



**ALL Briefing No 41**

**Date: September 2024**

### **Theme: Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, September 2024**

Ofsted has published updates to its state-funded school inspection handbooks as well as its deferral, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy, ahead of routine school inspections returning on 23 September 2024.

#### **Background:**

##### **Our brief introduction**

The Handbook sets out the grade descriptors that inspectors use to make their judgements and on which they report.

Graded inspections are carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. They were previously known as section 5 inspections.

... Ofsted's education inspection framework (is used to) ... grade the school for each of (the) key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth-form provision) ...

... (The) handbook is primarily a guide for inspectors on how to carry out school inspections ... This handbook should be regarded not as a set of inflexible rules, but as an account of the procedures of inspection.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook-for-september-2023> (sic)

#### **Key messages:**

Our selection of significant changes to the Handbook (highlighted by **our** bold text)

- updates throughout the handbook to reflect that from September 2024, graded **inspections of state-funded schools will not include an overall effectiveness grade**
- changes throughout the handbook to reflect the previously announced updates to **ungraded inspections**

- updates to reflect that **notification for graded and ungraded inspections will now be carried out from 9.30am on the Monday of the week** we will inspect the school
- updates setting out a new '**suspend and return**' policy enabling inspectors to suspend an inspection to allow a school to resolve issues with safeguarding, where that is the only issue in the school, depending on the school's wider context
- updates to provide clarity about the different **Single Central Record requirements for maintained schools and academies** and to reflect what inspectors will check during inspection
- updates throughout the handbook to refocus ungraded inspection on determining whether the school has taken **effective action to maintain the standards** identified at the previous inspection
- updates to reflect that a school with one or more judgements of requires improvement, but which is not placed in a formal category of concern, may be subject to **monitoring**
- updates to reflect that schools where any key judgement is graded inadequate and/or safeguarding is judged to be ineffective, will be placed in a formal category of **concern**
- ungraded inspection outcomes have been updated to reflect the **removal of overall effectiveness grades**
- some references to the **COVID-19** pandemic have been **removed** in relation to maintained nursery schools, as these are now out of date
- defined what we mean by the term '**qualifying complaint**' and clarified how inspectors consider qualifying complaints made to Ofsted about a school during their preparation
- updates to explain that **aligned inspections of state-funded boarding and residential special schools are not planned for the 2024-2025** academic year
- clarified that **inspectors may discuss** with leaders their reflections on evidence being discussed during their end of day team meetings
- **removed the paragraph that explained what we analyse as part of our risk assessment process** as this is already contained within the separately published risk assessment methodology
- clarified the information that is requested and discussed during different parts of the **pre-inspection process**
- added a new section setting out clarifications about the appointment of **early career teachers in schools judged to require special measures**
- minor clarification to **align the process for handling concerns and complaints** with the deferring, pausing, and gathering additional evidence policy
- minor clarification to the '**good early years grade descriptors** to align with inspection handbooks for other remits
- updates to reflect that **the notice for urgent inspections** remains unchanged, with the addition of timings for clarity

## References:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-publishes-updates-to-school-inspection-handbooks>

Key messages taken from : <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/summary-of-changes>

## Points for reflection / action:

This Briefing is for information.

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