

# Press release: Ofsted launches a consultation on proposals for changes to the education inspection framework

## Summary:

- revised framework to focus inspection on what children learn through the curriculum, rather than over-reliance on performance data
- proposals will call time on the culture of 'teaching to the test' and off-rolling
- new separate behaviour judgement to give parents reassurance that behaviour is good
- most evidence-based, research-informed and tested framework in Ofsted's 26-year history

The new framework proposes a shift that will rebalance inspection to make sure that young people are being taught the best of what has been thought and said. Instead of taking exam results and test data at face value, Ofsted will look at how a nursery, school, college or other provider's results have been achieved – whether they are the result of broad and rich learning, or gaming and cramming.

Ofsted's research has found that some children are having their teaching narrowed in schools in order to boost performance table points:

- in many primary schools, rather than reading a wide range of books, some children are instead spending their time repeating reading comprehension tests
- in certain secondary schools pupils are being forced to pick exam subjects a year or more early, meaning many lose out on the arts, languages and music
- at GCSE level, pupils are being pushed away from studying EBacc subjects such as history, geography, French and German, and towards qualifications deemed to be 'easier'

Similar practices exist in the further education and skills sector, such as:

- some colleges offering 'popular' courses designed to attract maximum student numbers, rather than those which will lead to a job
- useful maths and English not being taught to support students' vocational training
- apprenticeship providers focusing on quantity rather than quality, meaning young people don't get the training they need

And in early years, instead of feeling able to spend time reading to children, or playing with them, nursery staff feel pressured into completing endless documentation to demonstrate each stage of a child's development.

The new framework will seek to tackle these practices, looking instead at every stage of education from nursery to college, whether young people are being offered a rich curriculum which is taught well and leads to them achieving their all.

- a new 'quality of education' judgement, with the curriculum at its heart
- looking at outcomes in context and whether they are the result of a coherently planned curriculum, delivered well
- no longer using schools' internal performance data as inspection evidence, to ensure inspection does not create unnecessary work for teachers
- separate judgements about learners' 'personal development' and 'behaviour and attitudes'
- extending on-site time for short inspections of good schools to 2 days, to ensure inspectors have sufficient opportunity to gather evidence that a school remains good

The 'leadership and management' judgement will remain, and will include looking at how leaders develop teachers and staff, while taking their workload and wellbeing into account. Inspectors will continue to make an overall effectiveness judgement about a provider. All judgements will still be awarded under the current 4-point grading scale. Parents will still get the information they value and understand.

The new framework builds on our existing expertise but marks a change in emphasis towards the substance of education. The proposed changes to the framework will make it easier to recognise and reward good work done by schools in areas of high disadvantage, by tackling the perverse incentives that leave them feeling they have to narrow the curriculum. Shifting the emphasis away from performance data will empower schools to always put the child first and actively discourage negative practices such as off-rolling.

Ofsted has also responded to the demand for parents to give better information about how well behaviour is managed in a school. A new separate behaviour judgement will assess whether schools are creating a calm, well-managed environment free from bullying. Alongside that, proposals for a 'personal development judgement' will recognise the work schools and colleges do to build young people's resilience and confidence in later life – through work such as [cadet forces](#), [National Citizenship Service](#), sports, drama or debating teams.

Launching the consultation in a speech to the [Sixth Form Colleges Association](#), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, will say:

The new quality of education judgement will look at how providers are deciding what to teach and why, how well they are doing it and whether it is leading to strong outcomes for young people. This will reward those who are ambitious and make sure that young people accumulate rich, well-connected knowledge and develop strong skills using this knowledge.

This is all about raising true standards. Nothing is more pernicious to these than a culture of curriculum narrowing and teaching to the test.

She will continue:

Two words sum up my ambition for the framework: substance and integrity.

The substance that has all children and young people exposed to the best that has been thought and said, achieve highly and set up to succeed.

And the integrity that makes sure every child and young person is treated as an individual with potential to be unlocked, and staff as experts in their subject or field, not just as data gatherers and process managers. And above all that you are rewarded for doing the right thing.

Ofsted is committed to making sure that any changes to the inspection framework and approach are fair, reliable and valid.

Today's proposals are the result of well over a year of research, developmental work and discussions with a wide range of stakeholders. Since June 2017, Ofsted has held over 200 engagement events attended by more than 16,000 people. The feedback from these events has helped shape the new framework and approach. More stakeholder events are planned during the course of the consultation. The draft framework criteria have also been tested in a series of pilot inspections, which will continue throughout the spring term.

The draft framework is accompanied by a research commentary which underpins the evidence base for each of its aspects. As a result, Ofsted is confident that this will be the most evidence-based, researched and transparent framework in our history.

The consultation is open until 4 April 2019. Views are sought on the overall changes to the framework as well as on how they will work in practice for the individual education remits. All responses received will be considered carefully, and will help Ofsted to refine and improve the proposed approach before the final framework and inspection handbooks are published in summer 2019.