OFSTED have slightly revised their handbook for schools. There are not many changes but they are significant. We have worked through the October 2017 version and compared it with the last published version in August 2016.

**Scroll down to see a transcript of all the changes**

The headline changes are:

**Part 1 – How schools will be inspected**

- Good schools may trigger a full inspection if provision is deemed to have deteriorated slightly
- Ofsted have published a short paper dispelling common myths and misconceptions about their work in schools some of which are included in the handbook and captured here
- Clarification that judgements will not be made where groups are small and therefore not representative
- Clarification of arrangements for who should be included in meetings including the governance structure and inclusion of chief executive officers or equivalents of academies and multi-academy trusts
- Emphasis that inspectors must gather evidence from a wide range of sources including pupils’ experiences of learning, behaviour and the prevention of bullying
- New wording for how a school is judged as requires improvement and when a school is causing concern
- Section 8 of the handbook has also been revised

**Part 2 – The evaluation schedule – how schools will be judged**

- An additional entry emphasising that inspectors should look at how leaders and governors use high quality professional development to encourage challenge and support teacher improvement
- An additional entry that emphasises that inspectors must see that the curriculum provides adequately for the needs of all pupils
- Further emphasis that using data for small groups of children must be treated with caution
- New emphasis on the adequacy of core provision, inclusion and additional provision for those deemed disadvantaged
- Emphasis on stretch and challenge for the most able
- New emphasis on scrutinising the progress of pupils in English and maths against national figures
- For early years there is an additional emphasis on the ‘culture of safeguarding’
- There is a new publication for boarding provision Social Care Common Inspection Framework: Boarding schools and Residential Special schools
- New annex relating to new academies (Page 72). Inspectors must take care to ensure that data from the predecessor school is used carefully

The specific changes are listed below linked to the relevant section or subsection of the new handbook for schools.
A transcript of all the changes to the
October 2017 Ofsted handbook for schools

Here are the changes we have noted:-

Changes to Part one: How schools will be inspected

Outstanding exempt school

New subsection 18. Where an exempt school subsequently makes structural changes, such as adding a new key stage or amalgamating with another school, the school will receive a section 8 no formal designation inspection.

Short inspections of good schools

New subsection 21. This paragraph has been extended to include the statement – The separate section 8 handbook explains how these short inspections will be carried out. Some good schools will automatically receive a full section 5 inspection instead of a section 8 short inspection. This will affect approximately a fifth of good schools, and will occur when OFSTED’s risk assessment process indicates that the quality of provision may have deteriorated significantly.

Schools requesting an inspection

There is clarification of the term governing body at index 18 of the handbook. The term governing body is used to define the accountable authority for the school. In the case of an academy, including schools within a multi-academy trust, this will be the board of trustees.

Before the inspection

Clarification for schools

Some clarification to dispel myths and highlights specific practices that are not required by OFSTED. Some notable additions from the last handbook in August 2016 are included in the new handbook subsection 29. Ofsted have published the Myths and misconceptions document separately.

Lesson planning

- Ofsted does not expect tutor groups/form time to include literacy, numeracy or other learning sessions. Schools can use form time as they wish

Evidence for inspection

- Ofsted does not require schools to provide evidence for each teacher for each of the bulleted sub-heading in the teachers’ standards
- Ofsted does not expect to see photographic evidence of pupil’s work. Ofsted is very aware of teachers’ workload and inspectors are happy to speak to pupils during an inspection about what they have learned
- Ofsted does not require schools to predict their progress scores. It is impossible to predict progress as test results are compared nationally and this cannot be done until after the tests
- Ofsted does not require schools to hold onto books and other examples of pupils’ work who left school the previous year
Inspectors are not required to routinely check personnel files, but may do so in specific cases as part of looking at schools’ procedures for checking the suitability of employees to work with children.

There is no requirement for multi-academy trusts to maintain single central records for all staff. Each academy school should maintain a single central record. Where the multi-academy trust employs staff who are not assigned to an individual, these employees must be recorded on the single central record for the multi-academy trust, along with all others employed by the multi-academy trust and trustees.

Statutory provision

- Ofsted will report any failure to comply with statutory arrangements, including those relating to the workforce, where these form part of the inspection framework and evaluation schedule (Part 2 of the handbook).

Leadership and governance

- As many governors or trustees as possible are invited to meet inspectors during an inspection.
- For academies, inspectors meet those directly responsible for management and governance, including the CEO/their delegate (or equivalent) the chair of the board of trustees and other trustees.
- An inspector may talk to the chair of governors by telephone if s/he is unable to attend a face-to-face meeting with the inspector in school.
- For academies, the headteacher and CEO/their delegate (or equivalent) are invited to observe the inspectors’ final meeting.
- All those responsible for governance need to know the outcome of the inspection as soon as possible. Individual governor representatives must keep the outcomes confidential until the school has received the final inspection report.

Inspectors’ planning and preparation

Additional bullets in subsection 30 have been added to the section: The planning will be informed by analysis of:

- Data from the inspection data summary report (IDSR) ‘Analyse school performance’ (ASP), including on attendance and exclusions, and the level 3 Value Added (LV3A) report.
- Sub-section 33 has an addition at the end of the chapter that explains that the guidance on pre-inspection activity is set out in the ‘Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): boarding schools and residential special schools’. 28
Notification and introduction

In subsection 38 two additional bullets. The purpose of the inspector’s initial call is to:

- request, that, where appropriate, the chief executive officer (CEO) their delegate, or equivalent of the multi academy trust is present at the final team meeting and at the final feedback to the school
- establish whether the school has received support from other schools or services, including schools or services within the same multi – academy trust, (it will be important to establish the extent and the impact of this) **this point has changed to emphasise receiving support but not giving it

A further bullet point referring to exceptional leaders has disappeared

Safeguarding

Reporting on evidence or allegation of child abuse

Additional text in subsection 51 Inspectors should consult ‘Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings’ and ‘Guidance for inspectors; what to do if a child or young person discloses a safeguarding concern. Index 35

During the inspection

The start of the on-site inspection

In sub-section 60 an additional bullet point entry

- Confirm arrangements for a meeting with the chief executive officer (CEO)/their delegate or equivalent if the school is part of a multi-academy trust

Feedback to and discussion with teachers and other staff after observations

Joint observations

New subsection 72. If the headteacher or other leader offers a written record of the observation, the inspector should consider this. The inspector and the school’s observer should discuss any differences in their analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching, learning and assessment or other aspects of the lesson they have observed and the pupils’ personal development, behaviour and welfare. Any notes taken by the headteacher or other leader should remain in the school; they should not be included in the evidence base for the inspection.

The use of performance information

in subsection 79 an additional bullet

- Overall consistency in performance, trends of improvement or decline and differences in the performance of groups, but only where groups are large enough for valid inference to be drawn, as we might otherwise form unfair judgements about a provider. Under-performance by a sub-group may indicate specific problems with one or more children, or equally may reflect deficiencies in the provider’s main curriculum provision
Meeting those responsible for governance

The title Meeting during inspection has been removed from the new handbook

Additional subsection 91. The lead inspector should invite the headteacher and, where appropriate, the CEO/their delegate or equivalent of a multi-academy trust, to the final team meeting at the end of day two. It is important that the lead inspector makes it clear that observers who are invited to attend the final team meeting are there to listen to the scrutiny of evidence and corporate judgements made by the inspection team. As appropriate, the lead inspector may request that observers clarify key points during the meeting.

Providing feedback

Additional bullet in subsection 94

- for academies, the chair of the board of trustees and as many trustees as possible

Additional subsection 96. With regard to the appointment of NQTs in maintained schools, regulations governing the induction of teachers provide that induction may not be served in a school that has been judged to require special measures, unless HMCI has given permission in writing. (see appendix 44). Where the lead inspector has informed a maintained school that it may not appoint NQTs, the school must seek approval if it later wishes to appoint NQTs, by writing to the relevant Ofsted regional director with supporting reasons. The restriction on the appointment of NQTs does not extend to trainee teachers on employment – based training programmes.

Schools that are judged as requires improvement (an additional section)

97. A school that is judged as requires improvement (overall effectiveness grade 3) is a school that is not yet good but overall provides an acceptable standard of education. The judgement of requires improvement is not a formal category of concern but the school may be subject to monitoring by Ofsted. The school will be re-inspected under section 5 usually no later than the end of the term in which the 24th month after the publication of the report falls.

98. In schools judged as requires improvement, where a new headteacher joins the school after the section 5 judgement, the school will normally be re-inspected no later than 30 months after the publication of the previous report. Refer to appendix 45.

99. Where the school is judged as requires improvement, inspectors should direct schools to Ofsted’s section 8 handbook.

100. If at the section 5 re-inspection the school has not demonstrated that it has improved to good, the lead inspector will need to consider whether the school continues to require improvement or may be inadequate. If the school has demonstrated improvement in some areas and there is a general upward trend, but key aspects of performance remain less than good, the school may be judged as requires improvement again, in which case there may be monitoring before another section 5 inspection takes place within two years. These considerations will be made at each section 5 re-inspection of a school that was previously judged as requires improvement.
Schools causing concern

Special measures

Additional subsection 107. When the evidence indicates that one or more of the key judgements is inadequate, inspectors must consider whether the school is failing to give its pupils and acceptable standard of education. If this is confirmed by the evidence, inspectors must consider whether leaders, managers and governors are demonstrating the capacity to improve the school. If both of these conditions are met then the school requires special measures. If neither or only one of these two conditions are met, the school has serious weaknesses.

Part 2 – The evaluation schedule – how schools will be judged

Grade descriptors for the effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding (1) New bullet

- Leaders and governors use high quality professional development to encourage, challenge and support teachers’ improvement. Teaching is highly effective across the school

Inadequate (4) addition to bullet 4

- An unbalanced or poorly taught curriculum does not provide adequately for the needs of all pupils or particular groups of pupils

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Subsection 163 addition to bullet 2

- Teachers and other staff have a secure understanding of the age group they are working with and have relevant subject knowledge that is detailed and communicated well to pupils

Outcomes for pupils

Sources of evidence

Addition to subsection 185. Inspectors will recognise that published data for small groups of children must be treated with caution. Whilst inspectors will analyse all pupil-level and group-level data, there will be some groups that are too small for group-level reporting to be meaningful. Only if groups are large enough will inspectors be able to draw valid inferences from group-level performance. This is to avoid forming unfair judgements about a school. For example, it will not be possible to draw conclusions about trends in relation to small groups. (The rest of the subsection is the same as before.

Subsection 187 – the reference to the most able has now gone.

Disadvantaged pupils (additional words are in bold)

Addition to subsection 188. Inspectors will take particular account of the progress made by disadvantaged pupils from their starting points. They will consider the progress made by the end of the key stage compared with that made nationally by other pupils with similar starting points. Inspectors must review carefully what data is meaningful and avoid
focusing on the performance of small groups where assessment information is less reliable.

Addition to subsection 189. For current pupils, inspectors will consider the impact of what a school is doing to reduce any differences in progress and attainment between disadvantaged and other pupils with the same starting points. Where performance information is limited due to small group size, inspectors should gather a wide range of other evidence to ensure the school is providing effectively for disadvantaged pupils, including reviewing pupils’ work, and talking to pupils and teachers.

New subheading 190. Inspectors should talk to leaders about the quality of teaching, behaviour and design and delivery of the curriculum to examine why there may be underperformance for some pupils. Where there is an identifiable shortfall in progress or attainment of disadvantaged children or in wider, inspectors should consider:

- the adequacy of the core provision and approaches that have an impact on all children
- identified needs of the child, e.g. SEND, and how these are met, and
- any additional provision that may appropriately be made on the basis of family, economic or social disadvantage

The most able

Addition to subheading 191. Inspectors will pay particular attention to whether the most able pupils are making progress towards attaining the highest standards and achieving as well as they should across the curriculum. They also will consider whether the most able pupils are receiving the support they need to reach their full potential. For example, inspectors will consider whether pupils who had the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 in English and mathematics achieve the top grades at GCSE in these subjects by the age of 16 and whether enough current pupils are on track to do so. Where performance information is limited due to small group size, inspectors should gather a wide range of other evidence to ensure the school is providing effectively for the most able pupils, including reviewing pupils’ work, and talking to pupils and teachers.

Lower attaining pupils

Additional subheading 192. Inspectors will consider the progress that lower – attaining pupils are making and the impact of provision for them on raising their attainment so that they reach standards expected for their age. Inspectors will also consider the impact of provision on raising the attainment of other pupils who have fallen behind so that they attain as well as they should. Where performance information is limited due to small group size, inspectors should gather a wide range of other evidence to ensure the school is providing effectively for lower – attaining pupils, including reviewing pupils’ work, and talking to pupils and teachers.
Grade descriptors for outcomes for pupils

Outstanding (1)

Addition to bullet 5

- For pupils generally, and specifically for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special education needs and/or disabilities, progress from starting points is above average across nearly all subject areas. **From different starting points, the progress in English and in mathematics is high compared with national figures.**

Inspecting the effectiveness of the early years provision: quality and standards

Addition to subheading 202 bullet 3

- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures and **the culture of safeguarding**

Grade descriptors for the effectiveness of early years provision

Outstanding (1)

New text for bullet 12

- Almost all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged children and the most able, are making substantial and sustained progress in relation to their starting points. They are extremely well prepared academically, socially and emotionally for the next stage in their education

Bullet 13 has been removed

Good (2)

Last bullet 12 the word closing has been replaced by the word diminishing

Annex. Additional guidance

Evaluating the quality of boarding and residential provision in schools

Changes to the first paragraph are in bold. Where a school provides boarding or residential provision, inspectors will make the four key judgements on that provision. **These judgements are made in accordance with the guidance and grade descriptors in ‘Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): boarding schools and residential special schools’. Appendix 70**