

July 2014

Name
Address

Sir Michael Wilshaw
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

Dear Colleague

As we near the end of the academic year, I am writing to bring to your attention the changes to inspection that will commence from 1 September 2014.

Consultation on early school years and the sixth form

As you may be aware, Ofsted consulted recently on plans to introduce separate graded judgements on the quality of schools' work in the early years and sixth form. We consulted on this because of the vital importance of both of these stages.

These proposals received strong support. I intend, therefore, to introduce separate graded judgements for the early years and the sixth form, where these apply, from 1 September 2014. These grades may influence the judgement on a school's overall effectiveness.

Inspection following the removal of National Curriculum levels

Many of you want to know about how inspection in 2014/15 and beyond will take account of the removal of National Curriculum levels.

As happens now, inspectors will use a range of evidence to judge learning and progress. In particular, they will take account of test/examination results, other assessment information and the standard of pupils' work.

Inspectors will:

- spend more time looking at a range of pupils' work in order to consider what progress they are making in different areas of the curriculum
- talk to leaders about the school's use of formative and summative assessment

and how this improves teaching and raises achievement

- evaluate how well pupils are doing against age-related expectations, as set out by the school and the National Curriculum (where this applies)
- consider how the school uses assessment information to identify pupils who are falling behind in their learning or who need additional support to reach their full potential, including the most able
- evaluate the way the school reports to parents on pupils' progress and attainment. Inspectors will assess whether reports help parents to understand how their children are doing in relation to the standards expected.

Further information can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/140131.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

In my last Annual Report,¹ I wrote about the critical importance of good behaviour in schools. I will be publishing a short report on this in September. This will summarise the findings of focused inspections as well as the views of parents, teachers and pupils.

It is essential that all schools have the highest expectations of pupils' behaviour. From 1 September 2014, inspectors will pay greater attention to how well school leaders tackle low-level disruption and make sure that pupils' conduct and attitudes to learning are good.

Achieving a broad and balanced curriculum

Inspectors see a range of curricula across maintained schools and academies (including free schools). It is right that schools develop their own curriculum to respond to the particular needs of their pupils and ensure they receive a broad and balanced education.

A school's curriculum must comply with the legislation to give pupils the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects. In addition, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development should promote tolerance of and respect for people of other faiths, cultures and lifestyles. Good teaching in a broad and balanced curriculum, underpinned by an effective approach to the SMSC development of children and young people, will help to prepare them for life in modern Britain.

Therefore, from 1 September 2014, inspectors will pay even greater attention to the curriculum and comment in more detail on its effectiveness in the leadership and management section of the inspection report.

¹ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/annualreport1213/schools-report>

Notice period for school inspections

The Secretary of State has asked me to examine the feasibility of moving to routinely inspecting schools without notice. I am considering this. In the meantime, I intend to broaden, in the coming year, the criteria Ofsted uses to judge whether unannounced inspection is required for particular schools.

The determining criteria will include:

- rapidly declining standards
- concerns about safeguarding, including a decline in the standards of pupils' behaviour and the ability of staff to maintain discipline
- serious complaints from parents or staff
- concerns about standards of leadership or governance
- concerns about the breadth and balance of the curriculum (including where the statutory requirement to publish information to parents is not met).

Future of school inspection

Ofsted's inspections have done much to raise standards in schools since its inception in 1992. However, now is the right time to review how Ofsted inspects so that all children in England have the opportunity to receive a good or outstanding education.

As I set out in my speech to the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) in March this year, I propose to alter the way that we inspect good schools. I also announced my intention to revise the section 5 school inspection framework. I look forward to consulting you on all my proposals in due course. I intend that, subject to consultation, these further and fundamental changes will take effect from 1 September 2015.

I would like to thank you for all your hard work this year and wish you and your staff a very enjoyable and restful summer holiday.

I would be grateful if you could share this letter with your Chair of Governors.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Wilshaw".

Sir Michael Wilshaw
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector