

Ofsted Inspection Update – Spring 2024

Updated 17 January 2024
Including reminders from autumn 2023

This update is split into three sections.

Section 1: Reminders

Section 2: Summary of changes

Section 3: Additional information

Links to documents used in the compilation of this newsletter:

- [Summary of changes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
- [School inspection handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk) (SIH)

Section 1: Reminders

- Components and composites
- If nothing has altered in long-term memory, nothing has been learned
- National assessments and examinations
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Components and composites

What schools intend pupils to learn:

- clear end points – likely to be composites
- appropriately sized steps – not overloading the working memory with components that pupils have not become fluent with
- sequenced – composites built on secure components
- to build towards those end points. (SIH 243)

If nothing has altered in long-term memory, nothing has been learned

- learning as an alteration in long-term memory
- pupils understand key concepts, they transfer key knowledge to long-term memory and apply it fluently. (SIH 235)

National assessments and examinations

useful indicators of pupils' outcomes ... but it does not constitute a substitute for inspectors' first-hand inspection activities. (SIH 240)

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities

Inspectors are guided when exploring the quality of the curriculum to consider important factors. The first listed is, 'the extent to which the school's curriculum is ambitious and designed to give pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils (including pupils with SEND) the knowledge they need to take advantage of opportunities, responsibilities and experiences in later life'.

Also, 'The school does not offer disadvantaged pupils (including pupils with SEND) a reduced curriculum.'

When noting the impact of the curriculum, the handbook is explicit that all the bullet points apply to, 'all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils (including those with SEND)'. (SIH 227)

There is a whole section with guidance on inspection of provision for pupils with SEND. (SIH 264 to 268)

Section 2: Summary of changes

October 2023:

- providing more detail on what evidence inspectors will ask schools to provide in relation to safeguarding.
- clarifying that inspectors will want schools to provide details about adults living on school sites.
- clarifying that inspectors will look at attendance when carrying out ungraded inspections of schools.
- minor changes to take account of the new Department for Education's exclusions and suspensions guidance.

Previous changes outlined in the update for autumn 1 covered:

- A revised complaints procedure
- Inspecting safeguarding
- Culture of safeguarding
- Sharing the inspection outcome
- When discussing areas of weakness
- Code of conduct referenced explicitly
- Schools raising concerns
- Behaviour and attendance
- DfE minimum expectations of 32.5 hours (non-statutory)
- Separation by sex

What evidence inspectors will ask schools to provide in relation to safeguarding

All schools should have an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

This means they:

- protect pupils from serious harm, both online and offline;
- are vigilant, maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here';
- are open and transparent, sharing information with others and actively seeking expert advice when required and making sure all safeguarding decisions are accessible for appropriate scrutiny, being accepting of challenge to ensure the right decisions are made, and accepting that there may be safeguarding issues in any provision at any time (see also paragraph 424 of ['Keeping children safe in education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges'](#));
- ensure that all those who work with pupils are trained well so that they understand their responsibilities and the systems and processes that the school operates and are empowered to 'speak out' where there may be concerns;
- actively seek and listen to the views and experiences of pupils, staff and parents, taking prompt but proportionate action to address any concerns, where needed;
- have appropriate child protection arrangements, which:
 - identify pupils who may need early help, and who are at risk of harm or have been harmed. This can include, but is not limited to, neglect, abuse (including by their peers), grooming, exploitation, sexual abuse and online harm;
 - secure the help that pupils need and, if required, refer in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help;
 - manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to pupils.
- are receptive to challenge and reflective of their own practices to ensure that safeguarding policies, systems, and processes are kept under continuous review.

Inspectors will not use the four-point grading scale for this aspect of the school. However, inspectors will always make a written judgement under 'leadership and management' in the report about whether the arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective.

Details about adults living on school sites

If adults do live on the premises, inspectors will consider the school's risk assessment in assessing the school's safeguarding. Schools will be expected to demonstrate they have fully assessed any risks to children, including in their safeguarding check of residents, in their assessing of access between the residential accommodation and the rest of the premises, and in their consideration of other individuals (such as family members and visitors) that will access the residential accommodation.

Inspectors will look at attendance when carrying out ungraded inspections of schools

Specific matters for ungraded inspections

- Attendance – inspectors will consider whether the school is doing all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance (SIH 148)

One of five specific matters. (Previously four specific matters)

Note: Gillian Keegan MP, Secretary of State named improving attendance at schools as one of her highest priorities. (Secretary of State for Education January start-of-term live event 16/01/2024)

Exclusions and suspensions guidance (SIH)

300. If a school uses suspensions, inspectors will evaluate their effectiveness, including the rates, patterns and reasons for suspensions and whether any pupils are repeatedly suspended. Schools should have a strategy for reintegrating a pupil who returns to school following a suspension and for managing their future behaviour. Inspectors will consider how well the school is recognising and acting to address any patterns that exist. This is because disruptive behaviour or sudden changes in behaviour can be an indication of unmet needs or a change in another aspect of a young person's life.

301. Headteachers have the right to exclude pupils when there are legitimate reasons for them to do so. Used correctly, exclusion is a vital measure for headteachers to use. Exclusions must be legal and justified. Permanent exclusions should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy, and when allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

302. Inspectors will consider whether the school is developing the use of alternative strategies to exclusion and taking account of any safeguarding risks to pupils who may be excluded. Inspectors will recognise when schools are doing all that they can to support pupils at risk of exclusion, including through tenacious attempts to engage local support services.

Section 3: Additional information

- Ofsted webinars and blogs:
 - [Improving school attendance - Ofsted: schools and further education & skills \(FES\) \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)
 - [How we inspect safeguarding in schools - Ofsted: schools and further education & skills \(FES\) \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)
- Press releases:
 - [School and further education inspections to begin from 22 January - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
 - [Sir Martyn Oliver begins term at Ofsted with mental health awareness training for inspectors - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

This includes introducing The Big Listen.

- Recently announced changes to school inspections include:
 - scheduling inspectors to return more quickly to schools graded inadequate because of ineffective safeguarding but which are otherwise performing well;
 - changes to Ofsted’s complaints process following a consultation held last year;
 - the introduction of a duty helpline to take calls directly from providers during and after an inspection;
 - changes to school handbooks, to make clear that school leaders can be joined by colleagues in meetings with inspectors, and can share inspection outcomes with colleagues, family, medical advisers, and their wider support group, before sharing with parents;
 - delivering seminars across all Ofsted’s regions to support leaders of previously exempt outstanding schools ahead of their next inspection;
 - Further changes will be announced soon – as Ofsted continues to respond to the coroner’s findings and her regulation 28 report.

Date: Wednesday 18 October 2023

Time: 4:30pm - 5:30pm

Slides from webinars are available from this site as well.

[Ofsted webinars for schools \(smartsurvey.co.uk\)](https://smartsurvey.co.uk)