

OFSTED INSPECTION: AN OVERVIEW (2021/22)

Types of inspection

Schools are inspected under [section 5](#) or [section 8](#) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended).

Section 5 (para 182-184): Individual judgements are made so the overall effectiveness grade can be changed. Judgements will be made about: Overall effectiveness; Quality of education; Behaviour and attitudes; Personal development; and Leadership and management.

If the school offers early years provision and sixth-form provision, inspectors will also make judgements on these areas.

Section 8: Typically, this does not result in individual graded judgements so the overall grade does not change. However, in some circumstances (para 91) 'The section 8 inspection will be deemed to be a section 5 inspection, usually within 48 hours, if there are serious concerns about the quality of education, behaviour, potential gaming (including off-rolling) or safeguarding.'

The timeframe of inspection (refer to the tables on page 2)

The timeframe of inspection is laid out in law (Section 5, para 41):

'The regulations set the usual interval for section 5 inspections as within 5 school years from the end of the school year in which the last section 5 (or relevant section 8) inspection took place. For the first routine inspection of schools after 4 May 2021 the interval will, instead be 7 years.'

Section 8 handbook (para 43) states 'good and outstanding schools will normally receive a section 8 inspection approximately every 4 years. However, for the first routine inspection after 4 May 2021 this period may be extended by up to 6 terms' (ie two academic years).

NB, In the [blog](#) of November 2021, Ofsted said 'this year we will inspect schools last inspected in the 2016/17 academic year – which is an extension of about 5 terms'.

Section 5 handbook (para 147) states schools judged as requires improvement will be inspected 'again under section 5, usually within 30 months of the publication of the previous section 5 report. For the first inspection after the pandemic, this period will be extended by up to 6 terms.'

Timing and length of inspection

'Inspections can take place at any point from 5 school days after the first day pupils attend in the autumn term' (section 5, para 67).

Section 5 inspections are likely to be two days. For section 8 inspections Ofsted indicates for schools of more than 150 pupils, the inspection is likely to be two days in length, with one inspector. However, where there are fewer than 150 pupils, the inspection is likely to be one day in length with two inspectors.

Feedback and post-inspection

For details regarding to whom feedback will be provided, and to enable you to plan/prepare colleagues, please refer to the inspection handbooks: Section 5 handbook (para 144-146); and Section 8 handbook (para 25-27).

Useful links

[Inspecting schools: guide for maintained and academy schools](#)

[Section 5 School inspection handbook](#)

[Section 8 School inspection handbook](#)

[Inspection timetable: what will the additional funding mean for your school](#) (Ofsted blog)

Current judgement	Date of previous inspection	Type of next inspection	Timescale of next inspection	Outcomes (next inspection)
Outstanding	Before September 2015	Section 5	By summer 2025 (starting with the oldest inspection judgements)	All four judgements are possible: Outstanding; Good; Requires Improvement; or Inadequate.
	After September 2015	Section 8		There are three possible outcomes (see s8 para 81): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school continues to be Outstanding; ▪ Returning section 5 (within 1-2 years); or ▪ Deemed section 5 (usually within 48 hours).

Current judgement	Date of previous inspection	Type of next inspection	Timescale of next inspection	Outcomes (next inspection)
Good	Before 4 May 2021	Section 8 [though some schools will receive a Section 5 inspection (see s8 para 44 for details)]	Up to 6 years (section 8, para 43) (Schools inspected in 2016/17 will be inspected in 2021/22)	<u>Section 8</u> There are four possible outcomes (see s8 para 81): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school continues to be Good; ▪ Returning section 5 within 1-2 years (possible outstanding); ▪ Returning section 5 within 1-2 years (possible declining) or ▪ Deemed section 5 (usually within 48 hours).
	After 4 May 2021		Usually 4 years, but no more than 5 years as determined by the academic year of previous s8 inspection (section 5, para 41)	
Good (returning section 5)	Before 4 May 2021	Section 5	Up to 7 years (determined by the academic year of the previous s5 inspection)	All four judgements are possible: Outstanding; Good; Requires Improvement; or Inadequate.
	After 4 May 2021	Section 5	Up to 5 years (determined by the academic year of the previous s5 inspection)	

Current judgement	Date of previous inspection	Nature of previous inspection	Type of next inspection	Timescale of next inspection	Outcomes (next inspection)
Requires Improvement	Before 4 May 2021	First RI judgement	Section 5	Usually within 30 months of the publication of the previous s5, extended by up to 6 terms	All four judgements are possible: Outstanding; Good; Requires Improvement; or Inadequate.
		Subsequent RI judgement	Section 8 (monitoring visit)		‘Leaders and those responsible for governance are/are not taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.’ Please refer to s8 paras 127-132 for possible scenarios.
	After 4 May 2021	First RI judgement	Section 5	Usually within 30 months of the publication of the previous s5	All four judgements are possible: Outstanding; Good; Requires Improvement; or Inadequate.
		Subsequent RI judgement	Section 8 (monitoring visit)		‘Leaders and those responsible for governance are/are not taking effective action in order for the school to become a good school.’ Please refer to s8 paras 127-132 for possible scenarios.

Schools causing concern

Section 5 (para 150): ‘Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be inadequate (grade 4) will be deemed to be in a formal category of concern.’ Please refer to s5 handbook, paras 151-169.