

Ofsted glossary for governors

TERM	DEFINITION
Key documents	
The education inspection framework (EIF)	Document that sets out the overarching principles that Ofsted inspectors apply to their inspections for all school types. It includes the categories that inspectors will judge schools against.
The school inspection handbook (section 5)	Document that accompanies the education inspection framework, focusing on how the principles will apply when inspecting maintained schools and academies. It explains the main activities that inspectors must do during full section 5 inspections, and tells schools how inspectors will arrive at their judgements. If you read this document, you'll know exactly what to expect on the day.
The school inspection handbook (section 8)	The same as the section 5 handbook, but for section 8 inspections and monitoring inspections (we cover them later).
Inspectors' roles	
Lead inspector	One person is assigned to be a 'lead' inspector on every inspection. The lead inspector will be the main point of contact throughout the inspection, co-ordinate the team of inspectors, and write the inspection report afterwards.
Additional inspectors	Additional inspectors usually comprise the rest of the team that come to schools to inspect them. The inspectors will usually be assigned specific areas of the school to go and look into, and will report back to the lead inspector. The number of additional inspectors varies depending on school size and the type of inspection. For example, a large school undergoing a section 5 inspection will have more additional inspectors than a small school having a section 8 inspection.
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectors. Senior inspectors who carry out inspections, but also quality assure and moderate inspection quality and outcomes. They are permanent, full-time inspectors - other inspectors are usually contracted alongside their day job.
HMCI	Essentially, the head of Ofsted. HMCI is responsible for Ofsted's work, and reports to Parliament on its effectiveness and management. This is currently Amanda Spielman .
Types of inspection	
Section 5	Full inspections. They normally last for 2 days and are the only inspections that can change schools' Ofsted grades. Read more about preparing for these inspections in this area of our website . They're called this because the power to inspect is set out in section 5 of the Education Act 2005 . The same applies to section 8 and section 48 inspections.

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Section 8	Shorter inspections carried out in 3 main circumstances: 1. For 'good' and non-exempt outstanding schools This is to confirm whether they remain good or outstanding under 'overall effectiveness'. These inspections will: • Last for 2 days for most schools, all special schools and PRUs (under the previous framework it lasted 1 day) • Last for 1 day for small primary schools/maintained nursery schools with fewer than 150 pupils on its roll • Take place approximately every 4 years The inspection will focus primarily on the 'quality of education' judgement. Schools won't get individual graded judgements, or have their grade changed for overall effectiveness in these inspections. The section 8 may be converted to a section 5 within 48 hours if there are serious concerns. See pages 12, 13 and 20 of the section 8 inspection handbook. Read more in this article. 2. Monitoring inspections These are for schools judged as 'requires improvement', having serious weaknesses, or needing special measures (unless Ofsted has directed the school to convert to academy status, or be re-brokered to a new academy trust, as part of the improvement measures they need). They're for Ofsted to make sure a school is making the progress needed to improve. See pages 30 and 36 of the section 8 inspection handbook (linked above). 3. No formal designation inspections 'Outstanding' schools that are exempt* from routine inspection (and other schools not in a category of concern), can be inspected by Ofsted if performance drops, concerns are raised or the school changes significantly e.g. it's merged or a new key stage added. Judgements are made based on the area of focus which caused the school to be inspected. The outcome might be that the school's 'outstanding' rating is questioned. This could lead to a full section 5 inspection that can change its overall grade. <i>*The exemption doesn't apply to 'outstanding' special schools, pupil referral units (PRUs) and maintained nursery schools.</i> See pages 49 to 51 of the section 8 inspection handbook (linked above).
Section 48	Schools with a designated religious character are responsible for organising section 48 inspections on top of standard Ofsted inspections. The purpose is to inspect the school's ethos, content of collective worship and denominational religious education. They're carried out every 3 to 5 years. See pages 10 to 11 of the section 5 inspection handbook.
Judgements	

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Areas	Under the new framework, Ofsted makes graded judgements about schools through the following key judgements: • 'Quality of education' - this is new and replaces the previous 'outcomes for pupils' and 'teaching, learning and assessment' • 'Behaviour and attitudes' - this is split from the previous judgement 'personal development, welfare and behaviour' • 'Personal development' • 'Leadership and management' 'Overall effectiveness' - brings together the 4 key judgements.
Grades	For each area above, schools get a grade: • Outstanding • Good • Requires improvement • Inadequate To be 'outstanding' overall, the school needs to receive 'outstanding' in all the key judgements (or one might be good if there's proof that the school is improving towards outstanding). This is a new method of evaluation. To be 'good' or 'requires improvement' will continue to follow the best-fit approach where inspectors will consider whether the overall quality of the school is most closely aligned to the descriptors. If the school receives 'inadequate' for any one of the key judgements and/or safeguarding is ineffective, the school will be judged 'inadequate' overall.
Serious weaknesses	A school has 'serious weaknesses' if: • One or more of the key judgements is inadequate and/or • There are important weaknesses in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)
Special measures	A school requires 'special measures' if: • It's failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education • The people responsible for leading, managing or governing aren't demonstrating that they can secure the necessary improvement in the school
Other inspectorates	
Inspectorates for faith schools	There are separate organisations that carry out the Section 48 inspections mentioned earlier (assessing the ethos, collective worship and denominational religious education in faith schools). Some examples are: • The Church of England inspects its schools using the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools framework (SIAMS) • Catholic schools are inspected by their diocese • Pikuach - the inspectorate for Jewish schools • AMSUK - The Association of Muslim Schools UK If you're in a school of any other faith, your headteacher will be able to tell you which organisation will inspect you.

TERM	DEFINITION
ISI	The Independent Schools Inspectorate inspects independent schools which are full members of the associations that make up the Independent Schools Council. Independent schools who aren't a member of any association are still inspected by Ofsted.
Estyn	The inspectorate for schools in Wales .

Sources

- [Education inspection framework](#)
- [School inspection handbook \(section 5\)](#)
- [School inspection handbook \(section 8\)](#)
- Other articles in the [inspection](#) area of our website