

Pocket Watch: Ofsted Annual Report

2012/66

28 November 2012

“Education England is not yet on the medal podium but is picking up pace”

Introduction

The main message that came out from this year's Ofsted Chief Inspector's [Report](#), which was released this week, was that there was still too much variability in the quality of provision in different parts of the country. To use the cliché, it's a postcode lottery: *"some have a better than 90% and some worse than 50% chance to attend a good or better school depending on where they live."* The point was hammered home by the various listings of Local Authorities indicating where such provision could be found. It's an issue that the new Chief Inspector is keen to address and for which he has set up a high-level task force which will report next year and where Ofsted is moving ahead to set up a new regional tier. Overall, inspection evidence suggests that 70% of providers are good or better which in global terms means, as the quote implies, *'fair but could do better'*

What were the main themes in the Report?

In all there were six. First, the importance of leadership and the need to use new freedoms to raise performance levels; *"they (heads and principals) are in the driving seat in a way I would never have thought possible when I first became a head."* Second, the need to raise performance in the 30% of schools not yet good. Third, ensuring post-16 providers concentrate on high-value provision. Fourth, squeezing out poor provision at a local level, more difficult perhaps when schools move outside Local Authority control. Fifth, improving the quality of provision in early years and sixth, setting up a new regional tier

What points stand out for schools?

First, schools are getting better and *"the momentum for a self-improving system is gathering pace."* Second, some lessons are still too formulaic but the quality of teaching is improving and by the way, *"Ofsted does not have a preferred teaching style."* Third, more needs to be done to reduce attainment gaps using, for instance, the pupil premium more effectively

What points stand out for FE?

First, overall effectiveness of the sector is improving but *"the proportion of colleges judged inadequate or satisfactory is the highest it has been over the past three years."* Second, providers should not rely on low value qualifications to boost success rates, the emphasis must be on best preparation for the world of work. Third, success rates in functional skills continue to remain low and more should be done to ensure the Level 2 threshold is reached by age 19

Some of the data

Schools

- *'20 years ago only 38% of 16 yr olds achieved 5 or more A*-C GCSEs, now it's 59%'*
- *"76% of schools are good or better compared with 64% five years ago"*
- *"Over 2m children attend schools that fall short of being good or outstanding"*
- *"48% of schools previously judged to be satisfactory and re inspected this year have improved to become good or better"*

FE

- *"Almost 1.5m learners are being supported by providers who are not yet good"*
- *"Of all providers inspected this year, only 56% were judged good or outstanding for teaching and learning"*
- *"The overall success rate for long qualifications is 80%, a 10% increase on five years ago"*
- *"Success rates in functional skills at level 2 were 47% for English and 55% for maths"*



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