

Up-to-speed on: Ofsted's school visits from Autumn 2020

Full Ofsted inspections will not resume until January 2021; however, Ofsted has released details of its “phased return to inspections” that will start with an interim period of school visits during the Autumn term. This article breaks down what you need to know.

Key points

The key points are as follows:

- [Ofsted will pilot the visits in September 2020, with a full roll out in October](#)
- [All 'inadequate' schools will be visited, alongside a sample of schools with other grades](#)
- [Visits will focus on a number of areas, including barriers to managing a full return and how schools are ensuring pupils resume learning the full curriculum](#)
- [Some details have been released about how the visits will be conducted and Ofsted will publish a short operational note in September](#)
- [Ofsted has said these visits are not full inspections](#)

Read on to learn more information about each key point.

When will the visits take place?

Ofsted will pilot its planned approach with volunteer schools during September 2020. The full programme will be rolled out at the beginning of October 2020.

Which schools will Ofsted visit?

All schools judged as 'inadequate' will be visited, alongside a sample of schools with other Ofsted grades.

Please note that Ofsted will still conduct registration visits and regulatory activity in early years settings. Pre-registration visits and emergency section 8 inspections in maintained schools and academies will also continue to be undertaken.

What will the visits focus on?

Visits will focus on:

- Identifying the barriers schools have faced and are still facing in managing the return to full-time education for pupils.
- How leaders are ensuring pupils resume learning the school's curriculum, including the blend of classroom teaching and remote learning (where remote learning is required).

- How pupils are settling back into expected routines and behaviours.
- How any specific health and wellbeing issues that have been identified in pupils are being addressed and what local and national support may be needed.
- Safeguarding.

What happens during a visit?

Schools will be given up to a day's notice of a visit. The lead inspector will phone the school ahead of the visit to discuss the logistics of the visit.

Visits will be based around a series of conversations with senior and middle leaders regarding the key areas of focus set out above. If documentation is needed to support discussions, inspectors will use what schools have already.

Following a visit, a brief letter will be published containing information agreed with school leaders about their next steps in managing the return to full-time education.

At the end of the pilot scheme, Ofsted will publish a brief operational note about how the visits will be conducted.

Are the visits the same as full inspections?

Ofsted has said that these visits are not inspections, and they will not:

- Use [‘The education inspection framework’](#) and [‘School inspection handbook’](#).
- Result in any grade or progress judgement.
- Judge schools on their response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic during the Spring and Summer 2020 terms.
- Require schools to prepare any pre-written planning or other documentation.
- Ask schools for documents or records in a certain format.
- Require teachers to prepare any lesson plans or examples of assessment, or to put up any displays.
- Use lesson visits as a method of collecting evidence.
- Involve a general review of a school's policies.

What's next?

- Read Ofsted's article in full [here](#).
- We'll keep you up-to-date with any further announcements about these visits, including when Ofsted publishes the operational note about how the visits will be conducted. To be kept informed, add this article to your 'Watch list'.

Bibliography

Ofsted (2020) 'Education plans from September 2020'
<<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-plans-from-september-2020>> [Accessed: 6 July 2020]