

Press release: Chief Inspector sets out vision for new Education Inspection Framework

Summary:

- Amanda Spielman proposes 4 new inspection judgements
- schools will no longer receive a separate grade for outcomes for pupils
- focus will be on the substance of education and a broad curriculum
- more involvement for classroom teachers
- consultation on draft framework to be launched in January

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman today announced details of planned changes to the way Ofsted inspects schools, colleges, further education institutions and early years settings from September 2019. These changes will move Ofsted's focus away from headline data to look instead at how schools are achieving these results, and whether they are offering a curriculum that is broad, rich and deep, or simply teaching to the test.

Speaking to school leaders at the annual SCHOOLS NorthEast summit in Newcastle, Ms Spielman said that these changes will be designed to allow teachers and leaders to focus more of their time on the real substance of education.

Read the [Chief Inspector's full speech at the SCHOOLS NorthEast summit](#).

Ms Spielman acknowledged that the current inspection model has contributed to excessive workload in some schools, much of which falls on classroom teachers. She said that when it comes to assessing a school, Ofsted should complement, rather than intensify, performance data. It should reward school leaders who are ambitious for their pupils, rather than those who jump through hoops. Therefore, the new framework will place greater emphasis on the substance of education, and actively discourage unnecessary data collection.

Ms Spielman said:

For a long time, our inspections have looked hardest at outcomes, placing too much weight on test and exam results when we consider the overall effectiveness of schools. The cumulative impact of performance tables and inspections, and the consequences that are hung on them, has increased the pressure on school leaders, teachers and indirectly on pupils to deliver perfect data above all else.

But we know that focusing too narrowly on test and exam results can often leave little time or energy for hard thinking about the curriculum, and in fact can sometimes end up making a casualty of it. The bottom line is that we must make sure that we, as an inspectorate, complement rather than intensify performance data.

Because our curriculum research, and a vast amount of sector feedback, have told us that a focus on performance data is coming at the expense of what is taught in schools. Our new focus will change that, bringing the inspection conversation back to the substance of young people's learning and treating teachers as experts in their field, not just data managers. I don't know a single teacher who went into teaching to get the perfect progress eight score. They go into it because they love what they teach and want children to love it too. That is where the inspection conversation should start and with the new framework we have an opportunity to do just that.

Ms Spielman announced that Ofsted will consult on the introduction of a new judgement for 'quality of education'. This will replace the current 'outcomes for pupils' and 'teaching, learning and assessment' judgements with a broader, single judgement.

This new judgement will allow Ofsted to recognise primary schools that, for example, prioritise phonics and the transition into early reading, and which encourage older pupils to read widely and deeply. And it will make it easier for secondary schools to do the right thing, offering children a broad range of subjects and encouraging the take up of core EBacc subjects at GCSE, such as the humanities and languages, alongside the arts and creative subjects.

At the same time, Ofsted will challenge those schools where too much time is spent on preparation for tests at the expense of teaching, where pupils' choices are narrowed, or where children are pushed into less rigorous qualifications purely to boost league table positions.

The Chief Inspector also announced the 3 other inspection judgements that Ofsted will consult on:

- personal development
- behaviour and attitudes
- schools' leadership and management

The 'personal development, welfare and behaviour' judgement in the current framework will be split into 2 distinct areas. This change recognises the difference between behaviour and discipline in schools, and pupils' wider personal development and their opportunities to grow as active, healthy and engaged citizens.

An overall effectiveness judgement will continue to be awarded, and all judgements will be made using the current 4 point grading scale.

Responding to the suggestion that these changes should be postponed for a

year, Ms Spielman said that she was confident that this will be the most researched, evidence-based and tested framework in Ofsted's history, and that to delay would let children and teachers down. She also addressed concerns that Ofsted will have a preferred approach to the curriculum.

Ms Spielman said:

We are not talking here about an Ofsted-approved approach. We are talking about an approach that leaves plenty of space for diversity, but nevertheless makes it possible to recognise and discourage things that just aren't good enough. Our curriculum research showed quite clearly that it's possible to acknowledge a range of successful curricular approaches – approaches that cross any perceived ideological divide.

She continued:

With teacher workload and retention such pressing issues, I am firmly of the view that a focus on substance will help to tackle excessive workload. It will move inspection more towards being a conversation about what actually happens in schools. Those who are bold and ambitious and run their schools with integrity will be rewarded as a result.

And we know from talking to you, as well as from our research, that this is the right way to go. One year of delay in this framework is the equivalent of more than 8 million child years of delay and half a million teacher years of delay. In the middle of a teacher recruitment crisis, the changes to inspection simply can't wait.

Ms Spielman said the new framework will make it easier to recognise and reward the good work done by schools in areas of high disadvantage. By shifting the focus away from outcomes, Ofsted hopes to reverse the incentive for schools to put overall results ahead of individual children's needs. These changes will empower schools to always put the child first and make teaching in high disadvantage schools even more rewarding. In turn, this will encourage the best teachers to work in the schools that need them most, rather than those where their career may feel safest.

In January, Ofsted will launch a consultation on the new inspection framework. Unlike previous consultations, views will also be sought on each individual inspection handbook. Ofsted will consider all responses carefully before finalising the framework. Further details of the consultation and how to respond will be published early next year.

Notes

The 4 judgements inspectors make under the current education inspection

framework are:

- effectiveness of leadership and management
- quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- personal development, behaviour and welfare
- outcomes for children and learners