

Proposed new Ofsted Framework for Sept 2019

Summary for schools and academies

Issued for consultation in January 2019, the consultation closed on 4 April 2019. The final framework and inspection handbooks will be published in summer 2019.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education>

Key Principles

- revised framework to focus inspection on what children learn through the curriculum, rather than over-reliance on performance data
- proposals will call time on the culture of 'teaching to the test' and off-rolling
- new separate behaviour judgement to give parents reassurance that behaviour is good
- most evidence-based, research-informed and tested framework in Ofsted's 26-year history

The new framework proposes a shift that will rebalance inspection to make sure that young people are being taught the best of what has been thought and said. Instead of taking exam results and test data at face value, Ofsted will look at how a nursery, school, college or other provider's results have been achieved – whether they are the result of broad and rich learning, or gaming and cramming.

Ofsted's research has found that some children are having their teaching narrowed in schools in order to boost performance table points:

- in many primary schools, rather than reading a wide range of books, some children are instead spending their time repeating reading comprehension tests
- in certain secondary schools pupils are being forced to pick exam subjects a year or more early, meaning many lose out on the arts, languages and music
- at GCSE level, pupils are being pushed away from studying EBacc subjects such as history, geography, French and German, and towards qualifications deemed to be 'easier'

Similar practices exist in the further education and skills sector, such as:

- some colleges offering 'popular' courses designed to attract maximum student numbers, rather than those which will lead to a job
- useful maths and English not being taught to support students' vocational training
- apprenticeship providers focusing on quantity rather than quality, meaning young people don't get the training they need

And in early years, instead of feeling able to spend time reading to children, or playing with them, nursery staff feel pressured into completing endless documentation to demonstrate each stage of a child's development.

The new framework will seek to tackle these practices, looking instead at every stage of education from nursery to college, whether young people are being offered a rich curriculum which is taught well and leads to them achieving their all.

The new framework builds on Ofsted's existing expertise but marks a change in emphasis towards the substance of education. The proposed changes to the framework will make it easier to recognise and reward good work done by schools in areas of high disadvantage, by tackling the perverse incentives that leave them feeling they have to narrow the curriculum. Shifting the emphasis away from performance data will empower schools to always put the child first and actively discourage negative practices such as off-rolling. "If we go into a school in challenging circumstances and there is a curriculum that is really doing the right things, it's putting the right things in front of the children, they are learning well but we know in those circumstances actually it's a tough job getting just above average results; for example, we might be considering them for 'outstanding' when previously we might not have done that." However, Ofsted was not dumbing down on standards and that a school with low results would not be judged as "great".

The key proposals for consultation include:

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment judgment (which Ofsted has admitted is too focused on outcomes) will be replaced a new 'quality of education' judgement, with the curriculum at its heart. This, Ofsted states, will "de-intensify the inspection focus on performance data and place more emphasis on the substance of education and what matters most to learners and practitioners".
- In practice, this means that pupil outcomes won't be the main factor for inspectors when considering a school's judgment. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment will still be judged, but will be "viewed in the context of the provider's curriculum". The new quality judgment will be built around a "working definition of the curriculum", which is set out in the draft framework and factors in elements like behaviour and workload. Ofsted wants to take a "holistic approach to considering the quality of education, rather than artificially separating the leadership of the curriculum from teaching, and separating teaching and the use of assessment from the impact this has on the outcomes that learners achieve".
- No longer using schools' internal performance data as inspection evidence, to ensure inspection does not create unnecessary work for teachers. This data, Ofsted warned, has "limitations", and inspectors will not be able to assess whether it is an "accurate and valid representation of pupils' learning across the curriculum". Instead, inspectors will be tasked with gathering "direct evidence" on the quality of education, and hold "meaningful discussions with leaders about how they know that the curriculum is having an effect". However, inspectors will

ask schools to explain why they collect the data they do, what they draw from it and how it informs their curriculum and teaching. Ofsted believes that this will help reduce unnecessary workload for teachers, but won't have a "negative effect on our [its] ability to judge effectively the quality of education in a school".

- Ofsted has also responded to the demand for parents to give better information about how well behaviour is managed in a school. Ofsted plans to scrap its current personal development, behaviour and welfare judgment. A new separate behaviour judgement will assess whether schools are creating a calm, well-managed environment free from bullying. Alongside that, proposals for a 'personal development judgement' will recognise the work schools and colleges do to build young people's resilience and confidence in later life – through work such as cadet forces, National Citizenship Service, sports, drama or debating teams.
- Extending on-site time for short inspections of good schools to 2 days, to ensure inspectors have sufficient opportunity to gather evidence that a school remains good, although the principle of such visits – to confirm whether schools deserve to remain 'good' or to be marked up or down – will remain the same. Inspectors will still be able to upgrade to a full inspection if they feel a 'good' school has got better or worse.
- Ofsted wants to introduce on-site inspector preparation for all inspections. Whereas now inspectors carry out such preparation remotely the day before they visit a school, Ofsted is proposing that from September, this preparation will take place in the school on the afternoon before inspection, in "collaboration" with school leaders. In practice, this will mean that schools will receive a call from Ofsted no later than 10am, informing them of the inspection, and the lead inspector will arrive on site no earlier than 12.30pm the same day. This time with senior leaders will then be used "to gain an overview of the school's recent performance and any changes since the last inspection", and the lead inspector will then leave the site no later than 5pm.
- The 'leadership and management' judgement will remain, and will include looking at how leaders develop teachers and staff, while taking their workload and wellbeing into account. Headteachers will be judged on excessive off-rolling of pupils; further questions will be asked by inspectors around off-rolling if data shows schools have high levels of pupil movement. Headteachers will be judged on how well they manage teacher workload.
- Inspectors will continue to make an overall effectiveness judgement about a provider.
- All judgements will still be awarded under the current 4-point grading scale.
- Parents will still get the information they appear to value and understand.