

Handy Guide to...

Ofsted's Inspection Framework

Part 1: Quality of Education



Introduction



This term sees the start of a new academic year, and with it the implementation of Ofsted's new Education Inspection Framework (EIF). Marking a significant shift from the outgoing framework, the EIF has, at its heart, a renewed focus on the quality of a school's curriculum with a view to putting "a single conversation about education at the centre of inspection."

In this, the first of a series of EIF guides, we have looked across and synthesised the various sources of information from Ofsted and from initial inspections, to summarise the key changes and their possible implications.

Quick links



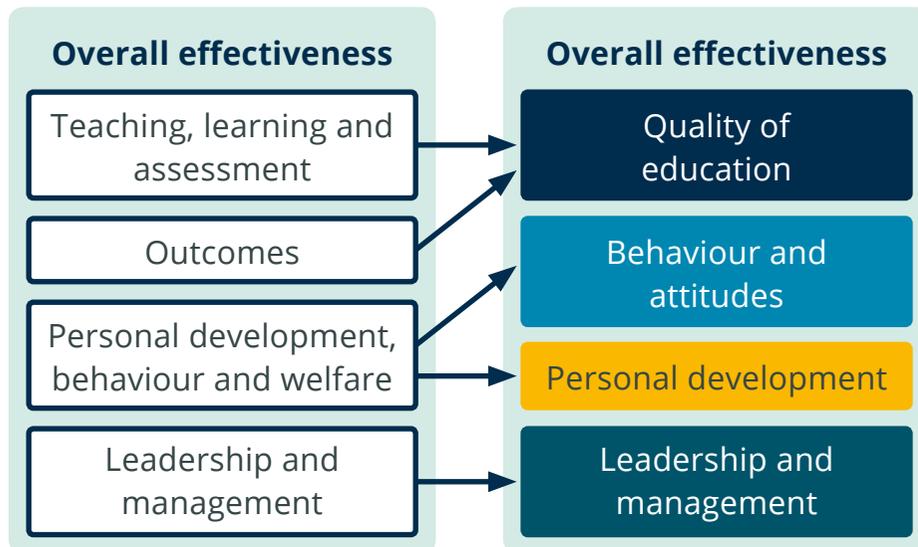
- ▶ The full text of the new [Education Inspection Framework](#)
- ▶ Ofsted's guidance on how they will [inspect the curriculum](#)
- ▶ The [handbook](#) that Ofsted inspectors will use to guide their inspection
- ▶ Ofsted's [overview of research](#) used to inform its development of the EIF
- ▶ One school's [account](#) of their experience of piloting the new inspection framework
- ▶ Ofsted's [School inspection update](#) (September 2019)
- ▶ [One Trust leader's account](#) of inspection under the new framework



The new EIF: key headlines

The introduction of a new inspection framework brings with it a huge amount of detailed information – the framework itself and numerous supporting documents, including inspection handbooks, overviews of research studies that inform the new EIF, guidance on how the quality of a curriculum in particular will be inspected, and so on. But what are the key headlines?

- ▶ The on-site time for short inspections of good schools will be extended to two days.
- ▶ Three of the four key judgement areas are changing:



- ▶ The quality of a school's curriculum – how well it is planned and implemented, and the impact it has – is to be front and centre during Ofsted inspections.
- ▶ There will be a focus on whether schools are keeping their curriculum as broad as possible for as long as possible, paying particular attention to whether schools are 'narrowing' the curriculum in KS2 and KS3.
- ▶ There will be less reliance on internal assessment data (although Ofsted have recently indicated that they will consider how effectively school leaders draw on such data in their decision-making).

In this guide, we focus primarily on the first key judgement area – Quality of Education – in the context of the guidance provided for maintained schools and academies.

Quality of Education

What will inspectors be judging?



With the new framework comes a noticeable shift in Ofsted's focus – away from internal assessment data as the primary focus of conversations, and towards matters of how effectively schools are planning, delivering and assessing the impact of their curriculum.

Inspection of a school's curriculum – or the Quality of Education – is itself to be broken down into three key areas:

- 1 Curriculum Intent:** what a school plans or intends to teach, whether that 'intended' curriculum is of an appropriate level of ambition for all students, and whether there is a logical coherence to the sequencing of learning in the curriculum.
- 2 Curriculum Implementation:** the measures put in place to effectively deliver your intended curriculum. This includes factors such as the level of subject knowledge of teachers, how effectively assessment is used to check understanding and inform teaching, and how well teachers present the learning and identify and respond to misconceptions. It is the taught or experienced curriculum.
- 3 Curriculum Impact:** what students have learnt from the taught curriculum. The judgement of this includes, but is not limited to, performance in national examinations. It also refers to the knowledge and skills that students will have developed through the taught curriculum.

Focus on: Preferred pedagogical approaches?

Ofsted has explicitly stated that it does not advocate that any particular approach to teaching should be used exclusively and that different approaches to teaching can be effective if used appropriately. However, in its [Education Inspection Framework: Overview of Research document](#), Ofsted does outline what it believes to be the characteristics of effective teaching according to educational research.



Focus on: A single view of curriculum

Whilst it is useful to break down how one thinks about one's curriculum using the categories of Intent, Implementation and Impact, it is equally worth noting that Ofsted will never treat 'the three Is' as disconnected sub-judgements. As outlined in Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook, "Inspectors will always seek to connect and triangulate evidence across the 'quality of education' judgement to form a single view of the quality of education provided." In other words, it is vital for your curriculum to be strong and consistent across Intent, Implementation and Impact if it is to be deemed effective overall.



What questions will Ofsted ask and what evidence will they be looking for when assessing the quality of a school's curriculum?



Ofsted's [School Inspection Handbook](#) details the specific evidence they will seek during an inspection, organised under the three Is - Intent, Implementation and Impact.



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Intent

How far are leaders following the national curriculum or a curriculum of similar breadth and ambition?

How carefully have leaders considered the end points that the curriculum is building towards and what pupils will be able to know and do at those end points?

How have leaders sequenced the curriculum so that pupils build their knowledge and skills towards those end points?

Have leaders ensured content will be taught in a logical progression, so that all pupils acquire the intended knowledge and skills?

In primary in particular, how has the curriculum been designed so that pupils read at an age-appropriate level?

Focus on: Who will Ofsted talk to?

Schools are already feeding back that, under the new EIF, Ofsted inspectors spend far more time interviewing and talking to middle leaders than under the outgoing framework. It will be important, therefore, that everyone involved in the planning and delivery of a curriculum is clear and aligned on the purpose of the curriculum and the choices the school has made in terms of what is taught and when.



Focus on: Supporting NQTs

Some of the first inspection reports under the new framework show that Ofsted will be keen to understand what schools are doing to support NQTs – in terms of the induction process, what training is in place and how well NQTs understand the school's approach to behaviour management, curriculum design, safeguarding and so on. Methods to assess this may range from a conversation with SLT and middle leaders to 1:1 interviews with all NQTs in a school.



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Implementation

Discussions with curriculum leaders, subject leaders and teachers about the curriculum for each subject, the intended end points and their view of how pupils are progressing through the curriculum

Discussions with subject specialists and leaders about the content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of teachers and what is done to support them

Discussions with classroom teachers about how often they are expected to record, upload and review data

Observations of, and interviews with, pupils or classes, including scrutiny of pupils' work

Review of schemes of work or other long-term planning

Focus on: Ofsted's definition of learning

Ofsted has defined learning as 'an alteration in long-term memory'. In their [School Inspection Handbook](#), they are careful to draw a distinction between genuine learning – in which pupils connect new and existing knowledge and develop a fluency of knowledge – and the recalling of disconnected facts through simple memorisation.



Focus on: The involvement of pupils and their work

Learning walks are key to Ofsted's methodology for understanding what is happening in a school. Some of the early feedback from schools who have undergone inspection shows the important role that pupils and their work will have in informing the inspectors' judgements. Scrutiny of pupil work will often involve a discussion between the inspector and the subject leader as to what the pupil's work indicates about the quality of the school's curriculum. There may also be a comparison of student work across year groups or between different ability sets. Additionally, in-depth conversations may be held with pupils to understand what they have learnt and retained. For example, pupils may be asked to recall and describe their learning from the previous year or they may be asked to show their books and talk about what they have learnt.



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Impact

The progress pupils are making in terms of knowing and remembering more

First-hand evidence of how pupils are doing, drawn from interviews, lesson visits, work scrutinies and so on

Information about the destinations to which pupils progress after leaving school

Discussions with pupils to understand what they remember about what they have been taught

How well SEND pupils are prepared for the next stage of education

In primary school, listening to a range of pupils read

National performance data around pupils' progress and attainment

Focus on: Internal assessment data

*Ofsted has consistently said they will **not** look at internal assessment data as a means of assessing the impact of a school's curriculum. They will, however, be interested in understanding why a school has collected the assessment data they have, and how they are using that data to inform their curriculum and teaching.*



Focus on: Assessment in the new EIF

When it comes to a school's use of assessment, Ofsted will pay careful attention to whether an appropriate balance is being struck between gathering useful assessment information that informs the teaching of the curriculum and the need to avoid over-burdening teachers. Ofsted supports the view of the Teacher Workload Advisory Group, which recommends no more than two to three data drops per year. Schools choosing to have more than this will need a clear rationale for doing so, including an explanation of how this is manageable for staff.



How will Ofsted inspect the quality of our curriculum?



At the heart of the debate around the new inspection framework has been the matter of how Ofsted will ensure consistency of inspection and judgement of schools' curricula.

Ofsted extensively piloted the new inspection framework prior to its national roll-out and arrived at the inspection methodology detailed in its [Inspecting the Curriculum document](#). This can be summarised as follows:

Step 1: Top-level view

The relevant school leader will receive a 90-minute phone call from the lead inspector on the day before the inspection is due to start. This conversation will be with a view to the lead inspector understanding in more detail areas such as:

- ▶ the progress the school has made since their last inspection
- ▶ the headteacher's own view of what the school's strengths and areas for development are – particularly in relation to the school's curriculum.

This same phone call will also include discussion around which specific subjects and year groups will be the focus of the inspection. Feedback from some of the pilot inspections has indicated there is some scope for school leaders to negotiate and influence the choice of subjects, although this may vary on a case-by-case basis.

Focus on:

Ofsted's [School Inspection Handbook](#) details the information a school will be expected to provide at 8 a.m. on the day of the inspection. Schools involved in pilot inspections fed back that having this information readily available ensured a smoother, calmer start to the inspection.



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Step 2: Deep Dives

From the initial phone call, inspectors will have heard the headteacher's view about what is happening in their school. The Deep Dives that follow are, to quote a key Ofsted mantra, an opportunity to 'see that in action together'. A number of subjects will be chosen as the focus for these Deep Dives:

- ▶ In primary schools, reading will always be the focus of a Deep Dive along with one or more foundation subjects, and there will 'often' be a Deep Dive in mathematics.
- ▶ In secondary schools, between four and six subjects will be focused on, across a 'wide variety' of pupils and year groups.

Focus on: Lesson observations

Under the new inspection framework, the focus of lesson observations is on the connectedness within a sequence of lessons – Ofsted will not be observing or grading the quality of a single lesson in isolation. It is likely that between four and six lessons will constitute a 'sample'. As well as evidence of the Quality of Education, these lesson observations will also provide evidence contributing towards the Behaviour and Attitudes judgement.



Focus on: Breadth and balance at Key Stage 3

KS3 has been the subject of much debate and the message from the first inspections under the new framework seems clear: ensure that your curriculum model fully delivers the national curriculum for key stage 3. Reducing the number of subjects, or curtailing the amount of time devoted to subjects at KS3 in a way that limits the depth of study, is unlikely to be looked upon favourably by Ofsted. Where schools do choose to finish KS3 early, they will need a clear rationale for doing so.



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The Deep Dives will then focus on a number of factors to help form a judgement on the Quality of Education:

- ▶ An evaluation of senior leaders' intent for the curriculum in that particular subject.
- ▶ An evaluation of curriculum leaders' thinking and planning, such as why they have chosen certain content and why they are teaching that content in a particular order.
- ▶ Visits to a sample of lessons, with a focus on how those lessons connect and build on each other (as far as is possible, Ofsted would like these to be joint visits between inspectors, the headteacher and curriculum leaders).
- ▶ Scrutiny of the work that pupils produce (this will be used to inform the inspectors' view of whether students know more and can do more and whether the intended curriculum is being realised).
- ▶ Discussions with teachers to explore their understanding of the purpose of a lesson (or lessons), how it fits into a broader sequence of learning, and what they know about pupils' existing levels of knowledge and understanding.
- ▶ Discussions with pupils to understand to what extent they recall their learning.

Focus on: Work scrutiny

In each Deep Dive, it is likely inspectors will look to 'review' a minimum of six pieces of pupil work from each lesson they visit and then to 'scrutinise' work from at least two year groups in more depth. Where possible, this scrutiny will be carried out jointly with teachers and leaders and will focus on how pupils' work shows evidence of progress in knowledge, understanding and skills towards defined endpoints.



Focus on: Shared understanding of curriculum intent

Ofsted's guidance and feedback from pilot inspections show the importance of all members of staff – from senior and middle leaders to individual teachers – having a shared understanding of the curriculum intent and the rationale for the curriculum sequencing. Schools where understanding of curriculum intent and sequencing is limited to SLT or to curriculum leaders are less likely to perform well against Ofsted's criteria.



Focus on: Homework

Ofsted will no longer check on schools' homework policies and whether they are setting an appropriate amount of homework. Nor will Ofsted ask parents for their views about their children's homework.



When does the new EIF come into effect?



Whilst the new EIF is already live and in use (as of 2nd Sept 19), Ofsted has acknowledged that developing an effective curriculum takes time and that schools may be at different parts of the process of developing or strengthening their curriculum. In an effort to ensure schools are treated fairly during the introduction of a new inspection framework, Ofsted has agreed to put certain 'transition arrangements' in place:

- ▶ Inspectors will draw on their professional judgement when a school has taken appropriate action but is still in the early stages of developing its curriculum.
- ▶ Ofsted defines 'appropriate actions' as those which are likely to result in a 'good' Quality of Education judgement within two years, all other things being equal.
- ▶ These transition arrangements will only apply to a judgement that the school is 'good'.

Focus on: Transition in primary

Ofsted makes one important exception to the above transition arrangements. In schools with primary-aged pupils, the transition arrangements will not apply to reading, writing and mathematics – they would only apply to science and the foundation curriculum. If a school's teaching of reading is not judged 'good' then the school would not be good.



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Find out how we can help you by emailing: **curriculum@pearson.com** or find out more about our work at **go.pearson.com/Ofstedguide1**

Look out for forthcoming parts in our Handy Guide to Ofsted's Inspection Framework:

Part 2: Leadership and Management

Part 3: Personal Development

Part 4: Behaviour and Attitudes



Please note this summary prepared by Pearson of Ofsted's EIF document is intended as a helpful reference. Pearson is not responsible for the contents of the EIF and schools are advised to refer to the full version for any reliance on the document.