



Updates from Ofsted and the DFE November 2025

Please click on the links below to access documents.

School inspection: toolkit, operating guides and information

Updated 5 November 2025- Ofsted

Ofsted have added the school monitoring operating guide for inspectors, for use from 10 November 2025. They've also clarified what is expected in terms of strong leadership and governance and clarified expectations for achievement and how it relates to attainment and progress in national tests in the state-funded schools inspection toolkit.

School inspection data summary report (IDSR) guide

Updated 4 November 2025- Ofsted

Ofsted have released the 2025 provisional primary IDSR, with several developments for the renewed inspection framework, for all schools. The IDSR guidance now reflects all new developments and data updates. The main data updates are the latest 2025 key stage 2, phonics, contextual data, 1-term absence, final exclusions for 2024 and new alternative provision placements data.

IDSR: news and updates

Updated 4 November 2025- Ofsted

What is changing in the curriculum?

The DFE reports that there will be refreshed programmes of study, building on what already works.

'The reforms will ensure that the curriculum is ordered sensibly, and with appropriate specificity, so that children and young people – including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, or who have special educational needs or disabilities – are building on their previous knowledge. A range of targeted changes alongside wider reforms will create a fresh, modern curriculum.'- DFE

Key changes include:

- **Strengthened subject curriculum:** We will refresh the programmes of study and publish these in 2027 for first teaching in 2028. We will also update our GCSEs, for first teaching from 2029 onwards
- **Skills for a changing world:** Embedding digital and media literacy, and financial education across the curriculum, and introducing new oracy frameworks

- **New languages offer:** We will explore a new languages qualification which banks progress and motivates pupils to continue studying and reap the benefits of learning a language. We will also set clearer language expectations in primary school
- **Expanded citizenship education:** Citizenship will become compulsory in key stages 1 and 2
- **Reforming computing:** Creating a broader computing GCSE, and exploring a new level 3 qualification in data science and AI
- **Triple science offer:** Working with schools to support them to develop a triple science offer for all pupils at GCSE, ahead of introducing a statutory entitlement
- **Access to enrichment:** Schools will be supported to provide their pupils with an entitlement to enrichment activities covering civic engagement, arts and culture, nature and outdoor adventure, sport and physical activities
- **Protecting breadth of education:** We are revitalising arts education and reinforcing the importance of 2 hours of PE per week throughout school
- **At GCSE level:** We are removing EBacc performance measures to ensure greater student choice and encourage more students into subjects that have limited take up. We will consult on an improved version of Progress 8 that balances a strong academic core with breadth. We are retaining the rigour of exams while reducing the amount of time spent in them
- **Improved Key Stage 3 education:** New well-sequenced curriculum that re-engages pupils and prevents their learning from stagnating in the early years of secondary school
- **Key Stage 2 writing:** Improving the assessment of writing at key stage 2 so that it has a greater focus on fluent writing
- **Year 8 reading test:** New statutory reading tests in year 8 to understand progress and make sure no child is left behind. Schools are also expected to assess progress in writing and maths
- **New V level offer:** [Reforms to post-16 qualifications](#) were announced last month in the Post-16 Skills White Paper

- **A fully digital and easily navigable national curriculum:** Visually representing links within and between subjects, with connections to prior learning to help teachers contextualise learning across traditional subject boundaries
- **Support for inclusive and adaptive teaching:** Teachers will be equipped with evidence-led resources to deliver the new curriculum using inclusive and adaptive teaching practices

For more details on any of these reforms, please see the [government's response](#) to the [Curriculum and Assessment Review](#).

New curriculum to give young people the skills for life and work

Published 4 November 2025 — DFE- Press release

Government to set out plans to bring the curriculum into the modern day and help young people step into the future

Focus on reading in secondary years to drive up standards

Published 21 October 2025 — DFE- Press release

Education Secretary confirms all pupils will sit a mandatory reading test at age 13 to drive up reading standards.

The government has announced a mandatory reading test for all children at age 13. All pupils will take the test in year 8.

Data from the new statutory assessment will be made available to Ofsted and government, but individual schools' results will not be published – as with the phonics check. Schools will make children's results available to parents.

Education inspection framework: engagement programme

Updated 4 November 2025- Ofsted

Links to the webinar recordings for each of the settings below have been added to the above document.

- Nurseries, pre-schools and other registered early years settings
- Maintained nursery schools
- State-funded primary schools
- State-funded secondary schools
- Special schools
- ITE providers who offer any or all phases of initial teacher education

[Ofsted's approach to AI](#) –

25 October 2025- Ofsted

Ofsted supports innovation and the use of AI where it improves the education and care of children. The following documents set out Ofsted's approach to the use of AI:

- [Ofsted's use of AI](#): details Ofsted's approach to using AI lawfully, ethically and responsibly in their work.
- [How Ofsted looks at AI during inspection and regulation](#): sets out the broad principles for how they will consider uses of AI encountered on inspection.

The previous document, 'Ofsted's approach to artificial intelligence (AI)', has been withdrawn.

School business professionals: training and development

Updated 31 October 2025- DFE

Sources of training and development for school business professionals (SBPs) in schools and trusts.

The DFE have updated the SBP procurement training section to include details about fully funded places on sector-specific training delivered by the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS).

School uniforms: guidance for schools

Updated 7 November 2025- DFE

The statutory guidance has been updated to include information about:

- the limit on the number of branded items of school uniform and PE kit that the government intends to apply from September 2026, when the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill receives Royal Assent
- the actions schools should take now to comply with the limit

The DFE have now published [updated statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms](#) containing both statutory and draft statutory guidance.

The draft guidance (presented in text boxes) relates to the proposed limit on compulsory branded items of uniform and PE kit. The DFE intend to introduce this limit from September 2026.

The DFE strongly advises schools to act now in readiness for 2026, including making any necessary changes to uniform policies and working with suppliers to resolve any contractual implications.

Principles for carrying out early years inspection and regulatory work without notice

Published 7 November 2025- Ofsted

Guidance for inspectors on how to decide when to inspect or visit without notice.

Principles for deciding when more than one inspector is needed for early years inspection and regulatory activity

Published 7 November 2025- Ofsted

Guidance for inspectors on how to make this decision and the process to follow.

Martyn Oliver's speech to the Confederation of School Trusts

17 October 2025 — Speech - Sir Martyn Oliver, Ofsted's Chief Inspector

The following are excerpts from Sir Martyn Oliver's speech

We're here to explore collaboration, both within our own organisations and between our organisations.

Because when we collaborate – when we speak, when we listen, when we accept challenge from one another... And particularly when we do all of this with our core mission at the heart...

That's when we help children to achieve, belong and thrive. It's the vision we should all be striving for. And those 3 aims – achieve, belong, thrive – not only chime with today's theme of flourishing but are also, together, at the heart of our new approach.

Because can you honestly, hand on heart, say that data alone gives you the full story? Can that data ever fully tell you whether every individual child is achieving, belonging, thriving and flourishing? The answer is simply: of course not. Because school performance is far more complex. It's about more than just data – and any individual piece of data compresses reality, losing that all-important detail. Relying on data alone can lead to false comparisons between schools – and, worse – a lowering of expectations.

What is needed is an inspectorate that can get beneath the skin of the data and the day-to-day reality of the school. An inspectorate that can take your unique context into account and recognise when trusts are doing really good work in very difficult circumstances, and also challenge trusts when standards can and should be higher, in spite of positive data.

Trusts weren't created to maintain the status quo. Trusts were created to raise standards higher and higher. To be true agents of change. To make improvement happen. You all have a crucial role in setting that strategic vision and in seeing it through. Some trusts are doing this exceptionally well. There are fantastic examples of trusts raising standards not just in places like London but across the whole country. What we need is for all trusts to live up to that disruptive spirit and commit to tirelessly pushing standards ever higher. It means taking risks. And it means doing the right thing even though – and especially because – it's difficult.