

Education inspections in the summer term

Ofsted will inspect schools and further education & skills (FES) providers in the summer term to provide reassurance about how well children and learners are catching up, but it will not resume a full programme of graded inspections until September.

Following extensive discussion with government and education leaders, Ofsted today confirmed that it will undertake on-site, lighter-touch inspections in the summer term. Unlike 'full' inspections, these visits will allow inspectors to assess how well schools and FES providers are educating their learners and keeping them safe, but they will not result in a grade.

However, where the evidence strongly suggests that a school's current grade is no longer a fair reflection of its work – for example where the school is graded 'inadequate' or 'requires improvement' but has clearly improved – inspectors will be able to convert to a full, graded inspection either immediately or later in the term. As always, Ofsted will do the same if a visit to a higher-graded school highlights a significant cause for concern.

Ofsted is currently piloting some limited changes to inspection methods to take account of the challenges raised by COVID-19. An updated set of inspection handbooks with full details of these changes will be published after the Easter break. Ofsted is also working closely with Sir Kevan Collins on how its work can support the longer term education recovery.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman said:

Inspections play an important role. They look at the quality of education received by children, they provide information to parents and the government, and they help headteachers identify areas for improvement.

Our inspections this summer will recognise the current challenges facing schools and help support the catch up of all pupils. We will not grade schools before the autumn – unless we see significant improvement or we identify significant concerns. This continues our step-by-step approach towards a full programme of graded inspections in the autumn.

Any graded inspections carried out in the summer term will maintain the 4 key education inspection framework (EIF) judgements, but with additional flexibility in recognition of current contexts.

All inspection activity will typically be on site. Before the inspection, providers and inspectors will agree safety measures to ensure the inspection is COVID-19 secure. Inspectors will also take a lateral flow test before

arriving at the setting.

Schools

Monitoring inspections will begin from 4 May, under the EIF. These will not result in a change of grade.

Where inspectors find evidence that an inadequate school has improved, they can convert the monitoring visit to a full inspection, which would be graded. If schools judged 'requires improvement' on 2 or more consecutive occasions are found to have improved, inspectors will recommend that a full inspection is carried out before the end of the summer term.

Ofsted will also inspect 'good' schools that, due to the pandemic, have not had an inspection within the statutory 5-year window.

Ofsted will also inspect some 'outstanding' schools that request an inspection, prioritising those that have gone the longest without an inspection.

Other than where significant concerns are raised, Ofsted will not inspect secondary schools during the first half of the summer term, to allow them to focus on teacher-assessed grades.

Ofsted will continue to prioritise emergency inspections of all schools where significant concerns are raised.

Further education providers

New provider monitoring visits (NPMVs) will continue throughout the summer term. And Ofsted will continue to conduct emergency monitoring visits or full inspections of providers where serious concerns are identified.

From 4 May, monitoring visits to requires improvement and inadequate providers will also resume, where appropriate.

Full EIF inspections of new providers that have had an NPMV will also begin in the summer term.

Early years

Graded inspections of some registered early years providers will begin from 4 May. Ofsted will continue to carry out urgent inspections where there are significant concerns about a provider.

Non-association independent schools

Additional inspections of non-association independent schools, as commissioned by DfE, will continue throughout the summer term. And from 4 May, standard inspections of some independent schools will resume.

Initial teacher education

Initial teacher education (ITE) inspections will begin from 4 May. These will be carried out in line with Ofsted's new ITE inspection framework.

For more on plans under each inspection remit, visit the [Ofsted: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update](#).