

Up-to-speed on: Ofsted inspections in 2020/2021

This article breaks down what you need to know about how Ofsted will conduct visits and inspections in the 2020/2021 academic year.

Key points

The key points are as follows:

1. [Interim visits will take place between September and December 2020](#)
2. [\[Updated\] Ofsted will not reintroduce graded inspections until at least April 2021](#)
3. [\[New\] 'Requires improvement' and 'inadequate' schools will be selected](#)
4. [\[New\] Monitoring inspections will normally last for one day](#)
5. [\[New\] Monitoring inspections will be conducted on site](#)
6. [\[New\] Inspectors will consider the impact of coronavirus \(COVID-19\) when preparing for inspections](#)
7. [\[New\] Monitoring inspections will not cover the whole section 5 evaluation schedule](#)
8. [\[New\] A report will be published after a monitoring inspection](#)

Read on to learn more information about each key point.

Interim visits will take place between September and December 2020

Ofsted interim visits began on 28 September 2020 and will continue through to the end of December 2020. More information about Ofsted's interim visits can be found [here](#).

[Updated] Ofsted will not reintroduce graded inspections until at least April 2021

Graded inspections of schools will not be reintroduced until at least April 2021 – this reintroduction date was originally January 2021. Ofsted will begin supportive monitoring inspections from January 2021. These will not be graded inspections. Ofsted is planning to resume graded inspections of schools in the Summer term.

[New] Ofsted will also continue to carry out section 8 'no formal designation' (NFD) inspections if it has significant concerns about any school.

[New] Ofsted has also confirmed it will introduce full graded inspections under the new initial teacher education inspection framework from April 2020 – find out more [here](#).

[New] 'Requires improvement' and 'inadequate' schools will be selected

The following schools may be selected to receive a monitoring inspection:

- Schools judged as 'requires improvement' at, at least, their last two consecutive section 5 inspections – those that have converted to an academy or have re-brokered since their last section 5 inspection will not receive a visit
- Schools judged as 'inadequate', including those subject to a live directive academy order – new schools whose predecessor was 'inadequate' will not be selected

Monitoring inspections may also be carried out on other schools judged as 'requires improvement' – this will be done at regional directors' discretion and be based on Ofsted's risk assessment.

[New] Monitoring inspections will normally last for one day

Inspections of 'requires improvement' schools and schools with serious weaknesses will normally last for one day. Inspections of schools in special measures will normally last for two days. Notice will be given of all monitoring inspections.

[New] Monitoring inspections will be conducted on site

Inspectors will conduct monitoring inspections in person. School leaders may ask for a visit to be deferred if it is not possible for an on-site inspection to take place. Deferral requests will not normally be considered if they are lodged after 4:30pm on the day the school is notified.

Ofsted has taken advice from Public Health England about how to undertake on-site inspections safely. Inspectors will ensure all activities are carried out in line with coronavirus (COVID-19) guidelines. The lead inspector's initial call with the school will include a discussion about how inspectors can work in line with the school's protective measures.

[New] Inspectors will consider the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) when preparing for inspections

The lead inspector will prepare for the inspection by reviewing the inspection history of the school and other relevant information, including the school's most recent section 5 inspection report and the school's self-evaluation.

The lead inspector will seek to identify the barriers that appear to be preventing the school from either progressing to 'good' or coming out of a category of concern. When doing this, the lead inspector will take into account the school's context, including the impact coronavirus has had on the school. The school's context will also be used to decide where to focus inspection activities.

[New] Monitoring inspections will not cover the whole section 5 evaluation schedule

Ofsted has said the monitoring inspections are about giving assurance to parents and being supportive of a school as it improves. They focus on the school's work towards improving and do not cover the whole section 5 evaluation schedule. The inspections also will not result in an inspection grade or change to an existing inspection grade.

All monitoring inspections will focus on:

- Discussing with school leaders and those responsible for governance whether the right actions are being taken for the school to be judged as 'good' or to be removed from a category of concern at its next section 5 inspection – this will include discussing whether actions have been changed or delayed due to coronavirus.
- How effectively the school is adapting its existing development planning to meet current challenges.
- Matters that are particularly relevant at the time, e.g. the implementation of the curriculum (including remote education) and attendance (particularly of vulnerable pupils).
- Examining whether those responsible for governance are making an effective contribution to leadership and management, and whether they are supporting and holding to account the school on its immediate challenges, balancing this against its improvement journey, in order to ensure that pupils receive a good quality of education.
- Considering the impact of the support and challenge provided to the school, including from any external partners on school improvements.
- The effectiveness of safeguarding in the school.

Monitoring inspections of schools judged 'requires improvement' will also focus on identifying with the school any barriers to progress towards becoming a 'good' or 'outstanding' school.

Monitoring inspections of schools with serious weaknesses will also focus on whether leaders continue to demonstrate convincingly that the school's capacity to improve is increasing, taking into account the challenges of coronavirus.

During the inspections, the lead inspector will provide feedback to leaders regarding what they are finding. At the end of the inspection, the lead inspector will be the school more detailed feedback.



[New] A report will be published after a monitoring inspection

Reporting after a monitoring inspection will largely follow the procedures set out in Ofsted's [section 8 handbook](#).

Within 18 working days of the end of the inspection, Ofsted will write to the school, setting out in a draft report what inspectors found. The school will have 5 working days to comment on the draft report, process and findings. Ofsted will consider all comments and respond to the comments when it shares the final report with the school within a maximum of 30 working days after the visit, although it will likely be much sooner.

If the school wishes to submit a formal complaint, it will have until the end of the fifth working day after receiving the final report to do so.

Ofsted will normally publish the report on its reports website within 38 working days of the end of the visit.

What's next?

- We'll keep you up-to-date with any further announcements about the monitoring inspections that will take place from January 2021. To be kept informed, add this article to your 'Watch list'.

- Find out more about monitoring visits in maintained schools and academies [here](#).
- Find out more about how monitoring visits will be conducted in early years settings [here](#).

Bibliography

Ofsted (2020) 'January 2021: maintained schools and academies'
<<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/january-2021-maintained-schools-and-academies>>
[Accessed: 8 December 2020]