

OFSTED
preparation
for governors



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Contents

	Page
Introduction	4
Pre-inspection preparation	10
Deep Dives	30
Reading	32
IDSR – Inspection Data Summary Report	63
The Inspection process	75
Abbreviations	87

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About the author

John Musgrave Bolanos is a highly successful teacher, experienced Headteacher, consultant and school governor, with over 25 years experience of teaching in, and leading, a range of challenging inner-city primary schools in London.

John's specialisms include curriculum design, developing teaching and learning, assessment, leadership and management and strategic change management.

In addition to working with individual schools and writing essential documents for school leaders, John also leads training courses in schools and venues - he is driven to inspire schools to achieve outstanding results for the children - not for the purpose of inspection. His training and materials combine best practice with practical OFSTED support, where appropriate, to help schools raise attainment and improve the quality of their teaching and learning.



Introduction

Get ready for a Deep Dive!

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Inspectors want to make sure that you understand your role as a governor and your statutory duties.

More specifically, they want to know how well you fulfil **your role** and **how well you know your school**. They'll likely ask you about:

- Your **vision** for the school
- Your school's **culture**
- What **issues** your school faces
- Its **strengths** and **weaknesses**
- How the governing board **responds to challenges**

Meeting inspectors

Inspectors would like to meet with as many governors as possible. However, with limited notice (less than 24 hours before an inspection begins), it may be difficult for school governors to come to the school.

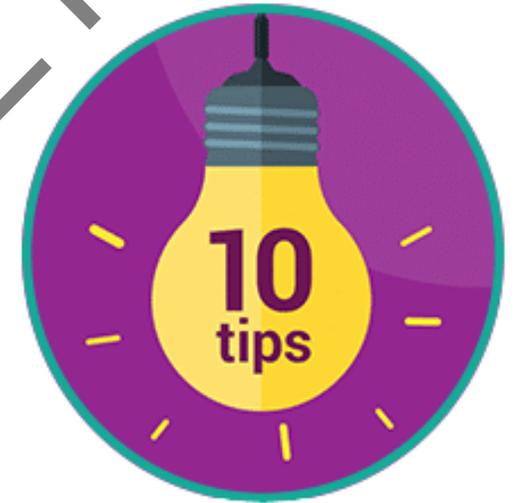
- Create a timetable to show who is generally available to meet an inspector at certain times of the day or days of the week – together with their contact details.
- If no governors can attend, for whatever reason, governors can speak to inspectors on the telephone.

Pre-inspection preparation



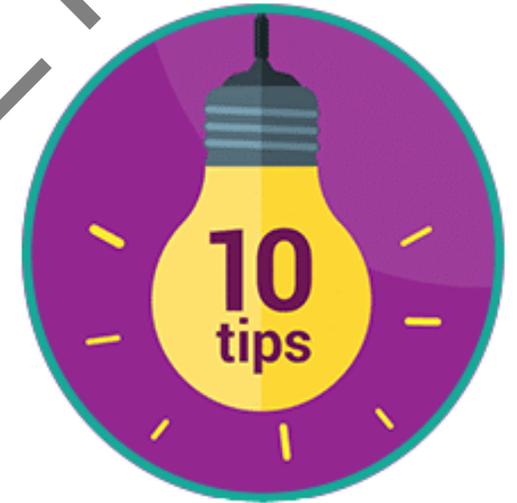
Preparing for OFSTED

- Understand the role, responsibilities and requirements of governors
- Have a good working knowledge of the school
- Ensure that you can evidence governor challenge
- Ensure that measures are taken to keep pupils and other members of the school community safe
- Ensure that you are familiar with the contents of the self-evaluation form (SEF) and school improvement/development plan



Preparing for OFSTED

- Familiarise yourself with the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) and the relevant inspection handbook
- Identify the progress that you have made since the last inspection
- Ensure that all policies are up to date
- Have your evidence ready
- Check that the school website is compliant



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Website

You should therefore regularly review the school's website.

The website provides the lead inspector a first view of your school or college's vision, values and aims - plus information about the the curriculum offer and policies.

Is this evident from looking at the school's website?



Key questions

- Are you familiar with the values and vision of the school?
- How do you support the Headteacher in their role?
- How are new staff and Early Career Teachers (ECT) inducted and supported?
- How involved are governors in the strategic direction of the school?
- How effectively are the finances of the school managed? Do you receive information regarding how Pupil Premium funding is used?



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Key questions

- How informed are governors about school self-evaluation outcomes? What are the strengths of the school?
- Do governors participate in self-evaluation activities? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how do governors know?
- Can governors give examples of how they have supported and challenged the school?
- Are you familiar with the School Improvement Plan and the school's priorities? How do you contribute to this?



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Have your evidence ready

Having a comprehensive portfolio of evidence is one way of ensuring that governors feel ready and prepared for inspection.

It can also be a handy point of reference for new governors who are joining the school and can be used as part of their induction process.



Keep up to speed...

Read and regularly check these online documents for updates:

- Governance handbook
- A Competency Framework for Governance
- Governance structures and roles
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE)





Keep up to speed...

Read and regularly check for updates [online](#):

- OFSTED Education Inspection Framework (EiF)
- School inspection handbook
- Further education and skills inspection handbook
- Non-association independent school inspection handbook
- Early years inspection handbook
- Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills

“

Section 5 inspections now referred to as ‘graded inspections’ and Section 8 inspections of good and outstanding schools called ‘ungraded inspections’.

The purpose of each inspection type and how they are carried out remains unchanged.

The change in name is simply aimed at promoting a better understanding of the types of inspection OFSTED conducts and why, especially among parents.

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Graded (Section 5 – full) inspections

All schools with a judgement of requires improvement or inadequate will receive a graded inspection, as will a selection of schools with an outstanding or good judgement (following a risk assessment trigger).

A good or outstanding school that has received an ungraded (Section 8) inspection where **HMI believes the school may no longer be good or outstanding.**

Ungraded (Section 8 – short) inspections

Some good and outstanding schools will receive a graded inspection but many will receive an ungraded inspection instead.

An ungraded inspection differs from a graded inspection, because it does not result in individual graded judgements, but focuses on determining **whether the school remains the same grade** as at the school's previous graded inspection.

It **cannot change the overall effectiveness grade** of the school.

Ungraded inspections

Usually, an ungraded inspection will be followed by a further ungraded inspection after approximately a **4-year interval**.

However, if inspectors find evidence that a school may no longer receive the same grade for overall effectiveness, they will specify that the next inspection should be a graded inspection, with the full range of graded judgements available.

This should take place **within 1 to 2 years**.

Urgent inspections

Inspections with no formal designation and unannounced behaviour visits are now called 'urgent' inspections.

These may be triggered by one or more risk assessment factors, shown on the next page.

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Risk assessment factors



- Poor DfE Progress and attainment data
- School workforce census changes – high staff turnover
- Negative views of parents and carers – Parent View
- Qualifying complaints that have been referred to OFSTED
- High pupil mobility
- Significant changes – age range, amalgamations
- Statutory warning notices – RSC or Local Authority
- Other significant concerns brought to the attention of OFSTED

Ungraded inspection deemed to be a graded inspection

Very occasionally, **an ungraded inspection can, however, be 'deemed' to be a graded inspection** under section 9 of the Education Act – see next pages.

Where this is the case, inspectors will make the full set of graded judgements, using the 4-point grading scale required for graded inspections.

The ungraded inspection will be deemed to be a graded inspection, **usually within 48 hours**, if there are serious concerns about the quality of education, behaviour, potential gaming (including off-rolling) or safeguarding.

This will occur if inspectors:

- Find evidence that suggests that the **'quality of education' might be judged to be inadequate** were a full graded inspection to take place at the time of the ungraded inspection. This may include a situation where the **range of subjects being taught is very narrow** (taking any COVID-19 catch-up factors into consideration).
- Find evidence relating to behaviour that suggests that **'behaviour and attitudes' might be judged to be inadequate** if a graded inspection was to take place at the time of the ungraded inspection.

This will occur if inspectors:

- Find evidence that suggests that the school has **removed pupils from the school roll** without a formal, permanent exclusion, or encouraged parents to remove their child from the school roll, **when the removal is primarily in the interests of the school rather than in the best interests of the pupil.**
- Find evidence that **deliberate gaming** is taking place.
- Find evidence indicating that **safeguarding may be ineffective.**

Ungraded inspection deemed to be a graded inspection

The ungraded inspection will also be deemed to be a graded inspection (under the Education Act 2005) when the lead inspector has gathered **evidence that suggests that the school would be inadequate in one or more of the graded judgements if it had received a graded inspection** instead of an ungraded inspection.

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Ungraded inspection deemed to be a graded inspection

If inspectors gather **evidence that suggests an outstanding school's performance may have declined so that if a graded inspection was to be carried out at the time of the ungraded inspection, the school would likely be judged as requires improvement**, inspectors will deem the ungraded inspection to be a graded inspection, usually within 48 hours.

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Safeguarding governor

Safeguarding is an important part of the inspection.

A senior board level lead is therefore to take leadership responsibility for your school's/trust's **safeguarding** arrangements (including Prevent) and report back to the board.

OFSTED will **ask governors about safeguarding** arrangements in the school.

Key questions

- How do you know that safeguarding is effective?
- What are the procedures for safeguarding pupils and how have training needs been met?
- Do you know the designated governor and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for safeguarding? How do they report back to the Governing body?
- What do staff understand about County Lines? How do you know?
- What do staff understand about Prevent? How do you know?



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Actions

- Plan the availability of governors to meet with OFSTED inspectors
- Read the online documents related to Governance
- Read the OFSTED online documents - these are on the OFSTED website
- Familiarise yourself with the content of each document as these explain the process of inspection
- Check the OFSTED website regularly to check for any updates
- Ensure that there is a senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for your school's/trust's safeguarding arrangements



Deep Dives

‘Deep Dive’ has become a common phrase in our schools as a result of the Education Inspection Framework (EiF) 2019 and the accompanying methodology of inspection by OFSTED.

This also helps school leaders become more familiar with the processes used by inspectors, should the school be visited by OFSTED.



A Deep Dive ...

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... involves gathering evidence on the curriculum **intent, implementation and impact** over a sample of subjects, topics or aspects. This is done in **collaboration** with leaders, teachers and pupils. The intent of the deep dive is to **seek to interrogate and establish a coherent evidence base** on quality of education.

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