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**Ofsted: Future plans for the inspection of children's services and schools**

**Children's services**

1. The current inspection programme has two elements: a three year programme of full announced inspections of safeguarding and looked after children's services; and an annual unannounced inspection in each local authority of contact, referral and assessment arrangements in respect of child protection. The three year programme will be completed in July 2012; the second round of unannounced contact, referral and assessment inspections will be completed by the end of March 2012.
2. On 27 July 2011 Ofsted published a consultation document setting out its proposals for the inspection of children's services from mid 2012. These arrangements will replace both programmes described above. The full consultation document can be found on the Ofsted website (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/arrangements-for-inspection-of-local-authority-childrens-services>).
3. These proposals build on the strengths of our existing inspection programme and take forward some key themes arising both from the experience of that programme and from the recommendations of the Munro review of child protection. Some of the main features of the proposals are:
  - 3.1. In future all inspections of child protection services will be unannounced. The inspection team will be on site for two weeks.
  - 3.2. The main source of inspection evidence and the main basis of inspection judgements will be the experiences of individual children and the outcomes they achieve, and an evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the help provided for them. Case tracking, the detailed examination of the journeys and experiences of individual children, is already a core element of inspection methodology; the majority of inspectors' time in future will be devoted to these activities.
  - 3.3. As part of case tracking, inspectors will spend time meeting with the children and their families themselves as well as the front-line professionals and managers concerned.
  - 3.4. The direct observation of practice, for example through the observation of social work visits and direct work with children and of multi-agency working, for example through the observation of child protection case conference, will be a central element of the inspection.
  - 3.5. The nine graded judgements we currently make on a safeguarding inspection will be replaced by just four: capacity for improvement; the

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effectiveness of the help provided to children, their families and carers; quality of practice; and leadership and management.

- 3.6. In addition to a universal programme of child protection inspections, we propose to inspect a sample of services for children on care of approximately 20-25 authorities a year.
4. The consultation runs until 30 September 2011. At the beginning of September, we will be writing to local authorities seeking volunteers to take part in piloting the new inspection framework later in the year. The final framework will be published by the end of December, and the first of the new inspections will take place by the end of May 2012.
5. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is required to conduct an annual assessment of every local authority with children's services responsibilities, and award a rating. The Government have announced their intention to repeal this legislative requirement. However it remains in place for 2011 and, given the requirements of the legislative process, is likely to do so also for 2012.

**Schools**

6. Revisions to the present inspection framework for maintained schools are required in response to the changes in Government policy set out in the White Paper *The importance of teaching*, and proposals contained in the current Education Bill. In February Ofsted published a consultation document setting out its proposals for the inspection of maintained schools and academies from 1 January 2012. During the summer term 150 pilot inspections were carried out. The consultation responses on the new inspection framework were generally very positive, and the pilot inspections carried out in June also provided a secure basis to proceed with the main proposals for the new framework. The evaluation report on the consultation and the pilot inspections, setting out our responses to the issues raised and indicating our proposed way forward will be published on the Ofsted website in early to mid September.
7. In summary the revised school inspection arrangements from January 2012 will give particular priority to:
  - 7.1. judging the quality of the school by making four key judgements
  - 7.2. evaluating the achievement of pupils and of different groups of pupils, assessing the extent to which schools ensure that all pupils, including those most at risk, succeed
  - 7.3. evaluating the quality of teaching with an emphasis on lesson observation
  - 7.4. evaluating the behaviour and safety of pupils, including –

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- 7.4.1. their attitudes to learning and conduct in lessons and around the school, and
  - 7.4.2. their behaviour towards, and respect for, other young people and adults and their freedom from bullying
  - 7.5. the impact of leadership and management on improving pupils' outcomes and on the quality of teaching
  - 7.6. the extent to which the school promotes pupils' spiritual moral, social, and cultural development including the contribution made to this by the curriculum
  - 7.7. focusing in particular on the teaching of early reading and standards in reading and literacy
  - 7.8. taking account of self-evaluation as presented by the school
  - 7.9. checking schools' procedures for safeguarding – keeping children and young people from harm – and evaluating pupils' ability to assess and manage risk appropriately and keep themselves safe
  - 7.10. promoting improvement: inspectors make specific and detailed recommendations based on their diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses
  - 7.11. fostering the engagement of headteachers, school staff and governors in the process of inspection so that they understand the judgements made
  - 7.12. gathering, analysing and taking into account the views of parents, pupils and staff
8. Ofsted will publish the key inspection documents on its website on 30 September. This will coincide with a central London launch led by HMCI and the Director, Education and Care. A further five dissemination conferences have been arranged between 3 and 14 October in major cities. Headteachers from a range of schools, local authority representatives, key user and engagement groups and DfE officials will be invited. In addition we have offered an Ofsted speaker to attend a meeting of headteachers and governors in any local authority that requests a presentation on the new inspection framework.