

# The Annual Report of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services, and Schools, 2021-22

## Introduction and background

The annual report presents Ofsted's findings from inspections under the new framework for early years childcare, schools, further education and skills, and social care in the academic year 2020-21. It is underpinned by evidence from inspections as well as findings from research, evaluation, data, and analysis.

## Key findings

### Early years and childcare

- Ofsted inspects and regulates around 65,600 early years and childcare providers that are on the Early Years Register (EYR) and the Childcare Register (CR).
- Ninety-six per cent of all early years providers were judged either good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. Of the EYR providers who had a full inspection this year, 83 per cent were judged either good or outstanding overall. This represents a fall of 6 per cent since last year, with the greatest decline among those providing education and care in nurseries and pre-schools. The decline is partly due to the fact that, upon resuming a full inspection programme, Ofsted prioritised providers who were judged less than good in their previous inspection.
- The report highlighted early years workforce challenges, which have worsened since the pandemic. Many providers have faced ongoing challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff. Some providers are not managing the impact of staffing challenges as effectively as others. Ofsted reports examples where leaders had not considered having their better qualified, more experienced staff working with all ages of children, rather than just with older, pre-school children.
- The pandemic continued to affect the inspection programme. In 2021-22, Ofsted carried out 4,620 inspections, compared with 5,580 in 2018-19 (the last full year of inspection activity before the pandemic).
- In 2021-22, Ofsted inspected nearly 500 schools which were previously exempt. Of these, 17 per cent retained their outstanding grade, while 21 per cent were judged requires improvement or inadequate. The remaining 62 per cent were judged to be good. A higher proportion of these previously exempt schools are now inadequate or requires improvement than is the case for all schools nationally. A higher proportion of secondary schools retained their outstanding grade (25% compared to 14% of primary schools).
- Over 800 of the graded inspections this year were of schools that had previously been judged requires improvement. Of these, 70 per cent had improved to good or outstanding, compared with 56 per cent in 2019-20. Improvement this year was most noticeable among secondary schools. Sixty-six per cent of formerly requires improvement schools improved, compared with 42 per cent in 2019-20. Of the primary schools inspected this year, 72 per cent improved from requires improvement, compared with 62 per cent in 2019-20.

### Schools

- In 2022, 88 per cent of schools were judged good (70%) or outstanding (18%) at their most recent inspection, a slight increase since the previous year when the figure was 86 per cent. Eighty-nine per cent of primary schools and 80 per cent of secondary schools were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. The increase since last year was mainly because a large number of schools which previously required improvement were judged good this year.
- The report expresses concern that 64 per cent of all schools have not had a graded inspection in the last five academic years, and 14 per cent have not had one in the last 10 academic years. Reasons for this include the pandemic, the fact that outstanding schools were exempt from routine inspection between 2012 and 2020, and the fact that most school inspections since 2015 have been ungraded.
- Many schools paused and reset their curriculum during the pandemic. Those which improved identified the precise knowledge which they wanted pupils to learn. They also ensured that the curriculum was well-sequenced and ambitious. They gave staff opportunities to share expertise and access subject-specific professional development and networking.
- The number of pupils identified as persistent absentees has increased. Of most concern is the fact that around one in 70 pupils missed 50 per cent or more possible school sessions in autumn 2021, up from around one in 120 in autumn 2019.
- It is hard to tell if the practice of off rolling pupils has decreased. Ofsted found that in 2021-22, there were 160 schools with 'exceptional pupil movement' compared with 320 in 2020. However, since 2020 and 2021 performance data was not used for accountability, schools may have had less incentive to off roll pupils.
- The effects of the pandemic are still being felt. In many primary schools, children in Reception, Year 1 and



Year 2 are still catching up. Speech and language development is behind compared to before the pandemic. Some pupils in Reception are not as used to sharing and taking turns, and more work is needed to develop pupils' listening skills. In the key stage 2 national curriculum tests, pupils' attainment fell in all subjects, other than reading, between 2019 and 2022. Secondary schools highlighted concerns about some Year 7 pupils still catching up on learning from key stage 2, particularly with reading. Schools have also reported that pupils are more anxious, especially about exams and socialising with peers.

- There are 2,420 independent schools in England, which must all meet the independent school standards (ISS) and inspects around 1,170 of these non-association schools). In 2021-22, 75 per cent of non-association independent schools were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. This is a small decline from last year (78%). The proportion of good and outstanding independent special schools is 81 per cent. This is lower than the proportion of good and outstanding state-funded special schools (89%).
- Independent faith schools have worse inspection outcomes than non-faith independent schools and faith schools in the state sector. Of schools inspected, 65 per cent of all independent faith schools were judged good or outstanding compared with 74 per cent of non-faith other independent schools (excluding special schools). Ofsted highlights 3 main reasons for the underperformance of independent state schools – they are often small and poorly resourced, they limit the curriculum to avoid areas which are in conflict with their religious beliefs, and they aim only to prepare children for life within a certain community, thereby failing to promote British values.
- Ofsted does not inspect Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs). It carries out 'summary evaluations' based on a series of visits to schools in the same chain. In 2021-22, Ofsted carries out 5 evaluations. Ofsted found positive areas such as coherence across curricula and the way in which MATs centralise some policies while giving schools autonomy in other areas. Areas for improvement included increased collaboration with other trusts and schools, and better assessment practice and governance. Ofsted intends to develop the MAT summary evaluation programme, covering more sizes and types of MATs. It aims to complete 12 MAT events in total this financial year. Ofsted strongly believes that routine inspection of trusts must have a significant role to play in trust regulation.
- Ofsted has ongoing concerns about the number of children being educated in unregistered schools which are often unsafe and of poor quality. Because of limited powers, they have only brought 6 successful prosecutions in 6 years. During its investigations, Ofsted has found children in chaotic institutions where disorganised managers and staff fail to provide a proper education. Some children in these settings are exposed to misogynistic, homophobic, and extremist materials that are contrary to British values. Ofsted has found unregistered schools operating in unsafe and inappropriate premises. Serious safeguarding concerns have been identified in more than a quarter of the unregistered schools they inspected.

#### SEND and alternative provision (AP)

- Between May 2016 and March 2022, Ofsted carried out SEND inspections of 151 local areas. Over half of

these (55%) were required to produce a written statement of action, indicating that they have significant weaknesses. This year Ofsted inspected 26 areas, 16 of which were required to submit a written statement of action because of significant weaknesses.

- Over time, the number of children and young people identified as having SEND has grown, in all types of settings. Nearly 1.5 million pupils are now identified as having SEND, an increase of almost 77,000 from the year before.
- The report identifies several problems within the SEND system. These include unacceptable delays in issues of Education Health and Care plans in 2021 (only 60% were issued within the 20 week time limit) and a marked deterioration in absence rates among SEND pupils. Another problem is that of pupils being mistakenly diagnosed with SEND as a result of poor teaching.
- Alternative provision (AP) is commissioned by schools or local authorities for pupils who have been excluded or otherwise fallen out of mainstream school, for example due to medical needs. The total number of AP placements in state-funded schools fell by 16 per cent to 22,000 between January 2020 and January 2021. The number of placements in independent schools and unregistered providers continues to rise, which is concerning. Ofsted has seen many examples of unregistered providers that offer an extremely narrow curriculum. Pupils attending unregistered AP are more likely to be exposed to safeguarding risks than their peers in state-funded AP. Others do not keep attendance records, carry out proper checks on staff, or operate safe environments.
- School inspections have shown up major weaknesses in the commissioning of AP. This means there is little independent scrutiny of the education that pupils receive and makes it unlikely that they are receiving a full, balanced, and coherent curriculum. Ofsted is calling for compulsory registration for all AP.

#### Teacher training and the early career framework

- Ofsted has identified some Initial Teacher Training (ITT) providers with weaker curricula, and some who have not fully embedded the new core content framework. Some weaker providers are treating the CCF as a 'bolt on', adding key principles in an ad hoc fashion with insufficient thought around how they build trainees' knowledge of practice.
- At the other end of the scale, some providers are relying too heavily on the CCF treating it as a generic curriculum model with insufficient attention paid to the subject-specific expertise which trainees will need.
- During its inspections, Ofsted was made aware of the difficulties which some providers have in sourcing placements. Reasons for this included the impact of the pandemic and the fact that mentors now have to divide their time between supporting early career teachers on the ECT programme and trainee teachers.
- Many participants in the early career framework (ECF) were happy with their training and believed it was helping them to better fulfil their roles. However, other early career teachers were finding it challenging to complete their training alongside their teaching responsibilities. A number of schools expressed concern about the workload which the ECF creates for early career teachers and mentors.

The full document can be downloaded from:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202122-education-childrens-services-and-skills>