

A good education for all: Ofsted consultation on amended inspection arrangements

Summary

As Governors will be aware, a new Ofsted Inspection framework has been in place since January 2012 which focuses on four key areas – achievement, teaching and learning, behaviour and safety and leadership and management. Ofsted is now consulting (until 3 May) on further amendments to the inspection arrangements for schools and FE/skills providers to start in September of this year. They are aimed at raising ambition, expectation and standards to make all provision at least 'good'.

Overview

Sir Michael Wilshaw, who took up the post of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) in the New Year, signalled early his intention to raise expectations and the quality of teaching, and to make Ofsted inspection and judgements a key vehicle for doing so. He launched a consultation on proposed amendments to inspection arrangements for schools, FE/skills providers and initial teacher education (ITE) partnerships.

Proposals for school inspections

- For a school to be judged 'outstanding', the quality of the teaching must be outstanding.
- The expectation is that the quality of education for all children should be at least good, so any school not providing a 'good' or better education will be deemed to be causing concern, and inspection reports will be clear about what must be done to improve; reports will make a distinction between schools that are showing strong signs of improvement and those that are not. The acceptable standard for the quality of education will be raised to good, rather than satisfactory.
- A single judgement of 'requires improvement' will replace the current 'satisfactory' judgement and 'notice to improve' category, giving a new four point scale: outstanding, good, requires improvement and special measures.
- All schools judged as 'requires improvement' will be re-inspected, usually within 12-18 months of their last inspection, and will not receive a monitoring inspection.
- If, at a school's third consecutive inspection, it is not judged to have made sufficient progress to be graded 'good' it will be deemed to be 'inadequate' and will require 'special measures'. For schools judged as 'satisfactory' before 31 August 2012, this inspection will count as their first 'requires improvement' judgement for the purpose of implementing this proposal.
- From September 2012, schools will receive no notice of inspection.
- Schools will be asked to provide anonymised information of performance management outcomes, which will not be reported but will be used with other evidence in evaluating the leadership and management of senior managers and governing bodies and whether they are using performance management effectively to assist in the drive for improvement.