



Ofsted Framework Webinar: Information Briefing 2025 Webinar



Aims

- To understand the key changes to education inspections.
- To stay informed and prepared of the upcoming changes to education inspections.
- To gain a clear understanding of what's changing.

Outline of session

- The journey so far
- Summary of changes
- The inspection process
- The grading scale
- What is the Early Years Inspection Toolkit?
- Navigating the Early Years Toolkit
- Evaluation Areas

The journey so far



The case for change



2024 Big Listen



Take change



Public Consultation



Introducing of change from November 2025

Summary of changes

- New Report Card
- A five-point grading scale
- A renewed focus on inclusion
- New toolkits
- New Inspection methodology
- More closely aligned to the EYFS
- A sharper focus on regulation
- New online insights platform – 'Ofsted – Explore an Area.'

The inspection process

Before an inspector arrives

Notification call

To notify the setting of their inspection and arrange the planning call



Timetable for inspection

To enable the inspector to gather evidence relevant to the areas of inspection focus.

Notification email

To give leaders helpful information before the inspection

Planning call

The inspector will work collaboratively with leaders to identify any necessary reasonable adjustments and understand the context of the setting

New measures for wellbeing during inspections

- An extra inspector to boost capacity
- New 'reasonable time frames' for inspections
- Inspectors will still be able to pause inspections for wellbeing concerns

Role of the nominee

- Support inspection planning and brief staff.
- Provide key information and context about the setting.
- Liaise with the inspector and ensure access to documents.
- Attend key meetings and join inspection activities where relevant.
- Act as a link between the inspector and setting leader.
- Coordinate feedback and keep leaders updated.

The grading scale



[Home](#) / [Search](#) / [Nursery](#)

Nursery

Address: Droad Road, Shipston, Amphine, 544 5TG
Unique reference number (URN): E02345
Type: Childcare in non-domestic premises
Registered with Ofsted: 13 February 2008
Registers: Early Years Register, Compulsory childcare register, voluntary childcare register
Registered person: John Smith

Inspection report: 25 June 2024

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ●
Expected standard	● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

☒ Safeguarding standards met
☐ Show

What is the Early Years Inspection Toolkit?

- Includes evaluation areas that inspectors will focus on and each area will be assessed
- The 5-point grading scale does not link to the current judgements
- Full fit **not** best fit
- The Toolkit is underpinned by the Early Years Statutory Framework and research reviews.

Navigating the Early Years Inspection Toolkit

Inclusion

This evaluation area considers how leaders and practitioners identify and support:

- socioeconomically disadvantaged children (those eligible for the early years pupil premium - EYPP)
- children with SEND; this means children receiving special educational needs (SEN) support and those with an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- children who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, such as children in need and looked-after children
- children who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being, which may include children who share a protected characteristic

Inspectors focus on gathering evidence relating to the factors that statutory requirements and non-statutory guidance, research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to inclusion.

These factors are:

- setting high expectations for all children, including disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being
- embedding a culture in which the early and accurate assessment of children's needs is prioritised
- reducing barriers to children's learning and/or well-being to support their development, involving specialists when necessary
- putting in place an EYPP strategy that is well thought through, and is based on evidence of what works well to support the achievement and well-being of eligible children
- working closely and effectively with children, parents, professionals and staff and ensuring that children's and parents' views and aspirations are included in decision-making about support for children



A summative statement of what the evaluation area considers



Grading standards are based on research, inspection evidence, statutory and non-statutory guidance set by the DfE



Significant contributory factors that underpin the approaches to evidence gathering and grading

Navigating the Early Years Inspection Toolkit

Considering inclusion for different ages and provision types

When evaluating inclusion for **children with SEND across different early years settings**, inspectors:

- consider the context of the setting and the type of provision
- work closely with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) to evaluate how well the setting identifies and supports children with SEND

In childminder settings, the childminder is likely to assume the role of the SENCo.

Each evaluation area has a section to explain how the area is applied for different ages of children and types of provision



Gathering evidence about inclusion

Identifying, assessing and meeting needs and reducing barriers

In gathering evidence about identifying, assessing and meeting needs, and reducing barriers, inspectors consider the extent to which:

- leaders identify children's emerging or changing needs quickly and accurately; these include the needs of disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being
- leaders make sure children receive effective support, consult with external specialists and implement their advice as necessary and ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments are made in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the SEND Code of Practice
- leaders ensure that the strategies that practitioners use to communicate and interact with children, including children who do not communicate verbally, are effective and supportive
- any accessibility planning meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, is implemented effectively and reviewed regularly

Explains the evidence Inspectors will gather



Navigating the Early Years Inspection Toolkit

Grading inclusion

Needs attention	Expected standard	Strong standard
Inclusion is likely to be graded 'needs attention' when the 'expected standard' has not been met but breaches of the EYFS requirements do not have a significant impact on children's learning and development and/or safety and welfare. This may include when one or more of the following applies: ■ Leaders have only recently started to take appropriate action to identify and assess children's needs or reduce barriers to children's learning and/or well-being. ■ Weaknesses or inconsistencies in practice have a negative impact on children or on a particular group of children.	Inclusion meets the 'expected standard' when all the following apply: Leaders identify children's needs quickly and accurately, including any emerging or changing needs. This includes the needs of disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. Leaders have high expectations for these children. Typically, the support they provide reduces barriers to the children's learning and/or well-being. Leaders ask for and implement advice from specialists and external partners, when needed. Leaders take a graduated approach (as explained earlier), which means that children's SEND needs are generally met well. Practitioners receive suitable training and support to implement this approach. Leaders have a secure understanding of these children's needs and progress. They use appropriate evidence to inform their decisions	Inclusion meets the 'strong standard' when the 'expected standard' has been met and all the following apply: Leaders and practitioners consistently make a demonstrable difference to the opportunities and experiences of disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. Leaders and practitioners are consistent in making sure that the barriers children face are swiftly identified and effectively addressed. They rigorously monitor the progress of children receiving statutory support and those who may also face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being. Adaptations are systematically and skilfully adjusted as needed, so that they make a sustained difference to children's opportunities and experiences.



Grades Inspectors expect to see most frequently on inspection

Navigating the Early Years Inspection Toolkit

Urgent improvement

Inclusion is likely to be graded 'urgent improvement' when breaches of the EYFS requirements have a significant impact on children's safety, well-being and/or learning and development, and any of the following apply:

- Leaders do not identify, assess or meet children's needs well enough.
- Support for disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, or those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being is ineffective.
- Leaders do not meet the requirements for children receiving additional support and any statutory support, including disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being.

Exceptional

Inspectors may consider inclusion to be 'exceptional' when the 'strong standard' has been met and all the following apply:

- Leaders and those responsible for overseeing the setting have a transformational impact on children's individual experiences because of their meticulous approach to promoting inclusion.
- Children receive commendable levels of individualised support and guidance, irrespective of the barriers that they may face. Parents are unanimously positive about the unwavering support that they and their child receive from the setting.
- There are no significant areas for improvement that leaders have not already prioritised.

If this grade is awarded, leaders should use their exceptional success in this evaluation area to:

- support improvement across all aspects of their own setting and/or group
- share their learning and best practice externally to support system-wide improvement, for example with other settings, professionals, their community and stakeholders, including local and/or national networks



Grades Inspectors expect to see less frequently on inspection

Early years inspection: toolkit, operating guide and information



Early years inspection toolkit

This toolkit sets out the areas that will be evaluated and graded on inspections of registered early years and childcare provision under sections 49, 60 and 77(2)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006.

It can also be used by leaders to support self-evaluation and continuous improvement.



Guidance

Early years inspection operating guide for inspectors: for use from November 2025

Published 9 September 2025



Guidance

Early years inspection information: for use from November 2025

Published 9 September 2025



Research and analysis

Education inspection toolkits: statutory and non-statutory guidance, professional standards and relevant research

Published 9 September 2025

Supporting resources



Research and analysis

Best start in life part 1: setting the scene

Updated 8 October 2024



Research and analysis

Best start in life part 3: the 4 specific areas of learning

Updated 8 October 2024



Research and analysis

Best start in life part 2: the 3 prime areas of learning

Updated 8 October 2024



Research and analysis

Getting it right from the start: how early years practitioners work with babies and toddlers

Published 30 April 2025

Review Findings

Based on this research review, high-quality curriculum and pedagogy may have the following features:

- The curriculum considers what **all** children should learn. It offers plenty of opportunity for children who are disadvantaged or who speak English as an additional language to learn and practise speaking and listening
- Practitioners choose activities and experiences **after** they have determined the curriculum. The most appropriate activities and experiences then help to secure the children's intended learning

Review Findings

- Staff will need to decide what they want all children to know and think about and identify the vocabulary and concepts that are associated with this
- Practitioners will need to think about the most effective ways to introduce and embed vocabulary and language structures. These might include:
 - - frequent and high-quality interactions between adults and children
 - - oral storytelling
 - - shared reading
 - - repeated reading
- Practitioners may want to consider the extent to which their curriculum for physical development
- Practitioners need to think about the most effective ways to help children learn how to look after themselves and how to get on with others.

Review Findings

- Learning in the specific areas should prioritise vocabulary and language comprehension
- Early literacy development gives children lifelong benefits. Stories, rhymes and songs help with children's language and vocabulary development
- Effective early mathematical learning combines deliberate teaching with opportunities for learning through play Understanding both number and spatial reasoning is crucial to later achievement, as is encouraging positive attitudes to Maths
- Understanding the World is a broad area that includes the foundational knowledge for many later curriculum subjects
- Talking with children about their art can help practitioners understand what children think about the arts and the world around them

Review Findings

- The Key Person Role is vital
- High-Quality Interactions are critical
- Physical Development needs more focus
- Parent Partnerships enhance outcomes

Supporting resources



Research and analysis

Strong foundations in the first years of school

Published 8 October 2024



Department
for Education

The writing framework

July 2025

Review Findings

- Some schools are not making sure that all children learn the foundational knowledge that they will need later. This makes it harder for children to learn at key stage 2
- Curriculums, particularly in some Reception classes, leave children's learning too much to chance. When there is a choice about whether to take part, some children, often those who need the most teaching and practice, opt out.
- Reception year is crucial - it lays the vital foundation for all future writing development
- Use oral composition as a core tool
- Quality over quantity
- Fine and gross motor development matters
- Support through dictation

Webinars

- Key messages from Ofsted's research on Strong Foundations
- Strategic leadership of the early years in school
- The importance of reception and the data available to support leaders
- The writing framework An introduction to the writing framework
- Ofsted education inspection framework: nurseries, pre-schools, other registered early years settings

3 Key Principles

Principle 1

Achieve, Belong, Thrive

Principle 2

Leadership, inclusion and whether there is an open and positive safeguarding culture are key areas of focus when gathering evidence.

Principle 3

The 'expected standard' in the evaluation areas in the toolkit is the starting point for planning your inspection activities.

Context

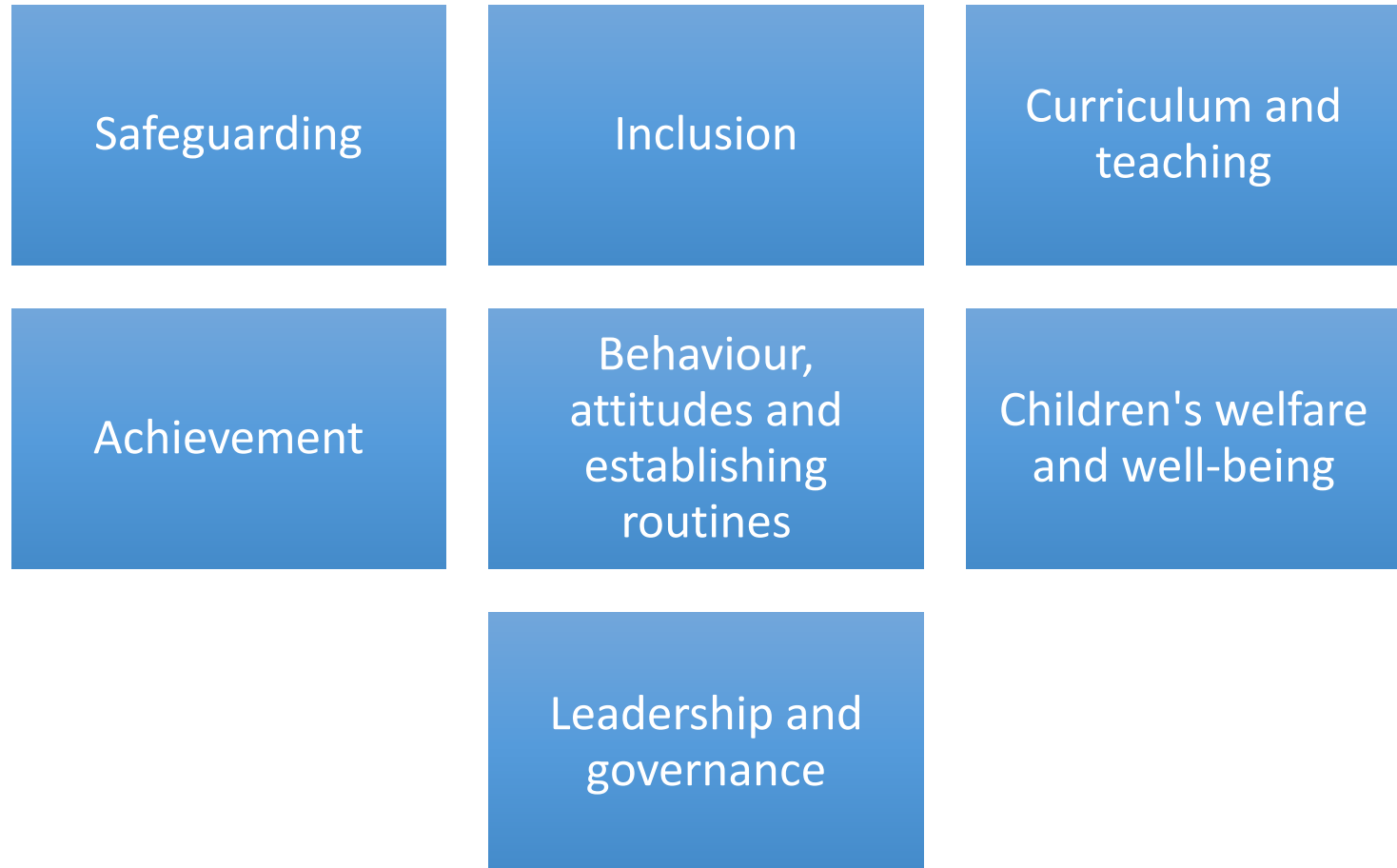
- Community characteristics
- Demographics
- SEND and social care involvement
- Staffing challenges or recent changes
- Size and type of provision

Case Sampling

- Collaborative observations and reflective discussions
- What are children's starting points? What are their needs? What support is in place? How do leaders check the impact?
- How well are children learning and developing in readiness for their next stage, development and education including school readiness
- A small representative sample of children: Include children of different ages and needs, especially those facing barriers to learning
- Remember to apply the 3 key principles
- No additional evidence beyond what you already have.

Evaluation areas

Early Years Settings



Evaluation areas Schools

Safeguarding

Inclusion

Curriculum
and teaching

Achievement

Attendance
and Behaviour

Personal
development
and well-being

Leadership
and
governance

Early Years

Approach to inspecting before- and after-school settings and holiday provision

- The learning and development requirements of the EYFS do not apply to before- and after-school settings and holiday provision. This includes childminders who provide care only before and after school, or during the school holidays, for children who normally attend Reception classes (or classes for older children) during the school day. Therefore, the evaluation areas for curriculum and teaching and for achievement do not apply to these settings.
- More information about how these inspections take place is in the operating guide for early years inspections.

Safeguarding

- Judged as 'met' or 'not met'
- Inspectors will consider whether there is a whole-setting culture to safeguarding
- Inspectors will consider the extent to which leaders take an effective, whole-setting culture to safeguarding
- Attendance
- Regard for the new safeguarding reforms

Inclusion

- Inclusion underlines all evaluation areas
- Context of the setting
- Inspectors will consider what leaders are doing to identify and support barriers for learning
- Early Years Pupil Premium strategy

Curriculum and teaching

- A High quality and ambitious curriculum
- A curriculum by design not by chance
- Plan and deliver a progressive EYFS curriculum that builds on children's existing knowledge and skills
- How well the curriculum supports children of all ages and stages, especially those who are disadvantaged
- A strong focus on communication and language

Achievement

- Whether the setting offers high-quality education that prepares all children—especially those facing disadvantage, SEND, social care involvement, or learning barriers—for their next stage, including school
- The progress that children make from their starting points across the 7 areas of learning and development set out in the EYFS statutory framework, so that they know more, remember more and can do more

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

- Leaders and practitioners create an environment that positively supports children's learning, development and care
- The setting has an impact on the behaviour, attitudes and routines of children receiving additional support, including disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being

Children's welfare and well-being

- Ensure that children receive the care and support that need to achieve and thrive in the setting
- Nurturing environment
- Establishing warm, positive relationships between key persons and babies and children
- Children's understanding of maintaining a healthy lifestyle

Leadership and governance

- Inspectors will consider whether leaders and governors understand and meet the statutory requirements set out in the EYFS
- The commitment of leaders to provide high standards of education and care
- Leaders' taking into account the workload and well-being of their staff

After the inspection

- Arrangements for publishing report cards will continue as before.
- Draft report cards are usually shared within 18 working days of the inspection.
- Providers have 5 working days to comment on the draft report card or submit a complaint.
- Final report cards are usually published within 30 working days of the inspection (but may be longer where there is a complaint).

Support

The EY Team is made up of dedicated Early Year's professionals, with a vast range of experiences.

Your Key Contact can support you with the upcoming new changes and offer guidance.

If you are unsure who your key contact is, please email the early years' service

The Early Years and Childcare Training Hub

The Buckinghamshire Early Years Training Hub is available for the Early Years and Childcare Workforce. Here you can find an extensive and varied selection of training and development opportunities, along with bespoke training tailored to your setting.

