

Summary of the changes to the new Ofsted School Inspection Handbook

Ofsted has condensed its handbook and subsidiary guidance into a single, slimmer document.

There are now just three guidance documents: The framework for school inspection (www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-school-inspection), the School inspection handbook (www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/school-inspection-handbook) and Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies (www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/inspecting-safeguarding-maintained-schools-and-academies-briefing-for-section-5-inspections).

ASCL Inspections Specialist Suzanne O'Farrell highlights the key changes within the document as below.

Key changes

- 1 Safeguarding guidance is set out in a separate document.
- 2 A graded judgement for sixth form provision.
- 3 Individual lesson observations no longer receive a grade for teaching.
- 4 Greater focus on a school's curriculum to ensure that it is appropriately broad and balanced to help prepare young people for life in modern Britain.
- 5 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is broken down into component parts.
- 6 Greater detail of provision of RE in schools both with and without a religious character.
- 7 Schools previously judged as 'good' no longer receive an interim assessment letter in the third year after their last section 5 inspection to inform them that they will not be inspected in the forthcoming year.
- 8 The criteria for unannounced inspections have been broadened.
- 9 Ofsted may schedule concurrent inspections of schools with collaborative arrangements.
- 10 For new academies, predecessor school data may be used to determine whether the school has improved, consolidated or declined but no reference made to previously identified 'areas for improvement'.
- 11 Confidential draft reports may only be shared with relevant personnel as determined by the school.

Leadership and management

Considers how well school leaders:

- 12 use accurate assessment to ensure pupils achieve the expected standard and to improve teaching and learning
- 13 create a culture of high expectations promoting scholastic excellence
- 14 demonstrate high expectations for social behaviour, respect and courtesy among pupils and staff
- 15 report to parents about a pupil's performance and areas for improvement
- 16 ensure a broad and balanced curriculum actively promotes fundamental British values
- 17 use pupil groupings to ensure the most able are stretched and the least able are well supported
- 18 enable pupils from Years 8 to 13 to have access to relevant and effective careers guidance
- 19 develop middle leaders and senior leaders and plan for succession
- 20 ensure effective support and professional development for NQTs and teachers in the early stages of their careers
- 21 ensure the requirements of the 16-19 study programme are fully met
- 22 make sure that governance – needs to ensure the rigour of assessment processes, the promotion of tolerance, the tackling of key concerns and the development of their own skills

Behaviour and safety

Where the judgements differ, the lower of the two will determine the overall judgment.

- 23 Looks at reasons for pupils taken off the roll and 'unofficial exclusion'.

- 24 Assesses pupils' understanding of a wider range of risks associated with social issues.
- 25 Focuses on schools' effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour.

Teaching and learning

- 26 Individual lessons are not graded but where there is sufficient evidence, achievement, behaviour and safety and, leadership and management may be graded.
- 27 Quality of teaching judgement is made considering the strengths and weaknesses of teaching observed across a broad range of lessons.
- 28 Schools do not need to provide records of graded lessons but will be able to discuss how they evaluate the quality of teaching.
- 29 Feedback to teachers or groups of teachers on strengths and weaknesses of what has been observed.
- 30 School leaders and teachers decide for themselves how best to teach.
- 31 Increased focus on the teaching of mathematics ensuring pupils acquire knowledge appropriate to their age and starting points.
- 32 Focus on ensuring teaching assistants are knowledgeable about pupils they support and have sufficient subject knowledge to be effective in their role.
- 33 Increased emphasis on whether teachers command the respect of their classes and set out clear expectations for pupil behaviour.
- 34 Book scrutiny assesses whether marking, assessment and testing are carried out in line with school's policy and whether they are used effectively to improve pupils' learning.

Achievement

This section has been substantially rewritten to reflect the changes to assessment in the new National Curriculum. Pupils supported by Pupil Premium funding are now referred to as 'disadvantaged' pupils.

- 35 Recognition that schools are still working on their preferred assessment options.

- 36 Evaluation of how well pupils are doing against relevant age-related expectations as set out by school and national curriculum.

- 37 Evaluation of the school's use of formative and summative assessment and how this improves teaching and raises achievement of all groups.

- 38 Closer scrutiny of pupils' work to consider their progress across the curriculum.

- 39 Assessment of progress in literacy and maths from evidence across a range of subjects.

- 40 In-school gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils are considered in the context of national gaps.

- 41 Recognition that where the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is high, any in-school gaps need not be closing rapidly and that in-school gaps may well exist.

Judging the sixth form

- 42 An overall numerical grade is given; a grade that is higher or lower than a school's overall effectiveness grade is clearly explained.

- 43 Consideration is given as to how well students' personal, social and employability skills are developed through 'non-qualification' activity.

- 44 Focus on the achievement of different groups and the extent to which gaps are closing.

- 45 Focus on well-managed, appropriate and relevant study programmes with high-quality impartial careers guidance for all pupils.

- 46 Focus on provision of high quality teaching in English and maths for those students who have not yet achieved a 'C' grade.

- 47 Focus on the support given to students to choose the most appropriate course.

- 48 The sixth form grade may not determine but can influence the overall school effectiveness grade.