

Dear Colleagues

Inspection Reports

As you may have seen, the first section 5 inspection reports under the new framework are being published on the Ofsted website. The way in which we are now reporting represents the most significant change since 2005, and a very different approach.

In view of the significance of the change, we have been reviewing some of the newly published reports. While some have done a good job in reflecting what is happening in the school, we have encountered others that should be sharper, more precise about why things are as they are, and written more simply.

This is why we're using this Update and the attached examples of reports to re-visit our expectations for the revised inspection framework.

The Update contains guidance about 'jargon busting'. It also focuses on the way in which we report on schools' leadership. Every section of the report is important, but the leadership section is especially so because leadership determines the culture of the institution and is fundamental to raising standards.

We have also included an annex with some guidance on academy converters and the report template.

I hope that you find the Update useful and that after writing a new style section 5 report, it helps you to stand back and reflect on whether it paints a vivid, interesting and accurate picture of what the school is really like.

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The clarity and presentation of reports

Section 5 reports are not for other Ofsted inspectors. They are primarily for parents and carers who need to understand what we are saying.

It is essential that reports are crystal clear, written in plain English and free from jargon. Reports should not harbour woolly, convoluted phrases; simple statements and explanations provide much greater clarity and this starts with the front page which presents key information to the reader.

Avoiding ‘inspector-speak’ and jargon

The language used in the guidance and grade descriptors in the *School inspection handbook* is not appropriate for parents and carers as it uses educational jargon and coded phrases which are familiar to inspectors and schools but which mean little to parents and carers.

The following examples translate ‘inspector-speak’ into plain English:

From the inspection report – jargon and inspector speak	An alternative version
<i>Not all planning and teaching sufficiently promotes a range of high-quality skills in reading, writing, speaking and communication for all students.</i>	Pupils are not taught to read, write or speak well enough.
<i>The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching in lessons but this has not been sufficiently effective to ensure that teaching helps pupils make consistently good progress.</i>	The headteacher does not check that all teaching is good often or thoroughly enough. Because of this, some pupils do not do as well as they should, especially in years X and Y.
<i>Remaining gaps in pupils’ achievement are closing, but actions taken by senior leaders and the governing body to reduce them further are not fully robust and effective as middle leaders are not yet held accountable for pupils’ progress so that improvements are sustainable.</i>	The headteacher and governors do not check on the work of teachers in charge of different subjects often or thoroughly enough. These teachers are not held to account for the progress pupils make. This means that the better progress being made by some pupils is still precarious.
<i>A legacy of previous slow learning, while decreasing rapidly, has yet to be fully eradicated.</i>	Teachers are helping pupils catch up quickly. However there are still gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
<i>Learning in some lessons is hampered by low-level disruption where pupils are not sufficiently engaged.</i>	In some lessons learning is hindered. Pupils misbehave because the teacher does not get them involved.
<i>Many pupils are overly reliant on adult support and are unable to sustain their learning without direct intervention from</i>	Pupils rely too much on adults for help. They are not taught how to work by themselves.

<i>adults. This is because they are not given enough help to acquire the strategies they need to become independent learners.</i>	
<i>There are strengths in leadership and management but a lack of coherence diminishes their impact.</i>	Some senior staff work well individually but poor teamwork lets them down.

Reporting on what the school needs to do to improve further

Recommendations should not be too complicated and difficult for the school to act on, and monitor. Recommendations must be clear for parents.

Here are some examples of clearly stated recommendations:

- Improve standards in mathematics by:
 - helping girls improve their skills and knowledge, using real life examples and problems
 - challenging higher ability pupils by giving them more demanding, open-ended work, which encourages them to think for themselves
 - helping lower ability pupils to solve problems, using, for example, large numbers and calculating the area of shapes.
 - recognising that some pupils work more quickly than others, and adapting the pace of learning as necessary.
- Improve the standards in English, by making sure all teachers:
 - follow the school's programme for improving reading and writing
 - match individual pupils' work carefully to their abilities and make sure that the able pupils are 'stretched'.
- Improve teaching by making sure that:
 - teachers follow up the advice and instructions given after lesson observations and that managers discuss with them the difference this is making to their teaching.
- Improve the impact of the school's leaders by:
 - evaluating the impact of the pupil premium funding on pupils' achievement
 - developing the skills of the governing body especially in understanding:
 - pupils' performance data
 - how good teaching is
 - undertaking an external review of the governing body.

Reporting on the school's leadership

The leadership of the headteacher/principal, the senior team and the governors should be described in a way which tells the parents whether these leaders are making a difference. The report should convey human qualities of the leadership team as well as the extent to which it is moving the school forward. This is especially important in a school that 'requires improvement', but where nonetheless, the headteacher/principal is working hard to change the culture. For example, inspectors can say something about the profile and visibility of the leadership team, their passion for teaching and raising standards, their determination to create a positive learning environment, and their capacity to address the key issues.

The leadership of the headteacher/principal and some senior staff can be good or better, even though the school is not yet good. Where there is a newly appointed headteacher/principal endeavouring to make a difference the report should reflect the energy and drive that they have injected into the school if, indeed, that is the case. Conversely, the complacent and ineffective leader needs to know in an unambiguous fashion that their impact on the quality of teaching is minimal and they are not driving standards forward.

Inspectors should comment on whether the headteacher/principal is taking performance management seriously and is using the budget to differentiate between high and low performers. It would be good, for example, to see inspectors making specific comment on whether the quality of teaching is reflected in the proportion of teachers who are promoted and/or are making progress on the salary spine. An example of this might be:

- The quality of teaching in the core subjects is mediocre at best, and yet inspectors found that the majority of teachers in these subjects had progressed to the upper pay spine and beyond. This does not represent good value for money, and is indicative of the poor quality of teacher evaluation at this school.

Here are some examples which explain the impact of the leadership of teaching and, in particular, performance management:

L&M – outstanding

- The headteacher and senior leadership team will not allow any staff to be content with teaching which is less than good. They make weaknesses in teaching the school's top priority. Any signs of deterioration in the quality of teaching are immediately met with a bespoke and effective package of support and training for individual members of staff. Teachers' performance is monitored closely and the headteacher uses information from lesson observations, as well as data about pupils' progress, to decide whether teachers should be paid more.

L&M - good:

- The headteacher and deputy check the quality of teaching thoroughly. Their observations of lessons identify the strengths of teaching and actions for improvement and these are followed up in subsequent observations. A comprehensive programme of training has been established for teachers, newly qualified teachers, prospective leaders and teaching assistants. The training has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching, especially the way in which higher ability pupils are being stretched. It has been well received by staff who feel more confident about tackling aspects of their performance that should be better.

L&M – good:

- The large majority of heads of subject departments are effective in checking the quality of, and supporting improvements in, teaching and learning. They form a strong 'teaching and learning' group that plans whole school training, coaches individual teachers and uses the best teachers to share their good ideas and ways of working. Teachers' performance is well managed and organised. Any weaknesses in the work of individuals and groups of teachers are followed up with training, and support. The headteacher makes the right decisions about teachers' movements up the salary scale on the basis of the quality of their teaching.

L&M – requires improvement:

- The headteacher's and deputy's lesson observations are sharply focused but heads of departments' judgements are, at times, overly generous. This is because they focus too much on teaching styles irrespective of whether the teaching is improving pupils' learning. Their feedback from lesson observations is sometimes misplaced as it does not pick up the main weaknesses. As a result, their regular observations carried out since the last inspection have helped reduce the amount of poor teaching, but have not been well enough targeted to improve teaching to a good standard.

Reporting on governance

During inspections, inspectors are asked to pursue particular lines of enquiry including the extent to which the school's governance:

- provides challenge and holds the headteacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement
- uses performance management systems to improve teaching, leadership and management
- uses the pupil premium to overcome barriers to learning.

It is not enough to comment on whether the governance is fulfilling statutory duties for safeguarding. Reports should comment on whether the school's governance:

- knows what is happening in the school and whether overall provision is good - or not
- knows about the quality of teaching, the use of performance management, what is being done to recognise and reward good teachers and also what is being done to tackle underperformance
- understands the data and the comparative performance of the school in relation to similar schools
- has a handle on the budget, particularly the pupil premium and whether this is being used to close the gap for poor children
- ensures that 'governors' are being professionally trained and developed.

These are some examples of ways of reporting.

The governance of the school:

- Governors do not ask searching questions of the headteacher because they do not have all the skills needed to thoroughly check data about pupils' progress, attendance and exclusions. They do not know enough about the quality of teaching and take too long to make important decisions, such as agreeing whether additional teachers can be brought in through use of the pupil premium funding. However, the new headteacher is now ensuring that governors quickly gain an accurate first-hand view of the school through their regular visits, and by meeting pupils, parents and staff. The expertise of governors is being developed well, through specially commissioned training and through the regular 'challenge' sessions that are taking place between the leadership team and governing body.

The governance of the school:

- The governing body asks challenging questions of the headteacher and senior staff. The chair of governors is regularly at the school and knows which groups of pupils most need additional support. She has made sure that the governors are perceptive in their discussions about the value of spending decisions and the impact these have had on pupils' learning and progress. This has led to some good decisions about what the school spends the pupil premium funding on. For example, governors have authorised the recruitment of extra teaching time so that the school can arrange additional, weekly lessons for the pupils who have not kept pace with others in their classes.

Reporting on the pupil premium

During inspections, inspectors are asked to pursue the following:

- what the school is spending the pupil premium money on
- why the school is spending it in this way
- how it is making a difference for disadvantaged pupils
- how governors are holding their school to account for the way in which this money is spent.

We need to ensure that what we say about the impact of the pupil premium funding is crisp and to the point. Here are some examples:

- Governors have approved the use of pupil premium funding to buy in extra staffing for Years 10 and 11 in support of pupils who need more help in lessons. Pupils in these year groups have made much better progress than similar groups of pupils in the past in a good range of subjects, including English and mathematics. (Achievement section)
- Pupil premium funding is being used wisely to make sure individual pupils get the right sort of support. For example, two teachers are being paid to run catch up sessions for pupils and parents after school. These have significantly improved pupils' ability to read in just one term. Parents have told the teachers that these sessions have given them the confidence to help their children at home, and some of the parents have volunteered to help out at an after school reading club. The headteacher is determined not to let things slip. He is making sure that these sessions are being carefully monitored so that they continue to help more disadvantaged pupils catch up quickly. (Leadership and management section)

Annex: reporting on academy converters

We have been made aware that there is some confusion about how lead inspectors should report on academy converter schools. The following FAQs explain how the report template should be used in respect of academy converters.

Q: How should I complete the previous inspection date field in the inspection report for an academy converter school?

A: If this is the first section 5 inspection of the school since it converted to become an academy, use the 'not previously inspected option'. The academy is a new legal entity and it would be misrepresenting its inspection history to refer to an inspection report of its predecessor school.

Q: How should I complete the most recent inspection outcome field in the inspection report for an academy converter school?

A: If this is the first section 5 inspection of the school since it converted to become an academy, use the 'not previously inspected' option.

Q: Should I refer to the predecessor school and its last inspection outcome in the context section of the inspection report?

A: Yes, if this is the first section 5 inspection of the school since it converted to become an academy this must be explained in the context section.

To ensure consistency **all** first section 5 inspection reports for academy converter schools must include a factual explanation as indicated below:

Holborn Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2011. When its predecessor school, Holborn Secondary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.

Formatting

As we mentioned in Update 3 we have 'rebuilt' and tested the report template and updated the guidance on how to complete it. In order to ensure consistency in formatting inspectors **must not** change the formatting of the template including spacing between bulleted lists, the font of drop down boxes or the colour of any shading in the template. In particular inspectors are reminded of the guidance in the section 5 report template guidance about completing the key findings.

- *Text should be written as sentences, beginning with a capital letter and ending with a full stop.*

An example of a correctly formatted report can be found here:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/100329>