

Better inspection for all

Maintained schools and academies, further education and skills providers, non-association independent schools and registered early years settings – consultation questionnaire

Age group: 0–19+

Published: October 2014

Reference no: 140165



Better inspection for all

We welcome your views on our proposals for new arrangements for the consistent and proportionate inspection of maintained schools, academies, further education (FE) and skills providers, non-association independent schools and registered early years settings from September 2015.

We propose:

- a common inspection framework for all early years settings on the Early Years Register, maintained schools, academies, non-association independent schools and FE and skills providers – this framework will mean that the same judgements will apply in each of these remits
- introducing shorter inspections for maintained schools, academies and FE and skills providers that were judged good at their previous inspection – these short inspections, conducted approximately every three years, will report on whether or not a provider has maintained its overall effectiveness but will not provide a full set of graded judgements
 - conducting a full inspection of non-association independent schools within a three-year period.

We are also keen to hear your views on how inspection methodology should be developed and whether or not we should introduce a separate graded judgement for the curriculum.

Your views will help to refine and develop our framework for inspecting these services.

This document should be read alongside the full consultation document available from www.ofsted.gov.uk/futureofinspection.

How to submit your views

There are three ways of completing and submitting your response.

- Complete the online questionnaire <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/futureofinspection>
- Download this document from: www.ofsted.gov.uk/futureofinspection, complete it on your computer and email your response to inspectionreform@ofsted.gov.uk.
 - Print this document, complete it by hand and post it to:

FOIE consultation
Ofsted
8th floor
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

The consultation will be open until **5 December 2014**.

Confidentiality

The information you provide will be held by Ofsted. It will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research to help us to become more effective, influence policies and inform inspection and regulatory practice.

We will treat your identity in confidence, if you disclose it to us.

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Yes please complete Section 1 and the related questions
No please complete Section 2 and the related questions

Section 1

Which organisation are you responding on behalf of?

Organisation: **NIACE (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education)**

Would you like us to consider anonymously publishing your views?

Yes
No

Section 2

Please tell us in which capacity you are completing this survey (please choose one option):

Teacher		Local government representative	
Governor		Inspector	
Headteacher		A registered early years group provider	
Other school staff		A registered early years childminder	
Pupil/student		An early years provider run directly by a school	
Academy chain representative		Leader/manager of a further education and skills provider or college	
Parent/carer		Other employee of a further education and skills provider or college	
Teacher/trainer of a further education and skills provider or college		An employer with an SFA training contract	
An adult learner/student		An employer without an SFA training contract	
A member of the public		Proprietor of an independent school	
Representative group or union representative		Prefer not to say	
Other, please tell us	Charity		

If you are responding in a professional capacity, please specify where you work:

A maintained primary school		A primary academy	
A maintained secondary school		A secondary academy	
A non-association independent school		An early years provider	
A general FE/tertiary college		A not-for-profit organisation	
A sixth form college		An independent specialist college	
A local authority		A higher education institution	
An independent training provider		Free school	
Maintained special school		Non-maintained special school	
Prefer not to say		Other, please tell us	

Proposal 1: A common inspection framework

We propose, from 1 September 2015, to introduce a new common inspection framework that we believe will provide greater coherence across the inspection of different providers that cater for similar age ranges. It will ensure more comparability through inspection as children and learners move from one setting to another and support greater consistency across the inspection of different remits.

See paragraphs 10–31 of the full consultation document for more detail.

Q1. Do you agree or disagree with the introduction of a new common inspection framework for maintained schools, academies, further education and skills providers, non-association independent schools and registered early years settings from September 2015?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	X				

Comments:

NIACE supports the principle of a shared common inspection framework for the purposes of comparing the performance of different providers, particularly in post-16 education where provision delivered to the same groups of learners has traditionally been inspected under different frameworks. This is a sensible approach considering the completion of the raising of the participation age to 18 years old in 2015. It is important that people and employers are able to obtain reliable and comparable information about the quality of education and training available.

However, the way the new framework is introduced must not destabilise work being done in providers to improve and maintain standards. Later in this response, we call on Ofsted to consult further on the inspection handbook, specifically on the grade criteria for the new additional thematic grades that further education and skills providers will be subject to which are not detailed in this consultation.

Making judgements in full inspections

Inspectors will use all the available evidence to evaluate what it is like to be a child, learner or other user in the provision. They will make judgements about a provider's overall effectiveness during a full inspection and will consider whether the standard of education, training or care is good, outstanding, requires improvement or inadequate. They will make these graded judgements in four areas:

- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Personal development, behaviour and welfare
 - Outcomes for children and learners.

See paragraphs 15–24 of the full consultation document for more details.

Q2. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed 'effectiveness of leadership and management' judgement (paragraphs 19–20)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
			X		

Comments:

NIACE supports many of the proposed judgements for 'effectiveness of leaderships and management' in advance of more detailed grading criteria in the inspection handbook. We welcome Ofsted's continuing emphasis on taking account of users; views, leading the improvement of teaching and learning through continuing professional development and the introduction of planning and managing careers advice alongside curriculum and learning programmes.

NIACE has concerns with the following proposed addition to the criteria for 'effectiveness of leadership and management': "provide a curriculum that has suitable breadth, depth and relevance so that it meets any statutory requirements, as well as the needs and interests of children, learners, employers and the local community and nationally." It's not clear from the consultation proposals how community learning will be defined. Will only providers with a community learning budget be judged on their delivery of this part of the curriculum, or will it be that expected that all providers demonstrate how they offer community learning, regardless of the funding stream?

While we have every confidence that providers can demonstrate learner, community and employer demand for the provision that they offer, we are concerned that the broad scope of this criterion could penalise providers that offer provision that does not directly match economically driven articulations of local and/or national employer need. NIACE believes that learning offers profound cultural, social as well as economic enrichment to individuals, communities and wider society and therefore seek assurances from Ofsted that adult education providers will not be downgraded for delivering certain community learning provision.

Equally, some smaller providers, particularly those involved in the delivery of sub-contracted provision, may not have the capacity to demonstrate that they, "influence improvement in other local or national providers" as proposed in the new common inspection framework under 'effectiveness of leadership and management.' At the same time, NIACE strongly encourages, and has worked with providers to deliver successful pilots through our family learning programmes, learning provision for, "families across their community and local economy." We agree strongly that providers' efforts in providing family and community learning provision should be recognised by Ofsted but would not wish to see providers penalised for not having the capacity to support improvement in other providers as proposed currently.

As such, NIACE believes it is important that, as Ofsted moves towards a universal common inspection framework, the inspection handbooks for each sector should come under scrutiny and be consulted on, even if this process delays the introduction of the new framework. Additionally, the inspection handbooks for each sector should be clearly cross-referenced to enable those working with stakeholders with varying interests an ability to strategically plan provision in light of the aspects that stakeholders are judged against in their own provision (e.g. family learning providers' understanding what those in schools are judged on to adapt relevant curricula accordingly).

We also require clarification as to the status of 'capacity to improve' as part of this judgement.

Q3. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed 'quality of teaching, learning and assessment' judgement (paragraph 21)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	X				

Comments:

NIACE supports the proposed inspection requirements for 'quality of teaching, learning and assessment.' In our response to the 2012 common inspection framework for further education and skills consultation, we supported Ofsted's proposal to ensure that category was, in effect, a limiting grade in that no provider's grade for overall effectiveness could exceed the judgement provided for quality of teaching, learning and assessment. NIACE hopes that this continues to be the case under the current proposed inspection framework in order to maintain the momentum and focus on continuing improvement in teaching and learning practice.

It is crucial that equality and diversity continues to be embedded across the curriculum, yet too many inspection reports find that opportunities to embed and promote equality and diversity are missed. Indeed, a distinct grade for equality and diversity was once awarded and was a limiting grade. NIACE therefore welcomes the continued inclusion of equality and diversity throughout teaching and learning. Further, we restate a point made in 2012, which is that recognition of gaps in access and achievement between different groups of learners must remain a leadership and management issue. NIACE would like to see the grade criteria as proposed go further in this regard. For example, the extent to which the curriculum embeds equality and diversity should be measured to include breadth, such as the extent to which apprentices and vocational learners access a work-based and vocationally contextual interpretation of an equality, diversity and inclusiveness curriculum.

Q4. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed 'personal development, behaviour and welfare' judgement (paragraphs 22–23)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
			X		

Comments:

NIACE believes that providers of adult and community learning will be able to confidently demonstrate the ways in which they support the personal development and wellbeing of their learners through their values and curricula, and so we support the introduction of this new grade. However, we question the relevance of some of the proposed criteria for older learners. For example, we would argue that the criteria has been written with a school to pupil relationship in mind, as opposed to the different type of relationships that providers have with their older learners. Further, criteria around attendance appears to exclude other forms of participation in learning such as online and digital. As recommendations from F/ELTAG develop, we could see a rapid increase in the availability, accessibility and volume of online provision; indeed a proportion of a course could soon be mandated to be delivered online. We would therefore welcome further consultation as part of a consultation of the inspection handbook.

The ability to make informed decisions about your own health and wellbeing is one of the features that demonstrates the different relationships learners in further education and skills have with their institutions relative to pupils in schools. Promoting independent living and wellbeing is something further education and skills providers will be familiar with. NIACE would prefer the phrase 'wellbeing' to be used.

Q5. Do you agree or disagree with the proposed 'outcomes for children and learners' judgement (paragraph 24)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
		X			

Comments:

Education has profound economic, social and cultural impacts on people, communities and businesses and NIACE believes it is important to bear these in mind when coming to a view on what can be defined as a positive outcome for learners. We would therefore like to see a more rounded definition provided in the inspection framework which can be developed further in the inspection handbook. Ofsted should also recognise how it intends to quantify and measure against, 'local and national demand' as NIACE believes these terms, especially for the purposes of evaluating effectiveness of learning and skills providers, is problematic. The inspection handbook must provide clarity on the benchmarks and information Ofsted will use to measure the extent to which the jobs or higher-level learning learners progress to 'meet local and national need'. We would argue that jobs learners obtain should meet their own needs and aspirations and not solely local and national needs as proposed in the new common inspection framework. This would also reflect better the importance attached by Ofsted to providers preparing learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities for progression to destinations that match their long term goals. Nonetheless, NIACE is in favour of also measuring job outcomes and earnings progression where provision is more labour market focussed.

Specific additional judgements according to type of provision

We have also proposed additional specific judgements for different remits:

- an early years judgement for schools incorporating an early years setting
- a sixth form judgement for schools incorporating a school sixth form
 - judgements on areas of provision within an FE and skills provider, where that provider incorporates 14–16 provision, 16 to 19 study programmes, 19+ learning programmes, apprenticeships, traineeships, employability and/or community learning.

See paragraphs 28–31 of the full consultation document for more detail.

Q6. Do you agree or disagree with the specific additional judgements proposed for the common inspection framework (paragraphs 28-31)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
		X			

Comments:

There is clearly value from a public information perspective in the new approach for specific additional judgements proposed in the new common inspection framework. NIACE echoes its call from earlier in this response which is for a further consultation on the inspection handbook for these new grades. For example, it is difficult to provide comment on whether or not a grade for 'community learning' will add value without proposals for the judgement criteria and the weighting each are has when combined with the core judgements. Similarly there is a need to be able to make judgements in relation to family learning (as part of the wider judgements about community learning) in order to scrutinise the unique approach taken through family learning provision as distinct from the rest of community learning.

NIACE would fully support the addition of offender learning provision on the list of proposed additional judgements for this provider involved in the delivery of an OLASS contract. Ofsted and NIACE share in a common a deep concern over the quality of education and training provision in provisions and the secure youth estate.

A graded judgement for the quality of the curriculum

In future, we propose to ensure a high level of scrutiny of the curriculum or range of courses offered by schools and other providers. This consultation proposes that, in doing so, we continue to report on the curriculum as part of the judgement on leadership and management.

See paragraph 18 of the full consultation document for more detail.

Q7. Do you agree or disagree that Ofsted should continue to report on the curriculum as part of the judgement on leadership and management?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	X				

Comments:

Under the current common inspection framework, further education and skills providers are already expected to be able to demonstrate that they, "successfully plan, establish and manage the curriculum and learning programmes to meet the needs and interests of learners, employers and their local and national community." Within this, we would support proposals to continue considering flexible modes of delivery, appropriate English, maths and ESOL provision, and ability to meet the needs of learners. In particular, we encourage Ofsted to continue to monitor flexibility, responsiveness and management of programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; young, adult and former offenders and young adult carers. NIACE believes that these are, and should remain, issues of leadership and management.

Proposal 2: Short inspections

We are proposing to introduce short inspections for maintained schools, academies and FE and skills providers that were judged good at their previous inspection. These short inspections, conducted approximately every three years, will report on whether a provider has maintained their overall effectiveness or not but they will not provide a full set of graded judgements.

See paragraphs 32–45 of the full consultation document for more detail.

Q8. Do you agree or disagree with the proposals for short inspections of good maintained schools and academies (paragraphs 32–34 and 37-40)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	X				

Comments:

See below.

Q9. Do you agree or disagree with the proposals for short inspections of good further education and skills providers (paragraphs 35–36 and 41-45)?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	X				

Comments:

NIACE supports the proposal for providers judged to be 'good' to experience short inspections every three years and for data and risk analysis to continue to evaluate the need for inspection on an annual basis. Shorter inspection focussed on maintaining the quality of provision, whilst also having the capability to be able to take action to upgrade and downgrade by conducting a follow-up full inspection. Providers will need to have confidence that a demonstrable improvement in performance can lead to the award of a higher grade, and vice versa, to maintain confidence in the inspection system.

All further education and skills providers must seek to continuously improve their performance. NIACE would recommend therefore that 'good' providers should be expected to demonstrate the level of improvement Ofsted expect since the last inspection, as opposed to simply maintaining their performance.

A support system will also need putting in place to those providers previously judged as outstanding to support them with maintaining that status.

Proposal 3: Inspection of non-association independent schools

All non-association independent schools will receive an inspection under the proposed common inspection framework within three years.

See paragraphs 46–48 of the full consultation document for more detail.

Q10. Do you agree or disagree with the proposals for the inspection of non-association independent schools?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	X				

Comments:

NIACE believes that unless non-associated independent schools are inspected it is difficult to see how an entitlement to lifelong learning for all can be achieved. Sharing good practice thought the sector around positive models for encouraging lifelong learning will be limited through others not learning about models being utilised in that part of the sector.

Additional proposals

Development of inspection methodology

Ofsted is committed to improving the way that we inspect so that our inspection provides a reliable and robust view of the quality of provision. We are interested in your views on how we can improve our inspection methodology.

See paragraphs 53–55 of the full consultation document for more detail.

Q11. Are there specific changes to the way that inspectors gather evidence that you think could make our judgements more reliable and robust?

Comments:

NIACE welcomes Ofsted's ongoing commitment to the use of appropriately trained subject specialist inspectors to make judgement across the range of core and thematic grades. NIACE believes that, in inspection 19+ provision, inspectors should have the appropriate expertise and knowledge of approaches to teaching and learning for adults. Judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in the specialist areas of English, ESOL and maths should be made by appropriately qualified and experienced inspectors, particularly with regard to adult literacy, language and numeracy provision.

NIACE is supportive of a holistic approach to the evidence used so that a balance can be struck between indicators such as success rates, value added, direct observations and destinations data in order to arrive at the more reliable judgements.

Any other comments

Q12. Do you have any other comments about this consultation?

It would be helpful to receive feedback from Ofsted about themes which have emerged from different sectors to see where there is overlap (e.g. was feedback from early years completely distinct from FE or were there some fundamental themes that all sectors had in common?)

What did you think of this consultation?

One of the commitments in Ofsted’s strategic plan is to monitor whether our consultations are accessible to those wishing to take part.

Please tell us what you thought of this consultation by answering the questions below.

How did you hear about this consultation?

Ofsted website

@ofstednews (twitter)

Ofsted News

Ofsted conference

Another organisation (please specify, if known)

Other (please specify)

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
I found the consultation information clear and easy to understand.	X			
I found the consultation easy to find on the Ofsted website.	X			
I had enough information about the consultation topic.			X - no proposed criteria provided for additional further education and skills grades.	
I would take part in a future Ofsted consultation.	X			

Is there anything you would like us to improve on or do differently for future consultations? If so, please tell us below.

Additional questions about you

Your answers to the following questions will help us to evaluate how successfully we are communicating messages from inspection to all sections of society. We would like to assure you that completion of this section is optional, you do not have to answer any of the questions, and all responses are confidential.

Please tick the appropriate box.

1. Gender

Female	Male
--------	------

2. Age

Under 14	14–18	19–24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
----------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-----

3. Ethnic origin

How would you describe your ethnic group?

Asian		Mixed ethnic origin	
Bangladeshi		Asian and White	
Indian		Black African and White	
Pakistani		Black Caribbean and White	
Any other Asian background (specify if you wish)		Any other mixed ethnic background (specify if you wish)	
Black		White	
African		Any White background (specify if you wish)	
Caribbean		Any other ethnic background	
Any other Black background (specify if you wish)		Any other background (specify if you wish)	
Chinese			

Any Chinese background (specify if you wish)	
---	--

4. Sexual orientation

Heterosexual	Lesbian	Gay	Bisexual
--------------	---------	-----	----------

5. Religion/belief

Buddhist		Muslim	
Christian		Any other, please state:	
Hindu		None	
Jewish			

6. Disability

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

Thank you for taking part in our consultation.