

## Preparing your governing board for Ofsted

### Edition 2: August 2015

This is the second edition of Q&As on preparing for an Ofsted inspection. This is based upon Ofsted's [Common Inspection Framework](#), the [School Inspection Handbook](#) and [Inspecting safeguarding in maintained schools and academies](#). This guidance was updated in July, and we have produced a briefing for members on the changes which is available on the NGA website.

This Q&A aims to include advice and guidance for governing boards preparing for an Ofsted inspection. All governors should know the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and have an understanding of the performance data (including the Ofsted data dashboard). An effective governing board should already know its school well enough to answer Ofsted's questions, but this guide will help you identify what will be expected of you. Even if an inspection is not imminent this information is still fundamental to a good understanding of the school and being able to carry out the governing board's statutory duty to hold the headteacher to account for the performance of the school.

On the [Ofsted website](#), you can find [inspection reports](#), the Ofsted [data dashboard](#), and [Parent View](#). You should familiarise yourselves with these pages, and also have a look at other resources available, like the [Fischer Family Trust Dashboard](#).

**If you are a GOLD member of NGA and have further questions** you would like answered, please feel free to telephone us or e-mail:

Email: [GOLD@nga.org.uk](mailto:GOLD@nga.org.uk)

GOLD advice line: 0121 237 3782



**We are keen to hear about your experiences of Ofsted inspections**, particularly if you believe inspectors have not acted in line with the guidance. Please send any comments to [fay.holland@nga.org.uk](mailto:fay.holland@nga.org.uk).

## 1. How do Ofsted inspectors make their judgement about the school?

**Answer:** Ofsted will make a judgement on each of four key areas:

- outcomes for pupils quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- personal development, behaviour and welfare
- the effectiveness of leadership and management

These four areas will inform the overall judgement of the quality of education at your school. Inspectors will also consider the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils, and whether the education provided is meeting the needs of the range of pupils at the school, and in particular those of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Schools with early years or sixth form provision will also receive a separate numerical grade for these aspects of provision, which may not determine but could influence the key judgements and therefore the overall effectiveness grade. Each of the four areas, the overall judgement and, where applicable, early years or sixth form provision will be graded on the following scale: 'outstanding' (grade 1), 'good' (grade 2), 'requires improvement' (grade 3), or 'inadequate' (grade 4). If you are given grade 4 overall, you will be placed in one of two categories: 'serious weaknesses' where Ofsted think the leadership and management is good enough to improve the school or 'special measures' where Ofsted think the leadership is not strong enough to improve the school.

The [School Inspection Handbook](#) contains a description of every grade for each of the areas of judgement. At least some members of your governing board – perhaps a committee - should familiarise themselves with the grade descriptors, particularly the quality of leadership and management section. See where you fall in the criteria. Although governors should not be spending excessive amounts of time and effort specifically on preparing for Ofsted, this exercise can be a useful way to drive school improvement and could form part of the school's self-evaluation process. School self-evaluation needs to be honest – Ofsted will assess this, but will be more impressed by an evaluation which identifies an area for improvement and states what is being done, than an evaluation which paints a rosy but inaccurate picture. The governing board needs to ask itself the question – can we justify the school's self-evaluation? If the answer is no then you need to revisit it.

## Preparing the governing board for the inspection

### 2. What documents will the inspector(s) ask to see?

**Answer:** To some extent this is up to the inspectors, but generally, they will request to see documents demonstrating the work of the governing board and its impact. The chair and the clerk to the governors should make sure that the minutes of governing board meetings in particular are easily accessible. Ofsted will be looking in the minutes to see that the governors challenge the headteacher and other senior leaders to hold them to account. Other documents it would be useful for inspectors to see include the strategic plan and governor training record (see Appendix 1). If inspectors don't ask to see something you think is important, don't be afraid to be assertive and show it to them anyway.

It is too late to realise when Ofsted arrives that your minutes do not demonstrate challenge, so it is vital that the governing board ensures that the minutes accurately record questions asked. If you are not convinced that the minutes demonstrate challenge, governors will need to work doubly hard to persuade Ofsted that they know, understand and hold the school to account. It may be a good idea for challenge questions to be highlighted in the minutes so that they can be picked out easily.

If the issue is more fundamental – i.e. the minutes don't demonstrate challenge because the governors have been in 'receive,' rather than 'question', mode you may need to put in place some governor training/development (see question 8 about self-review and question 23 about governance reviews).

Governors will need to be able to answer any questions from Ofsted during the inspection to show that they understand the school's position and know what steps are being taken to improve it. The inspection should not be a 'memory test' i.e. it's not about whether you have every performance statistic at your fingertips, but whether and how you know how well your school is doing.

### **3. What do I need to know about pupil data? Where do I get that information from?**

**Answer:** Governors do not need to know detailed performance data off by heart – an inspection is not a memory test. However you do need to know how well your school is doing compared to the national average and similar schools, both in terms of attainment and progress (achievement). You should know which subjects are strong and which ones need improving, and how well different groups of pupils are doing. For example, how do boys perform compared to girls? Do pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils? Are pupils eligible for the pupil premium making more than expected progress (see also question 10)? Have a look at the trends in different subjects and pupil groups over the last 3 years. Are they improving, or is there a downward trend that you need to be addressing? More important than knowing the data is knowing what is being done about it, and asking 'so what?' You will need to know what is being done to help any group that is not doing as well as expected, or whose results are falling.

Governors of high-performing schools should not be complacent about good headline figures. Your school may be achieving 80%+ five A\*-Cs at GCSE, but how many of those are A\* and how many should have been based on prior attainment? Does the overall high attainment mask subject weaknesses?

You can get this data from a variety of sources; Ofsted's [data dashboard](#) has a simple view of the strengths and weaknesses, though all the governors should try and dig deeper than this. The Fischer Family Trust and NGA [data dashboard](#) gives you a more detailed breakdown, particularly in terms of pupil groups and can give you a comprehensive overview. [RAISEonline](#) gives you the most detailed information, but is a lengthy document. However, at least one governor (and preferably a committee) should be familiar with it. For more information about knowing your data, have a look at the NGA [Knowing your School](#) document on the data dashboard.

It is vital that governors also receive in-year data from the headteacher about the performance of pupils currently in the school (RAISEonline and the data dashboards will only tell you about the results of pupils who have left the school). The removal of National Curriculum levels from September 2014 means that inspectors will potentially now have to get to grips with a new pupil progress tracking system for every school they inspect. They will consider whether governors “assure themselves of the rigour of the assessment process”, so it’s important that governors understand how the school assesses pupils and raise questions if they have concerns about the robustness of assessment.

Governors need to know how students are expected to achieve and ask questions throughout the year if pupils are not on target to reach at least floor standards. Governors need to compare the in-school data with the actual formal results – if there are significant discrepancies then it suggests that the school’s assessments are not as accurate as they could be and the governing board should be seeking explanations from the headteacher (see also question 8 about self-evaluation).

See also question 5 regarding pay and performance, and question 10 on pupil premium.

Crib sheet: You may find it useful to create a crib-sheet, a single sheet containing the headline attainment and progress figures, including those for different group. This is no substitute for a fundamental understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but it can provide you with a handy reference for the more detailed data – i.e. 65% of all pupils gained 5 A\*-C GCSEs, compared to 55% of pupil premium children – to refer to. Alternatively you could use your school’s [FFT data dashboard](#).

#### **4. How much should I know about the curriculum?**

**Answer:** Although governors are no longer required to have a curriculum policy, it is important that governors know what is provided and can discuss the curriculum offer. Governors at maintained schools must ensure that the National Curriculum is being taught as part of the school’s wider curriculum. A new National Curriculum takes effect from September 2014 and governors should monitor the school’s preparation for and implementation of this. If you are a governor or trustee at an academy which has decided not to follow the National Curriculum, then you should be able to explain the rationale behind the decision.

The updated *School inspection handbook* puts an increased emphasis on schools having a broad and balanced curriculum, which “actively promotes the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs”. Inspectors will also look at whether the curriculum includes a “rounded programme of assemblies that help to promote pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, providing clear guidance on what is right and what is wrong”. These additions are a direct result of the various ‘Trojan Horse’ reviews, which raised concerns about certain schools having particularly narrow curricula. It is important to note that Ofsted will look at whether schools are *actively* promoting British values. Governors need to know that this is the case in their school.

The curriculum should also take into account the needs of different pupils, in particular by providing high quality vocational options for those pupils for whom the academic route is not appropriate. A useful tool can be found on the [NGA website](#) as part of the *Knowing your Schools* briefing on questions to ask about the curriculum. This will help you to challenge the curriculum and identify how it can be improved.

#### 5. What will Ofsted expect me to know about our performance management and pay policy?

**Answer:** Inspectors will consider how effectively senior leaders use performance management and the school's self-evaluation to focus professional development activities. Ofsted will be looking at pay and performance during its inspection, and will want to know how you have made decisions about teachers' salaries. Although full implementation of the changes to performance related pay does not take effect until September 2014, the inspector(s) will look at existing decisions on pay and whether these correlate to the performance of the school; in particular inspectors will look at how many teachers have moved onto the upper pay range, and whether this mirrors the school performance. Once appraisals and pay decisions in Autumn 2014 have been taken Ofsted will be looking at how schools are implementing their pay policies in relation to performance related pay. Governors need to ensure that senior leadership teams have set objectives which relate to the priorities of the school and that any pay decisions meet the thresholds set in the school's pay policies. Governors should seek early sight of anonymised performance objectives – so that the headteacher can be asked early to address any questions about their fitness for purpose. This not about performance managing individual teachers, but ensuring that the objectives set by professional staff meet the requirements of the regulations/school policy.

It is absolutely essential that governors who carry out the head's performance management are confident about the process and clear about what they are trying to achieve; training for the process is advised. The headteacher's objectives must be linked to the school's strategic priorities and must be measurable. Does his/her movement up the pay scale reflect the performance of the school?

Have a look at the *Knowing your School* briefing on [Governors and Staff Performance](#).

#### 6. Are we as governors expected to have undertaken lesson observations?

**Answer:** Absolutely not. You are not an Ofsted inspector, and are not appointed to directly judge the quality of teaching. NGA is aware that some Ofsted inspectors have asked governors about visiting classrooms and whether they have used this to assess the quality of teaching and/or learning. Governors need to be robust with inspectors if these issues come up and make clear that visiting classrooms to judge the quality of teaching does not form part of the governor role. The Department for Education's (DfE) *Governors' Handbook* will be of use here – it specifically states "Governors are not inspectors and it is not their role to assess the quality or method of teaching or extent of learning...If governors wish to spend time within a classroom, they need to be very clear why they are doing so." Visiting the school can be useful and governors should have a school visit protocol so that they can see the school at work in order to help their understanding. You should be clear about the purpose of these visits, having first discussed them with the head.

**7. How do we demonstrate to Ofsted that we know the quality of teaching and learning?**

**Answer:** You can make this judgement using data from different sources. As well as performance data from national assessments (have a look at the various dashboards available - [Ofsted](#), [FFT and NGA](#),) and RAISEonline, senior leaders should regularly report internal performance data from the school's own tracking system, which will largely be based on teacher assessment. This should include reports on the performance of different subjects and year groups, which you can compare with the national statistics.

The headteacher might also report on any lesson observations that have been performed by school leaders, even though under the updated Ofsted guidance inspectors will no longer grade individual lesson observations. Some schools may have a partnership with another school to give an independent assessment of the quality of teaching and learning. You may also want to commission an external opinion. As a governor, you need to have confidence in the information you are given (i.e. is it reliable? has it been verified independently?) We will be producing guidance on how governors understand the quality of teaching and learning during the autumn term.

**8. How do we know if our governing board is effective? What should we do to improve?**

**Answer:** Your governing board should have a regular self-review of its governance. The [APPG Twenty key questions](#) can be used as the basis for a self-review. NGA has also produced an [evaluation framework](#) to facilitate this process. You should know when your last self-review was, what the outcomes were, what you have done to improve since then, and whether you have a governing board development plan. It would also be helpful to know what information you used to come to a decision about how effective you are. It might be useful to have this information to hand for the inspectors.

**9. What will I be expected to know about school finance?**

**Answer:** If you don't sit on the finance/resources committee, you won't be expected to know the finances of the school in detail. However, every governor should know whether the school is running with surplus or at a loss.

LA maintained schools must complete the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) annually by 31 March each year. Ofsted may wish to look at your SFVS to assess how effectively you hold the school to account for finance. In particular, the standard asks: 'Is there a clear and demonstrable link between the school's budgeting and its plan for raising standards and attainment?' Your finance committee should be able to justify your budget, and also demonstrate that there are effective procedures in place to prevent mismanagement.

Similarly, academy finance committees must be able to justify their budget and spending to Ofsted and be able to explain how the budget is used to bring about school improvement. The finance committee and any audit committee must be able to explain what measures are

in place to prevent mismanagement. The Academies Financial Handbook gives more information on the options for academies in relation to internal audit and internal security.

### 10. What do we need to know about our pupil premium spending?

**Answer:** Schools are required to publish on their website information about how they are spending their pupil premium money and what impact it is having. You must be able to answer the inspector’s questions about what it has been spent on, but you must also be able to demonstrate the effect that it’s had. It can be difficult to categorically state how much effect each measure has had but, for example, if you spend it on hiring a new teaching assistant but the TA does not end up working with any pupils on Free School Meals, then it is clear that the spending is not benefitting the intended pupils. Make sure you understand how you are evaluating the effect of each project funded by the pupil premium so that you can justify how the money has been spent. Have a look at the questions in the *Knowing your School* briefing note on [Questions for the governing board to ask](#) for help on challenging this.

If inspectors identify specific issues regarding the provision for pupils eligible for the pupil premium, they may recommend an external pupil premium review. For more information see question 24.

### 11. What do we need to know about safeguarding?

**Answer:** Ofsted will be looking at whether the governing board is meeting its statutory duties. The governing board of all schools ([section 175](#) of Education Act 2002 and regulations under [section 157](#) of the Education Act 2002) has a statutory duty to ensure their school has policies and procedures in place and takes into account any statutory guidance issued. The school must have a child protection policy and procedures - the governing board must review these annually and be certain that they are being implemented where appropriate.

The governing board should ensure that the school operates safer recruitment procedures – do all new staff members undergo a DBS check? Is the single central record kept up to date? The school should also have a designated member of the senior leadership team who has responsibility for child protection. The designated person should have additional training for this role – all other staff, including the headteacher, should undertake safeguarding training that is kept up to date by refresher training at three yearly intervals. The governing board should ensure that all staff are receiving the appropriate training and should seek assurance from the headteacher that the statutory checks are being undertaken. This can present problems for governing boards keen to keep clear lines between the operational and strategic. Just as ‘the headteacher told us’ will rarely be sufficient in relation to quality of teaching, so Ofsted may want to see the ‘how do you know evidence’ with regards to safeguarding. This may entail the safeguarding governor viewing the single central record annually to see that all staff members are recorded – and possibly doing a ‘spot-check’ on one individual to check that all the paperwork is there for that individual. Just as the school’s financial auditors may follow a single transaction from start to finish to check that the school’s procedures have been followed. You may alternatively ask your HR provider to carry out the audit for you and provide a report.

In addition to meeting the statutory requirements, inspectors will look at the school's safeguarding culture as a whole, and as part of the leadership and management judgement will consider whether leaders and governors promote "safe practices and a culture of safety". It is not enough just to have a policy in place; the governing board needs to be assured that policies are implemented and that safeguarding is integral to how the school operates. Inspectors will also consider "the extent to which pupils are able to understand, respond to and calculate risk effectively, for example risks associated with child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, substance misuse, gang activity, radicalisation and extremism and are aware of the support available to them". Does your PSHE provision ensure that pupils know about potential dangers and how to keep themselves safe?

## 12. Do we know our stakeholders well enough?

### a) Parents

A school needs to understand its parents and their views on the education being provided to their children because parents choose schools and they have an enormous influence on their children's learning. There are a number of ways the governing board can engage with parents - have a look at the *Knowing your School* briefing note [Knowing your parents](#), which will help you to understand what questions you should be asking. Ofsted inspectors have a statutory duty to have regard to the views of parents of pupils at the school. They will be checking the [Parent View](#) website and looking at any surveys the school has carried out independently. Therefore, you should be aware of how your parents view the school. On the Parent View website, parents can fill in an online questionnaire and leave comments and, once enough have been gathered, the results are available for anyone to view online. It is entirely commonplace for schools to have few if any comments on Parent View until an inspection occurs. If there are negative comments from disgruntled parents at that stage and you have no other data to go on, it may be difficult to counter. It is worth having your own research (for example your own questionnaires) that you can use to show your understanding and awareness of the parent voice, and demonstrate good dialogue between the governing board and parents.

### b) Pupils

It's important to know what the pupils think of the school, after all, Ofsted inspectors will be talking to them throughout the inspection. There are various ways you can engage with pupils, including pupil councils, surveys and pupil focus groups.

### c) Staff

One of the critical factors that will affect the success of any school is the mood in the staffroom. Teachers and support staff are on the front line when it comes to educating children, so they are in a unique position to both see what's going on in the school and to impact pupil – and overall school – performance. Therefore ensuring your staff team is happy and working well is vital. Governors might find out this information by using surveys to seek staff opinion, or from conversations during visits to the school.

### 13. How do we show the impact that we've had as a governing board?

**Answer:** One of the best ways governing boards can do this is to have an effective school strategic plan in place, setting out where the school wants to be and how it is going to get there. Setting clear, measurable objectives and key performance indicators will allow the governing board to track progress and evidence impact. The strategic plan should be a 'living document', which is periodically reviewed and adjusted to take into account new information. The minutes of full governing board and committee meetings (see question 2) will also be viewed by Ofsted. These should show that meetings are focussed on core priorities for the school – i.e. those set out in your strategic plan.

Some governing boards might also have an improvement plan for the governing board itself, for example as a result of a review of governance. The plan should record the current position of the governing board, and what action is needed to improve.

### 14. How does Ofsted judge the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils?

**Answer:** Inspectors will be looking at SMSC in more detail than they have previously, following the various 'Trojan Horse' reviews, and there is now a much greater focus on how well schools actively promote British values as part of SMSC. The areas Ofsted will look at for this can be found in the [School Inspection Handbook](#) (paragraphs 131-134). Inspectors will consider SMSC in relation all the key judgements they make (except for Achievement of pupils) so these skills and qualities should be developed throughout the curriculum and across the whole school. For example, inspectors will look at whether aspects of SMSC are evident in the lessons they observe, as demonstrated in the following extract from an Ofsted report: "Teaching across several subjects makes a positive contribution to students' social, moral and cultural development. In English students enjoy debates on topics such as animal rights. In a Year 11 science lesson students made good progress in their understanding of the political, social, economic and environmental issues connected to the oil industry."

Governors should (and generally are) interested in the wider well-being of their pupils and SMSC has an important role to play. It fits entirely with the strategic role of governors to discuss the school's curriculum offer. Ensuring that SMSC is given appropriate attention in the curriculum is definitely within the governing board's remit.

## The inspection

### 15. How and when does the school find out about an upcoming inspection?

**Answer:** For a routine inspection under Section 5 of the [Education Act 2005](#), the lead inspector will usually contact the headteacher at midday or soon after on the working day before the inspection to inform her/him that an inspection team will visit the school the following day. If the headteacher is not available, Ofsted will contact the most senior member of staff available by telephone.

Ofsted does have the right to inspect a school without any notice if it thinks it is appropriate, in which case the lead inspector will phone the school 15 minutes before arriving on site.

This call is purely to inform the school of the inspection; all other arrangements are made on arrival. NGA understands that Ofsted will be conducting a formal consultation during autumn 2014 regarding proposals to make no notice inspections the norm rather than the exception.

**16. My school is receiving a short inspection. How is this different?**

**Answer:** From September 2015, schools which are judged ‘good’ will receive short inspections approximately every three years. (Previously, they would receive a full inspection within five years.) This change has been introduced to ensure that inspectors can recognise improvement, or identify decline, sooner and to provide more up-to-date and relevant information to parents, the community, and the school itself.

Short inspections start from the assumption that the school or provider remains ‘good’ and inspectors will be on site for a maximum of one day. If the school remains ‘good’, the HMI will write to the school leaders confirming that this is the case and that safeguarding remains effective. The letter will highlight the school’s strengths and next steps for improvement but will not contain a full se

**17. Who informs the governing board?**

**Answer:** The headteacher should inform the governing board, but it will need to ensure that there is a procedure in place so that this happens at the earliest opportunity. In most circumstances the headteacher will phone the chair of governors to alert her/him to the imminent inspection. The chair should ensure that the rest of the governing board are informed of the inspection as soon as possible. If the chair is not available then the headteacher should contact the next person on the agreed priority list (see question 17).

**18. Who will Ofsted inspectors want to speak to?**

**Answer:** The *School inspection handbook* states that the inspector(s) should always seek to meet with governors during an inspection so that they can get an accurate picture of the effectiveness of the whole governing board. NGA has, however, come across varying practice from inspectors with some stating that they only want to meet the chair and others following the guidance document.

While it is expected that the chair will take the lead, the governing board should not be afraid to say x governors will also be in attendance. More governors should give a better picture of the overall knowledge and effectiveness of the governing board. It is also perfectly acceptable to specify when you would like to meet with inspectors, especially as there is so little notice and most governors will have work commitments. For example, if inspectors want to meet with governors at 3pm on the first day and no-one is available to attend, ask them to meet later that day or even the next morning.

The governing board must ensure it has procedures in place so that if the chair is not available, someone is ready to take her/his place as lead governor. Most commonly this will be the vice-chair followed by a committee chair. In short inspections which will last only a single day it is essential that the governing board has a plan in place to ensure that governors can be contacted and are available to speak to the inspector(s).

It is essential that **all** governors have a broad picture of the whole school and know its strengths and weaknesses. In the last school year inspectors have asked governors specifically about a number of 'hot' topics, including the pupil premium, British Values, life without levels, performance related pay and pupil performance data.

### **19. Can I attend the feedback session?**

**Answer:** Yes! Governors should definitely be represented at the feedback session. Paragraph 27 of the *School inspection handbook* states that in the phone call informing the school of the inspection the inspector should request that as many governors as possible are present at the feedback meeting. The latest Ofsted guidance advises inspectors to seek to meet with as many governors as possible for the feedback session, and NGA would recommend that at the very least the chair of governors, vice chair and chairs of committees should be present.

The feedback session should tell you not only the outcome of the inspection, but also give you recommendations for improvement. Inspectors will go through each grade and make sure you are clear about the grades awarded for each area (and that they may change subject to quality assurance procedures and/or moderation), the procedures leading to the publication of the report, and the recommendations. They will also go through complaints procedures, and the implications of being graded 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' if it is required. If the inspector thinks the school is likely to be graded 'inadequate' the headteacher will have been informed of the possibility at the end of the first day. Where the inspector is recommending a review of governance and/or the pupil premium s/he will also explain the reasons for this in the feedback session.

You should treat the feedback meeting as confidential until the written report is received from Ofsted. This will contain all the main findings of the inspection, and any oral feedback given. The report will take longer for schools that are causing concern so that the judgement can be moderated and confirmed.

## **After the inspection**

### **20. Can we as governors check the report before it is published?**

**Answer:** Yes, but only to check for factual correctness. You will only have one day to respond. We are aware of some instances under the previous framework where the headteacher has been asked by Ofsted not to share the "draft" report with anyone else, including governors. The current framework states that "on receipt of the draft report, it [the school] must ensure that the report remains restricted and confidential to the relevant senior personnel (as determined by the school)". The NGA's view is that the governing board forms part of the senior leadership team and should be given the chance to check the report for factual correctness, especially the governance paragraph. Therefore, the chair should agree with the headteacher in advance of any inspection the arrangements for checking the draft report. Regulations state that the headteacher must agree to all reasonable requests of the governing board and this is a reasonable request. This does not mean that the draft report should be circulated round the whole governing board – but that it should agree which member (most likely the chair) will be responsible for checking the governance paragraph.

The draft report will be sent to the school shortly after the inspection (usually within five working days) and the school will have one working day to comment on it. Schools which are judged to have serious weaknesses or require special measures will receive the draft report in the same time frame, but will have five working days to comment.

## **21. When will we get the report?**

**Answer:** If you have been judged to be 'outstanding,' 'good,' or 'requires improvement,' you should receive an electronic copy of the final report within 15 working days of the end of the inspection. If you have been judged 'inadequate', you will receive an electronic copy of the final report within 28 working days of the end of the inspection.

## **22. We've been judged as 'inadequate'; what does that mean?**

**Answer:** You will have been placed in one of two categories: 'serious weaknesses' or 'special measures'. If you have 'serious weaknesses', then your school was judged 'inadequate' in one or more of the four judgements, but the inspectors believe the leadership is strong enough to improve the school. If you are placed in 'special measures', Ofsted does not believe the leadership team (governors, headteacher, and senior leadership team) is capable of improving the school.

If after the first day the inspectors think the overall judgement might be 'inadequate', they will inform the headteacher of this possibility, and contact the Ofsted helpline to discuss the evidence. The formal judgement won't be made until the end of the second day when all evidence has been considered.

## **23. When will our next Ofsted inspection be?**

**Answer:** The frequency of inspection will be proportionate to the performance of the school.

### Primary and secondary maintained schools and academies

If you were given 'outstanding', you will be exempt from future section 5 inspections. You may still be subject to [section 8](#) inspections if Ofsted becomes aware of concerns about performance or safety (which can be treated as a section 5 inspection). You are still subject to inspection as part of curriculum reviews or other programmes as part of section 8. You can also request an additional inspection, although there almost certainly will be a charge for the cost from the HMCI.

If you were judged as 'good,' you will receive a short inspection approximately every three years, unless a risk assessment suggests an earlier inspection is needed, there are qualifying concerns about the school, or it is inspected for another reason (such as part of a cross-section of schools).

If you were judged as 'requires improvement', you will be subject to monitoring by Ofsted and be inspected within two years. If you are graded as 'requires improvement' at two

consecutive inspections and have not reached 'good' by the third inspection, you will be graded as 'inadequate' and probably require 'special measures'.

If you were judged as 'inadequate' with 'serious weaknesses' you will be monitored and re-inspected within 18 months. If you were judged as 'inadequate' and require 'special measures' you will have a monitoring visit within three months (or earlier if there are safeguarding concerns) and have a further four before your next section 5 inspection in 18-24 months.

### Special schools, PRUs and LA maintained nurseries

Special schools, PRUs and LA maintained nurseries cannot be exempt from inspection.

A maintained nursery judged to be 'good' or 'outstanding' overall will be inspected within three years from the end of the school year in which it was last inspected. Those judged as 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' are subject to the same process as primary and secondary maintained schools and academies, as described above.

Special schools and PRUs judged to be 'good' or 'outstanding' will normally be inspected within three years from the end of the school year in which the last inspection took place. However, if the school has been judged to be 'outstanding' at two consecutive inspections and there had been no change of headteacher since the school's last inspection, it will normally be inspected within five years instead of three. The decision to defer the inspection will also take account of any significant issues that have been brought to Ofsted's attention, including any raised by the local authority or through a qualifying complaint. The school will be informed of the deferral in writing. Special schools and PRUs judged as 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' are subject to the same process as primary and secondary maintained schools and academies.

## **24. Ofsted has recommended that we undertake an external review of governance. What does this mean and what do we have to do?**

Where governance is judged to be ineffective the Governors' Handbook states that inspectors **should** recommend a review of governance.

If you are recommended a review of governance, you will need to commission an external reviewer to undertake the review at the school's expense, in a timely manner. You can choose whoever you want to do the review, but the reviewer will need to have a good understanding of governance demonstrated by experience of leading governors and school improvement. The NGA offers external reviews of governance as part of our Consultancy and Training service - for more information email [clare.collins@nga.org.uk](mailto:clare.collins@nga.org.uk) or visit <http://www.nga.org.uk/Services/ConsultancyandTraining/Reviews.aspx>

Inspectors will assess the review's impact during subsequent monitoring visits and the next section 5 inspection, and if the review hasn't been undertaken by this time it may affect inspectors' evaluation of progress made by the school.

For more information about governance reviews see [www.gov.uk/reviews-of-school-governance](http://www.gov.uk/reviews-of-school-governance)

**25. Ofsted has recommended that we undertake a review of the school's use of the pupil premium. What does this mean and what do we have to do?**

Ofsted will recommend that you commission a pupil premium review where the inspection team identifies specific issues regarding the provision for disadvantaged pupils. In such instances, inspectors will advise that you seek support from an independent, external system leader with a track record of accelerating disadvantaged pupils' achievement.

The DfE's guidance states that schools should start the process of commissioning the review within 2 weeks of it being recommended and should aim to have the review completed within 8 weeks. If an Ofsted inspection report recommends the review, the monitoring inspector will expect it to be undertaken in a timely way.

For more information about pupil premium reviews see [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-reviews](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-reviews).

If you feel your governing board would benefit from more detailed advice and guidance in preparation for an Ofsted inspection, you might consider commissioning a Preparing for Ofsted session from the NGA Consultancy and Training service. For more information email [clare.collins@nga.org.uk](mailto:clare.collins@nga.org.uk) or visit <http://www.nga.org.uk/Services/NGA-Consultancy-and-Training-Service/Preparing-for-Ofsted.aspx> .

## Appendix 1: Preparing for Ofsted checklist and useful resources

Preparing for Ofsted should not be left until the school receives the phone call. Although in practice schools may feel under pressure to operate differently during an inspection, much of what inspectors are looking for should already be standard practice. The checklist below therefore shouldn't just be used when an inspection is announced, but as part of the governing board's ongoing work.

	Yes	No	Action	Useful resources
<b>The governing board</b>				
Do we have a clear vision and strategic plan and can all governors articulate it?				A Framework for Governance?
Have we recently undertaken a governing board review? (either self-review or external)				<a href="#">Twenty Questions – evaluation framework</a>
Have we recently completed a governing board skills audit?				<a href="#">NGA skills audit</a>
Do we have a succession plan for the chair and vice-chair?				<a href="#">NCOGS: Succession Breeds Success</a> <a href="#">Succession Planning</a>
Does our clerk keep a record of governor training? Have we reviewed the effectiveness of governor training for last year? If so, have we used the results to plan governor training for this year?				
<b>Demonstrating vision and strategic direction</b>				
Do governors have a good understanding of the school improvement/development plan and current progress made towards the objectives?				<a href="#">A Framework for Governance</a>
Are all governors able to confidently give an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school?				
<b>Demonstrating support and challenge</b>				
Does the governing board performance manage the headteacher effectively? Can we provide evidence of this?				
Do governing board minutes clearly show that governors challenge?				

<b>Knowing your school</b>				
Do all governors know where they could look for more detailed performance data? (e.g. data dashboards, RAISEonline)				<a href="#">FFT Governor Dashboard</a> <a href="#">Knowing your School briefings</a>
Can all governors talk confidently about the progress of different groups, and how it compares to progress of other pupils: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Boys v Girls</li> </ul>				<a href="#">FFT Governor Dashboard</a>
Can governors explain how the pupil premium grant has been spent and its impact on eligible pupils' progress?				<a href="#">NGA Pupil Premium guidance</a>
Does the governing board receive regular reports from the headteacher about the standards in the school?				
Do governors have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching?				
Can governors explain how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression?				<a href="#">Knowing your School: Governors and staff performance</a>
<b>Documents</b>				
Are all our policies up to date and accessible on the school website?				<a href="#">List of statutory policies for schools</a>
Is our school improvement/development plan up to date?				
Do we have evidence of self-evaluation, such as a SEF?				
Are all governing board minutes readily available?				
Have all governors seen the school's Ofsted school dashboard and FFT governor dashboard?				<a href="#">Ofsted Dashboard</a> <a href="#">FFT Governor Dashboard</a>
Has all the legally required information been published on the school website?				<a href="#">Information that must be on your school website</a>
Do we have a school visits policy for governors?				

## **Other useful resources**

### **Getting to Good - Ofsted**

Ofsted has published a number of documents detailing how schools have reached the 'good' criteria in Ofsted inspections, which can be found on the [NGA website](#).

### **Improving governance – a training resource for schools**

This [training resource](#) for governing boards is about improving governance. It is in the form of a PowerPoint presentation which contains training notes, so can be delivered by the chair or another governor to the rest of the governing board.

### **School governance – learning from the best**

This [report](#) presents evidence from an Ofsted survey into school governance. The report looks at the principles and practices that contribute to outstanding governance in 14 schools, and includes case studies from the schools visited.

## Appendix 2 – Extract from *School inspection handbook*

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

136. The CIF sets out the overarching criteria for judging the effectiveness of leadership and management.

137. In making this judgement in schools, inspectors will consider:

- the leaders' and governors' vision and ambition for the school and how these are communicated to staff, parents and pupils
- whether leaders have created a culture of high expectations, aspirations and scholastic excellence in which the highest achievement in academic and vocational work is recognised as vitally important
- whether leaders have the highest expectations for social behaviour among pupils and staff, so that respect and courtesy are the norm
- the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and how well it leads to planning that secures continual improvement
- the design, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum, ensuring breadth and balance
- how the school supplements the formal curriculum with extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding and to improve their skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities
- how effectively leaders use the PE and sport premium and measure its impact on outcomes for pupils, and how effectively governors hold them to account for this
- how the school prepares pupils positively for life in modern Britain and promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith
- the effectiveness of the actions leaders take to secure and sustain improvements to teaching, learning and assessment
- how leaders ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff to deliver a high quality education for all pupils
- the quality of continuing professional development for teachers at the start and middle of their careers and later, and how leaders use performance management to promote effective practice across the school
- how effectively leaders and governors track the progress of groups of pupils to ensure that none falls behind and underachieve, and how effectively governors hold them to account for this
- how well leaders engage with parents, carers and other stakeholders and agencies to support all pupils
- how effectively leaders use additional funding, including the pupil premium, and measure its impact on outcomes for pupils, and how effectively governors hold them to account for this
- the effectiveness of governors in discharging their core statutory functions
- how leaders promote all forms of equality and foster greater understanding of and respect for people of all faiths (and those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientations (and other groups with protected characteristics), through their words, actions and influence within the school and more widely in the community
- the effectiveness of safeguarding

- the work to raise awareness and keep pupils safe from the dangers of abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism, and what the school does when it suspects that pupils are vulnerable to these issues.