

Authored article

## HMCI's commentary: recent primary and secondary curriculum research

Ofsted's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, discusses findings from recent research into the primary and secondary curriculum.

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From: [Ofsted](#) and [Amanda Spielman](#)

**“...the focus here should be on what these pupils should be learning and what they need to do to progress. It should not focus solely on the qualification they are taking. This leads us back to school leaders mistaking ‘badges and stickers’ for learning and substance.”**

**“School leaders need to recognise how easy it is to focus on the performance of the school and lose sight of the pupil. I acknowledge that inspection may well have helped to tip this balance in the past.”**

Press release

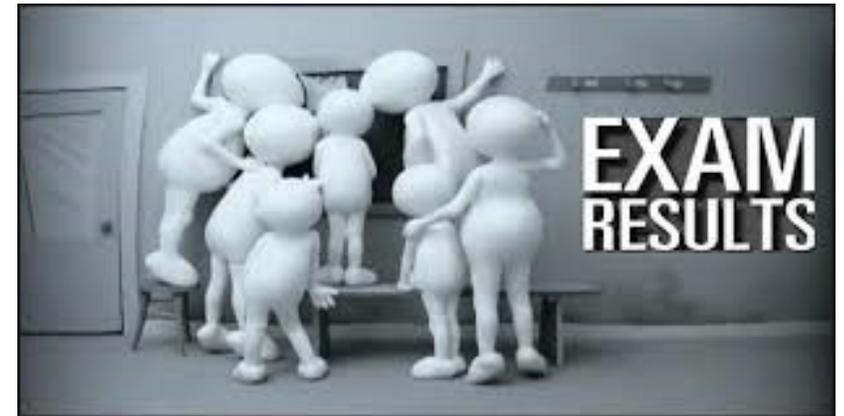
## **Ofsted's new inspection arrangements to focus on curriculum, behaviour and development**

Ofsted has published the outcome of the consultation on its new education inspection framework, which will take effect from September 2019.



From September 2019, Ofsted will refocus inspections to make sure that learners are receiving a high-quality education that puts them on a **path to future success**.

Ofsted inspectors will spend **less time looking at exam results** and test data, and more time considering how a nursery, school, college or other **education provider has achieved their results**.



2 new key judgements, evaluating learners':

- **behaviour and attitudes**

The 'behaviour and attitudes' judgement will assess whether leaders are creating a calm and orderly environment, where bullying is tackled effectively by leaders when it occurs

- **personal development**

While the 'personal development' judgement will recognise the work early years providers, schools and colleges do to **build young people's resilience and confidence** in later life, including through participation in sport, music and extra-curricular activities.

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Together, these changes will make it easier for **Ofsted to recognise and reward early years providers, schools and colleges that are doing the best they can for their pupils**, particularly those working in challenging circumstances.

**Schools will be empowered to always put the child first** and be actively discouraged from negative practices, such as ‘off-rolling’, where schools remove pupils in their own best interests, rather than that of the pupils. Such schools are likely to find their ‘leadership and management’ judged inadequate under the new framework.

*HM Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman said:*

“The new framework puts the real substance of education at the heart of inspection and supports leaders and teachers who act with integrity. We hope early years, schools and college leaders will no longer feel the need to generate and analyse masses of internal data for inspection. Instead, we want them to **spend their time teaching and making a real difference to children’s lives**, which is why they entered the profession in the first place.



## The quality of education

167. Inspectors will take a rounded view of the quality of education that a school provides to all its pupils, including the most disadvantaged pupils (see definition in paragraph 86) , the most able pupils and pupils with SEND. Inspectors will consider the school's curriculum, which is the substance of what is taught with a specific plan of what pupils need to know in total and in each subject.

170. The judgement focuses on factors that both research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to an effective education where pupils achieve highly. These factors are listed below.
- There is high academic/vocational/technical ambition for all pupils, and the school does not offer disadvantaged pupils or pupils with SEND a reduced curriculum.

190. When inspectors evaluate the impact of the education provided by the school, their focus will primarily be on what pupils have learned.
191. Inspection experience and research show that the most important factors to consider are that:
- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND acquire the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life.
  - National assessments and examinations are useful indicators of pupils' outcomes, but they only represent a sample of what pupils have learned. Inspectors will balance outcomes with their first-hand assessment of pupils' work.
  - All learning builds towards an end point. Learners are being prepared for their next stage of education, training or employment at each stage of their learning. Inspectors will consider whether pupils are ready for the next stage by the point they leave the school or provision that they attend.



## Sources of evidence specific to curriculum impact

195. Inspectors will gather evidence of the impact of the quality of education offered by the school from the following sources:

- nationally published information about the destinations to which its pupils progress when they leave the school<sup>76</sup>
- in primary schools, listening to a range of pupils read
- discussions with pupils about what they have remembered about the content they have studied
- how well pupils with SEND are prepared for the next stage of education and their adult lives.<sup>77</sup>

## Grade descriptors for the quality of education

### Outstanding (1)

- The school meets **all** the criteria for a good quality of education **securely** and **consistently**.
  - The quality of education provided is **exceptional**.
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- Pupils consistently achieve highly, particularly the most disadvantaged. Pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well.

## Grade descriptors for the quality of education

### Good (2)

#### Intent

- Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and including pupils with SEND, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. This is either the national curriculum or a curriculum of comparable breadth and ambition. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]
- The curriculum is successfully adapted, designed or developed to be ambitious and meet the needs of pupils with SEND, developing their knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence. [If this is not yet fully the case, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about.]

## Grade descriptors for the quality of education

### Impact

- Pupils develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well. This is reflected in results from national tests and examinations that meet government expectations, or in the qualifications obtained.
- Pupils are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They have the knowledge and skills they need and, where relevant, they gain qualifications that allow them to go on to destinations that meet their interests and aspirations and the intention of their course of study. Pupils with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes.

### Pupils who have particular needs

201. The school may be working with pupils with particular needs in order to improve their behaviour or their attendance. When this is the case, 'behaviour and conduct that reflects the school's high expectations and their consistent, fair implementation' are likely to include demonstrable improvement in the attendance and behaviour of these pupils, taking account of the individual circumstances of the school.
204. If a school uses fixed-term and internal exclusions, inspectors will evaluate their effectiveness, including the rates, patterns and reasons for exclusion and whether any pupils are repeatedly excluded. Schools should have a strategy for reintegrating a pupil who returns to school following a fixed-term exclusion and for managing their future behaviour. Inspectors will consider how well the school is recognising and acting to address any patterns that exist, because disruptive behaviour or sudden changes in behaviour can be an indication of unmet needs or a change in another aspect of a young person's life.

208. Inspectors will evaluate the experience of particular individuals and groups, such as pupils for whom referrals have been made to the local authority (and check, for a small sample of these pupils, how the referral was made and the thoroughness of the follow-up), pupils with SEND, children looked after, those with medical needs and those with mental health needs. In order to do this, inspectors will look at the experience of a small sample of these pupils and consider the way the school is working with the multi-agency group to ensure that the child receives the support they need. For pupils with SEND, this will include ensuring that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND code of practice.

- the extent to which leaders take into account the workload and well-being of their staff, while also developing and strengthening the quality of the workforce
- the extent to which leaders' and managers' high ambitions are for all pupils, including those who are harder to reach. This includes ensuring that practices such as 'off-rolling' do not take place and that the way the school uses the pupil premium is founded on good evidence.

### **Inspecting off-site provision**

244. Inspectors must evaluate how well a school continues to take responsibility for its pupils who attend alternative or off-site provision. Inspectors need to be assured that leaders have ensured that the alternative provision is a suitable and safe placement that will meet pupils' academic/vocational/technical needs, pastoral needs and, if appropriate, SEND needs. Inspectors will speak to a selection of pupils who attend off-site provision, where possible.

248. Inspectors will consider:

- the reasons why leaders considered off-site provision to be the best option for the pupils concerned
- whether leaders have made the appropriate checks on the registration status of the provision
- what safeguarding checks leaders have made and continue to make to ensure that the provision is a safe place for their pupils to attend
- the extent to which leaders ensure that their pupils will benefit from a well-taught, broad and balanced curriculum
- the extent of pupils' progress and attainment
- the attendance and behaviour of the pupils who attend the provision
- how well the provision promotes the pupils' personal development.

250. A school is likely to be judged inadequate for leadership and management if:

- it is making ineffective or inappropriate use of alternative provision
- it is using inappropriate alternative provision
- leaders have not taken the necessary steps to assure themselves of the suitability of a provision
- leaders are not aware of how many of their pupils attend alternative provision
- leaders are not taking responsibility for their pupils who attend alternative provision.

## Inclusion and off-rolling

253. Schools should have an inclusive culture that supports arrangements to:

- identify early those pupils who may be disadvantaged or have additional needs or barriers to learning
- meet the needs of those pupils, drawing, when necessary, on more specialist support, and help those pupils to engage positively with the curriculum
- ensure pupils have a positive experience of learning and achieve positive outcomes.

### Safeguarding

259. All schools should have a culture of safeguarding. This means they should have effective arrangements to:

- always act in the best interests of children, pupils and students to protect them online and offline
- **identify** children, pupils and students who may need early help, and who are at risk of harm or have been harmed. This can include, but is not limited to, neglect, abuse (including by their peers), grooming or exploitation
- secure the **help** that children, pupils and students need, and if required, referring in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help
- **manage** safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to children, pupils, students and vulnerable adults.