



Schools Alliance for Excellence Ofsted Changes Webinar Questions and Answers

My question is around the timing of inspections. How many years after the last 'good' outcome will a school expect to be inspected again?

Ofsted intends to carry out full inspections every 4 years as part of the routine cycle under the new model, for schools that are not in a category requiring monitoring. In the published guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-toolkit-operating-guide-and-information/inspection-information-for-state-funded-schools-for-use-from-november-2025#types-of-schools-we-inspect>) it states 'Schools are inspected approximately once every 4 years'.

If you are a current RI school, will there be monitoring visits once the new framework starts or will we go straight into a full inspection under the new framework?

The current documentation indicates that the school's next inspection is likely to be a full inspection.

Will the calls informing schools about inspection still take place only on Mondays?

This is not yet confirmed in the published materials (not in the sources currently available). However, it would seem likely due to the education sectors generally positive view on this approach.

What are the timings of the next inspection if you recently received an 'improving' letter?

There is no fixed/certain next inspection date indicated in the current information linked with an 'improving letter'. It would seem likely that the school's next inspection would be four years from the time of the inspection that resulted in an improving letter.

Does that mean that SLT can no longer be in on the phone call? Is it just the nominee?

The nominee can attend. In the past senior staff have been included and it is likely that this will continue. The publicly published materials do not say that other senior leaders cannot be present.

Can only the nominee attend the planning call or can other members of SLT attend as well?

As above, there is no explicit prohibition in the published material that only the nominee may attend.

Will schools with less than 150 pupils have 2 days?

The new model does not yet clearly quantify the position for small schools under 150 that existed previously. This is likely to be the case because under the previous framework it was small schools under 150 that had a section 8 inspection and not a full section 5 inspection that had two inspectors for one day.

Can you confirm if the second call is a phone call or a video call as I have heard it is a video call.

In the operating guide for inspectors it states under the 'Planning call' section that inspectors should 'Call the school at the time agreed in the notification call. This is normally a video conference call, unless technology does not allow this.'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-toolkit-operating-guide-and-information/school-inspection-operating-guide-for-inspectors-for-use-from-november-2025#planning-call>



What does the inclusion strand look like in a special school inspection?

The inclusion strand is the same across different settings within the framework that Ofsted inspects.

Clarification on the requirements for AP for Special schools might be helpful.

Schools must take a proactive and rigorous approach to ensure the provision is safe, appropriate, and effective. Schools should check the quality of the alternative provision before placing pupils there and ensure that the provider can meet the specific needs of the pupil. Schools should have robust systems to monitor attendance and engagement, track academic progress and evaluate the impact of the provision on pupil outcomes. The school retains legal responsibility for safeguarding pupils in AP. They must ensure the provider has appropriate safeguarding policies and practices. Carries out suitable checks on staff (e.g. DBS checks). There should be clear lines of communication between the school and the AP provider.

If a school is an improving school which can be evidenced by data but is still below National Average for GCSE results will it still be graded as improvement needed even if Progress measures are in line with National Average and moving in the right direction. This seems a bit harsh if, in comparison, a school is above national average but declining being graded as meeting expected standard.

The tool kit confirms that when inspectors evaluate achievement in schools with secondary-age pupils, they consider:

- whether pupils achieve well in national tests and examinations
- the extent to which pupils make progress across the whole curriculum and through key stage 3, in preparation for key stage 4 and post-16 study
- the extent to which gaps in knowledge are tackled for pupils who are at the early stages of securing their foundational knowledge (including reading fluency), so that they can access the wider curriculum

Do we know where the opportunities will come for HoDs to engage in reflections, or learning walks? Where the grading criteria refer to leaders, can we assume this is all leaders - middle and senior?

If a head of department can contribute to providing evidence and information about the school's work and impact on students, they should be enabled to participate in inspection activities. Where, in the grading criteria, it refers to leaders that relates to leaders in different roles and with different responsibilities.

When can a 'good' school whose last two inspections were section 8 ones expect their next inspection under the new framework?

Schools are usually inspected approximately every four years from the time of the previous inspection, including if it was a section 8 inspection.

Do you get a few words/narration under each judgement?

The new report card format will include narrative explanations of strengths and areas for improvement.



Can you clarify 'known to social services' e.g. if a family have had an early help referral but not engaged would they need to be recorded?

Ofsted uses the term 'pupils known to social services' to include all children receiving support or intervention from social care, ranging from early help to children in care. Clearly, social services will be aware of pupils for whom a referral has been made.

What will the time frame for re-inspection be for a school that achieved outstanding in all areas last academic year?

The timeframe is within the four-year cycle. However, any school may be reinspected sooner if there are concerns about safeguarding, pupil behaviour or attendance or leadership and management. Concerns may also include if there is a significant decline in outcomes or performance data or the school undergoes a significant change.

Will attainment be based on trends in national data or last year? Schools can have a challenging cohort which doesn't achieve similar to previous years or predicted future years.

The tool kit states: In schools where published data from national tests and examinations is available, inspectors consider:

- what the published data indicates about achievement over time, and use this as a starting point for discussions with leaders about achievement
- how comprehensive the picture presented by published outcomes is (for example, what proportion of pupils or subjects the data is available for) and will be aware of the data's gaps or limitations, for example in relation to small cohorts; inspectors take into account that published outcomes do not reflect the achievement of pupils in every year group, or of some groups, such as some pupils with SEND
- how compelling the picture presented by published outcomes is (for example, the consistency of outcomes over time and whether performance is in line with, exceeds or falls below national averages)
- evidence gathered on site to provide a fuller picture of achievement over time, particularly for groups of pupils or phases for which published data is not available
- what published data, set alongside evidence gathered on site, indicates about pupils' achievement over time

How might a Junior School demonstrate progress in the achievement section?

Evidence could include:

- Capturing pupils talking (this could be through video/audio) about what they've learned and make links across learning
- Pupils' books and other work show increasing knowledge sophistication, depth, and independence
- Pupils' work showing progression in writing quality, maths fluency or scientific enquiry.
- Senior leader lesson visit evidence to illustrate how learning deepens over time
- Provide examples of where leaders have sampled planning in different curriculum subjects and checked that the work pupils have completed matches and focuses securely on the intended learning
- Evidence that shows how gaps are closing between groups
- Share what the internal achievement information shows (Toolkit - Inspectors will not review internal data. However, they may discuss with leaders how they use internal assessment data, what it tells them about pupils' achievement and what decisions they make as a result)



Do you get the final decisions on the second day?

Yes. It states in the operating guide for inspectors that on 'Day 2 - This meeting is the formal grading meeting. This is when you evaluate the evidence gathered, including that already shared and discussed at the reflection meetings. Provisional, final grades will be determined based on a 'secure fit'.'

Do leaders get to be part of that grading meeting?

Yes. It states in the operating guide that in relation to the grading meeting that 'Leaders and the nominee (where relevant) should be invited to attend this meeting.'