:

'Good (2)

- The school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain effectively, developing their understanding of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, **and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs**.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity and diversity effectively. As a result, pupils understand, appreciate and respect difference in the world and its people, **including** the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities.'

Paragraph 252

Said:

'If a school uses a provider that is not registered, the inspector must contact the duty **desk** so that **staff** can notify Ofsted's unregistered schools team. Following the inspection, the team will determine if we need to take further action because there is reasonable cause to believe that the setting is operating as an unregistered school.'

Now says:

'If a school uses a provider that is not registered, the inspector must contact the duty **staff** so that **they** can notify Ofsted's unregistered schools team. Following the inspection, the team will determine if we need to take further action because there is reasonable cause to believe that the setting is operating as an unregistered school.'

Paragraph 274

Said:

'If an inspector believes that a school may be segregating pupils, they will contact the duty **desk**. If segregation is taking place, inspectors will write about this clearly in the inspection report.'

Now says:

'If an inspector believes that a school may be segregating pupils, they will contact the duty **staff**. If segregation is taking place, inspectors will write about this clearly in the inspection report.'

Inadequate grade descriptors, following paragraph 295

We have removed the bullet point in **bold**:

'Inadequate (4)

The quality of education is likely to be inadequate if any one of the following applies.

- The design, coverage or teaching of the curriculum does not provide adequately for all students.
- The curriculum does not prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.
- Weak assessment practice means that teaching fails to meet students' needs.
- The attainment and progress of students are consistently low and show little or no improvement over time, indicating that students are underachieving considerably.
- Students do not develop or improve the English and mathematical skills they need to succeed in the next year or stage of education, or in training or employment.
- Students have not attained the qualifications, skills or behaviours appropriate for them to progress to their next stage of education, training or employment.
- Students' attendance is consistently low and shows little sign of sustained improvement. Their lack of engagement, motivation or enthusiasm inhibits their progress and development.
- **The school does not ensure that sixth-form students get access to unbiased information about potential next steps, high-quality careers guidance, or opportunities for encounters with the world of work.'**

Throughout

Minor spelling, grammar and style corrections. Web link updates.

Summary of changes made to the section 8 handbook

Paragraph 24

Said:

‘Normally, the final feedback meeting will be attended by:

- the headteacher/principal and other senior leaders, agreed by the lead inspector and headteacher
- for maintained schools, the chair of the school’s governing body and as many governors as possible
- for academies, including academies that are part of a multi-academy trust (MAT), the chair of the board of trustees, and as many governors or trustees as possible
- in an academy that is part of a MAT, the chief executive officer (CEO)/their delegate or equivalent
- a representative from the local authority (for maintained schools), or the academy sponsor.’

Now says:

‘Normally, the final feedback meeting will be attended by:

- the headteacher/principal and other senior leaders, agreed by the lead inspector and headteacher
- for maintained schools, the chair of the school’s governing body and as many governors as possible; **the clerk of governors, or their delegate, may also attend to take notes**
- for academies, including academies that are part of a multi-academy trust (MAT), the chair of the board of trustees, and as many governors or trustees as possible
- in an academy that is part of a MAT, the chief executive officer (CEO)/their delegate or equivalent
- a representative from the local authority (for maintained schools), or the academy sponsor.’

Paragraph 53

Said:

‘Inspectors will focus primarily on the ‘quality of education’ during a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. Inspectors will form a secure view of whether the quality of education as defined in the ‘school inspection handbook’ remains good at this school. In

order to do this, inspectors will focus on key aspects of the school's provision.

They will:

- in primary schools, always consider how well reading and early mathematics are taught in early years foundation stage and key stage 1 as part of a wide-ranging curriculum that prepares children well for the next stage in their education'

Now says:

'Inspectors will focus primarily on the 'quality of education' during a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. Inspectors will form a secure view of whether the quality of education as defined in the 'school inspection handbook' remains good at this school. In order to do this, inspectors will focus on key aspects of the school's provision.

They will:

- in primary schools, always consider how well reading and early mathematics are taught in early years foundation stage and key stage 1 as part of a wide-ranging curriculum that prepares children well for the next stage in their education. **As in section 5 inspections, inspectors will always carry out a deep dive in reading; they may choose to carry out a deep dive in mathematics, but this is at the lead inspector's discretion.'**

Paragraph 79

Said:

'The school will then receive a **letter** setting out what the school is doing well and what it needs to improve. The school's current overall effectiveness judgement will not change as a result of this inspection. The school will subsequently receive a section 5 inspection within the prescribed statutory timeframe.'

Now says:

'The school will then receive a **report** setting out what the school is doing well and what it needs to improve. The school's current overall effectiveness judgement will not change as a result of this inspection. The school will subsequently receive a section 5 inspection within the prescribed statutory timeframe.'

Paragraph 122

Said:

If, at the section 5 re-inspection, the school has not demonstrated that it has improved to good, the lead inspector will need to consider whether the school continues to require improvement or whether it is inadequate. If the school has demonstrated improvement in some areas and there is a general upward trend, but key aspects of performance remain less than good, the school may be judged as requires improvement again, **in which case there may be monitoring before another section 5 inspection takes place, which would normally be within 30 months after the publication of the previous section 5 report. These considerations will be made at each section 5 re-inspection of a school that was previously judged as requires improvement.**

Now says:

If, at the section 5 re-inspection, the school has not demonstrated that it has improved to good, the lead inspector will need to consider whether the school continues to require improvement or whether it is inadequate. If the school has demonstrated improvement in some areas and there is a general upward trend, but key aspects of performance remain less than good, the school may be judged as requires improvement again.

Paragraph 158

We have added a footnote after:

'The lead inspector will telephone the school up to two days in advance of the monitoring inspection.'

It reads:

⁴⁷ For second or subsequent monitoring inspections, notification will normally take place on the afternoon before the inspection.'

Paragraph 188

Said:

'The monitoring letter and report must include...**brief bullet points evaluating** the progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement, and brief bullet points setting out:

- strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement
- weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement'

Now says:

'The monitoring letter and report must include...**an evaluation of** the progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement and brief bullet points setting out:

- strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement
- weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement'

Paragraph 244

Said:

'Alternatively (for schools that are not exempt from routine inspection), where evidence prompts concerns that overall standards may no longer be as last reported under section 5, but where no serious concerns have been identified, the lead inspector may recommend to the relevant regional director that the next **section 5 inspection be brought forward**. The timing of any such inspection should not be indicated to the school. If the inspection raises concerns, these concerns should be reported at the feedback meeting.'

Now says:

'Alternatively (for schools that are not exempt from routine inspection), where evidence prompts concerns that overall standards may no longer be as last reported under section 5, but where no serious concerns have been identified, the lead inspector may recommend to the relevant regional director that the next **inspection be a section 5 inspection and be brought forward**. The timing of any such inspection should not be indicated to the school. If the inspection raises concerns, these concerns should be reported at the feedback meeting.'

Throughout

Minor spelling, grammar and style corrections. Web link updates.



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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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