



Updates from Ofsted and the DFE October 2023

Since September 2023, inspection outcomes published in Essex for primary schools have been as follows:

23 schools that were category 2 schools remained as category 2 schools
2 schools that were category 3 schools remained as category 3 schools
1 school that was a category 1 school remained as a category 1 school

1 school that was a category 3 school is now a category 2 school
1 school that was a category 4 school is now a category 2 school

2 schools that were category 2 schools are now category 3 schools
1 school that was a category 2 school is now a category 4 school

This means that of the 31 schools identified 23 remained the same, 2 improved and 3 declined.

Please click on the links below to access documents.

A useful blog from Ofsted

- [September 2023 - changes to how we inspect schools](#)
- Ofsted published a separate blog which clarifies [when schools can expect their next inspection](#)

Blog post by Lee Owston, Deputy Director, Schools and Education, followed up by a [school inspection update webinar](#) and a [podcast episode](#), all explaining some of the recent changes made to the way Ofsted inspect schools.

[Education inspection framework \(EIF\)](#) –

Updated 14 July 2023

'[Summary of changes](#)', are set out below;

New paragraphs added to outline the expectations for conduct during inspections

Removed peer on peer reference and replaced with learner on learner

New section added on evaluating safeguarding culture

[School inspection handbook](#) –

Updated 6 October 2023

'[Summary of changes](#)'.

October 2023

This summary sets out minor changes we have made to the School inspection handbook (September 2023 version), including:

- providing more detail on what evidence inspectors will ask schools to provide in relation to safeguarding, to prevent unnecessary workload for schools
- clarifying that inspectors will look at attendance when carrying out ungraded inspections of schools
- minor changes to take account of the new Department for Education's exclusions and suspensions guidance

September 2023

Schools monitoring handbook (for September 2023 version)

This summary sets out updates we have made to clarify some of the terminology we use and to address the changes we set out recently about inspection processes.

We have included new definitions that clarify the following:

- what we mean by the terms 'school', 'maintained school' and 'academy'
- what we mean by the terms 'board of governors', 'governors', 'board of trustees' and 'trustees'

- what we mean by the terms 'leaders' and 'trust leaders'

We have made amendments throughout the handbooks to apply the changes detailed above.

We have made changes to reflect the changes we have made in how we inspect safeguarding:

- we have updated the monitoring policy to include early monitoring inspections
- we have added new paragraphs on monitoring programmes for inadequate schools
- we have added a new section on monitoring programmes for schools judged inadequate solely due to ineffective safeguarding (early monitoring inspections)
- we have added new paragraphs on deeming of monitoring inspections that are inadequate with serious weakness due to ineffective safeguarding
- final feedback meeting for inadequate schools with serious weakness solely due to ineffective safeguarding

Other changes included in this update:

- a new 'conduct during inspection' section
- clarity about what we mean by 'capacity to improve'
- clarity about the monitoring process for inadequate schools that are not subject to academisation or re-brokering
- clarity on academy orders and the monitoring process

August 2023 (for September 2023 version)

This summary sets out minor changes we have made following the initial publication of the handbook for September 2023. These changes include:

- a new section on schools raising concerns
- clarification regarding the DfE's minimum expectation of at least 32.5 hours for the length of the school week

July 2023 (for September 2023 version)

This summary sets out updates we have made to clarify some of the terminology we use and to address the changes we set out recently about inspection processes. It does not include minor corrections made purely to improve readability.

We have included new definitions that clarify the following:

- what we mean by the terms 'school', 'maintained school' and 'academy'
- what we mean by the terms 'board of governors', 'governors', 'board of trustees' and 'trustees'
- what we mean by the terms 'leaders' and 'trust leaders'

We have made amendments throughout the handbooks to apply the changes detailed above.

We have also made changes that provide clarification around the role of the trust during inspection and how we judge safeguarding.

Further updates to the handbook include:

- a new 'conduct during inspection' section
- confirmation of the likely date of the next inspection for schools
- that inspectors will protect anonymity of individuals when drawing on evidence
- confirmation that evidence from pupils, parents and staff will always be considered in a proportionate way, alongside other evidence
- updates to 'behaviour' and 'attendance' sections
- clarity about what we mean by 'capacity to improve'
- clarity about what we mean by 'culture of safeguarding'
- clarification on schools' obligations in relation to 'separation by sex' and the steps inspectors should take in relation to this

[Early years inspection handbook](#) –

Updated 6 October 2023

'[Summary of changes](#)' are set out below

October 2023

Removed the duplication in the leadership and management descriptors as this information can be found in the safeguarding section of the handbook.

July 2023 (for September 2023 version)

In this update, we have amended and added information on the inspection process, including:

- how we judge safeguarding, including a definition of an open and positive culture of safeguarding
- what inspectors should consider when deciding if a provider has the capacity to improve
- who the inspection outcome may be shared with
- the link between the provider's curriculum and the behaviours and attitudes of the children at the setting
- who can be present during meetings that take place on inspection
- an amendment in the quality of education judgement to refer to how practitioners and leaders use assessment to plan suitable activities

[Risk assessment methodology for good state-funded schools](#) – Updated 14 July 2023

This is the risk assessment process that Ofsted uses when scheduling inspections of good state-funded primary and secondary schools. This update aligns the guidance with updates made to the schools inspection handbook.

Risk assessment has 2 stages:

Stage 1 involves an assessment of each school based on analysis of school-level performance and contextual data

- stage 2 involves a review of a wider range of available information
- Stage 1: analysis of school-level data

Stage 1: analysis of school-level data

- schools contextual data
- performance (progress and attainment) and subject entry data
- school workforce census data
- qualifying complaints about schools
- data collected from Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire

Stage 2: further review

SHMIs in each region review the information provided by stage 1 of the risk assessment process. Before finalising their selection, they also consider:

- the outcomes of any inspections that we have carried out since the last routine inspection
- qualifying complaints about the school referred to us by parents
- statutory warning notices
- data on potential gaming by schools, including details of schools with exceptionally high levels of pupil movement
- any other significant concerns that are brought to our attention

[Mathematics education in schools is improving despite recruitment challenges](#) - Ofsted has published [a subject report](#) looking at how mathematics is being taught in England's schools.

[Quality of history education continues to improve but inconsistency between schools remains](#) - Ofsted has published [a subject report](#) looking at how history is being taught in England's schools.

[Subject report series: geography](#) – from Ofsted See also the [press release](#) highlighting that geography teaching has improved significantly, but more focus is needed on fieldwork

[Subject report series: PE](#) – from Ofsted See also the [press release](#) reporting that schools give enough time but need to focus on a broad PE curriculum

[Subject report series: music](#) – from Ofsted See also the [press release](#) explaining that music teaching is too variable in quality and often not given enough time.

[Curriculum and subject leadership | Ofsted webinar for schools](#) - This Ofsted webinar focuses on how subject leaders are involved in Ofsted inspections. It explores the evidence we gather on deep dives, look at the findings from our recent curriculum research reviews and share insights from our subject leads.

[Best start in life: a research review for early years](#) - This is three-part subject-based curriculum research review from Ofsted focused on early years education. Ofsted have added '[Best start in life part 2: the 3 prime areas of learning](#)'. See also the accompanying [press release](#).

[Blog: giving all children the best start in life](#) - Blog post by Lee Owston, Deputy Director, Schools and Education, reflecting on the importance of this [strategic priority](#).

[Webinars: early years curriculum - a focus on communication and language](#) - Ofsted have published five short webinars. Three of them are for registered early years providers and schools. These explain: why communication and language are so important, what a good curriculum should look like to support development of communication and language, and the ways that children make progress through knowing and remembering more. The other two are specific to the type of setting: one for registered early years settings and one for schools, both explaining how we look at communication and language on inspection.

[School inspections: statistical commentaries 2022 to 2023](#) – Ofsted have updated this to include a commentary and data table on deep dives in school inspections.

Keeping children safe in education

GOV.UK

<https://www.gov.uk> > ... > [Safeguarding pupils](#)

Updated 1 September 2023

The September 2023 version of the keeping children safe in education guidance is now in force, replacing previous versions. The DFE have made meaningful amendments to paragraphs 142, about the appropriateness of filtering and monitoring systems online, and 150, about guidance and resources on inspection. Annex F has a table of substantive changes from the September 2022 guidance.

Strengthening chess in primary schools

Updated 6 October 2023

Explains how primary schools can apply for funding to increase access to chess for pupils.

PE and sport premium for primary schools

Updated 6 October 2023

How much PE and sport premium funding schools will receive for the academic year 2023 to 2024 and advice on how to spend it.

Updated the payment dates for 2023 to 2024. Added the link to the 2023 to 2024 conditions of grant.

Leading primary mathematics national professional qualification

Published 20 September 2023

A one year DFE course to help teachers learn how to use mastery approaches and teach maths effectively. This course is for:

- teachers and leaders with responsibility for leading maths across a primary key-stage or school, or those who want to have this responsibility
- teachers familiar with mastery approaches to teaching primary maths, who want to improve leadership skills in this area
- subject leaders in a school already engaged in the primary [Teaching for Mastery programme](#) or similar programme example

Funding to cover the course fees is available for most teachers and school leaders in state funded settings in England.

[Learn about funding.](#)

