

London Borough of Barnet

Revised guidance for inspections of maintained schools and academies

Ofsted has significantly reduced, by over 275 pages, the amount of guidance it publishes for inspectors, schools and other stakeholders.

There are now just three guidance documents: **The framework for school inspection**; **The School inspection handbook**; and **Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies**.

Inspectors will use this new guidance for the inspection of maintained schools and academies from September 2014.

Key changes

- The revised School inspection handbook incorporates guidance and briefings for inspectors that were previously spread across a number of documents. The exception is in the area of inspecting safeguarding, where guidance is set out in a separate document.
- While there is no fundamental change to inspection methodology, inspectors will from September 2014:
 - Make graded judgements for early years and sixth form provision, following consultation earlier this year;
 - No longer record on evidence forms a grade on the quality of teaching for individual lesson observations;
 - Pay even greater attention to a school's curriculum to ensure that it is appropriately broad and balanced to help prepare young people for life in modern Britain.
- Guidance has also been revised to support inspectors in making judgements following the phased removal of National Curriculum levels from September 2014.
- Schools previously judged to be good will 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. Inspection selection policy for 'good' schools remains unchanged.
- The inspection handbook makes clear that the most important role of teaching is to promote learning and the acquisition of knowledge by pupils and to raise achievement. It reiterates Ofsted's stated policy that they have no preferred teaching style; it is up to the classroom teacher to determine how they should teach.
- There is clear guidance for inspectors on the duties and responsibilities of school governors

Key responsibilities for Governors

Inspectors should consider how governors:

- Carry out their statutory duties, such as safeguarding, and understand the boundaries of their role as governors
- Ensure that they and the school promote tolerance of and respect for people of all faiths (or those of no faith), cultures and lifestyles; and support and help, through their words, actions and influence within the school and more widely in the community, to prepare children and young people positively for life in modern Britain
- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction, including long-term planning (for example, succession)
- Contribute to the school's self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses, including the quality of teaching, and reviewing the impact of their own work
- Understand and take sufficient account of pupil data, particularly their understanding and use of the school data dashboard
- Assure themselves of the rigour of the assessment process
- Are aware of the impact of teaching on learning and progress in different subject and year groups
- Provide challenge and hold the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety, including by using the data dashboard, other progress data, examination outcomes and test results; or whether they hinder school improvement by failing to tackle key concerns or developing their own skills
- Use the pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics
- Ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively
- Are providing support for an effective headteacher
- Monitor performance management systems and understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression, including the performance management of the headteacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management
- Engage with key stakeholders
- Are transparent and accountable, including in terms of recruitment of staff, governance structures, attendance at meetings, and contact with parents and carers.