

# Understanding the New Ofsted Inspections

A Guide for Parents

December 2025

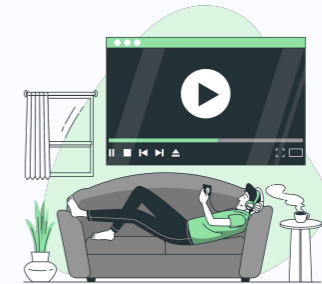


# Understanding the New Ofsted Inspections

## Why Is Ofsted Changing How It Inspects Schools?

From November 2025, Ofsted will no longer give schools and early years settings a single overall grade, such as Good or Requires Improvement. Instead, each school will receive a report card showing how it is performing in specific areas. These changes were introduced to give parents a clearer, more balanced picture of how well a school is doing in each area, making it easier to understand where it is doing well and where it is improving. You can watch a video about these changes here:

[New Ofsted report cards and grades: a guide for parents](#)



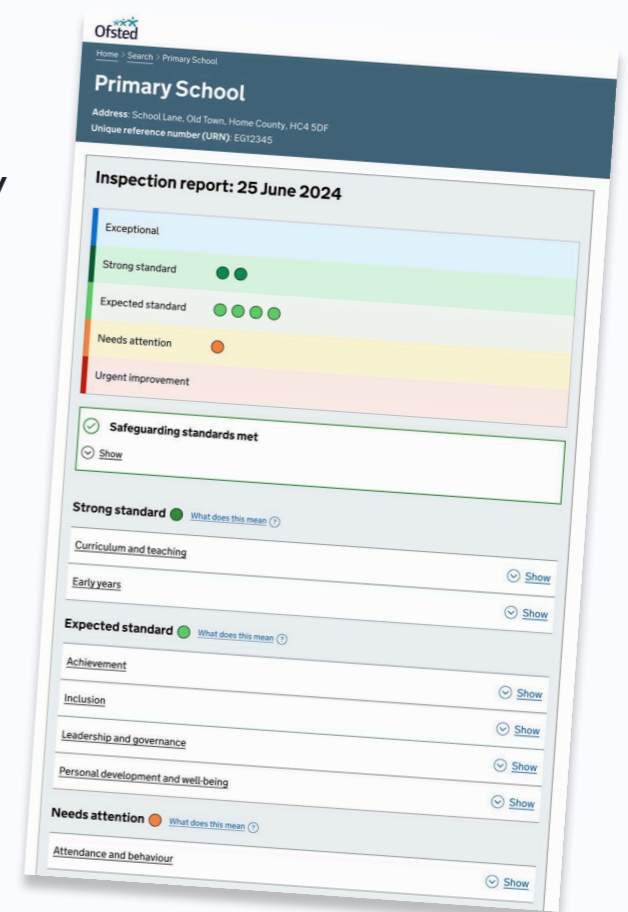
## How Does This Compare to the Old System?

Previously, schools were given one of four overall grades: Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement, Inadequate. Inspectors looked at four key areas: Quality of Education, Behaviour and Attitudes, Personal Development, and Leadership and Management. Now, instead of receiving a single headline, schools are given a report card that shows how they are performing in specific areas.

## What Will Ofsted Now Look At?

Inspectors will assess your child's school or nursery across eight key areas:

- Safeguarding (this will be marked as either 'Met' or 'Not Met')
- Inclusion
- Curriculum and Teaching
- Achievement
- Attendance and Behaviour
- Achievement
- Personal Development and Wellbeing
- Leadership and Governance



## The New Grading Scale

Most schools will receive a mix of grades, depending on how they perform in each area. Each area will receive one of the following grades:

Grade	What It Means
Exceptional	Awarded in rare cases where practice significantly exceeds expectations.
Strong Standard	Consistently high-quality practice that goes beyond expectations.
Expected Standard	Meeting all expectations. Effective and secure practice. This means the school is doing everything it should, and it is doing it well.
Needs Attention	Some areas need to improve. Not a failure, but action is required.
Urgent Improvement	Serious concerns. Immediate change required.

## What Does 'Needs Attention' Really Mean?

This is one of the most important parts of the new system for parents to understand. Most schools will have a range of grades across the middle three grades: strong standard, expected standard, and needs attention. If a school receives a 'Needs Attention' it is important to note:

- It is not a failure.
- It means the school or setting hasn't fully met the expected standard in one area.
- It's a normal part of the process. Many schools will get this grade for one or more areas.

Ask your school: *"What's the plan to improve the area marked as 'Needs Attention'?"*

## For Parents of Children with SEND

Inclusion now has its own separate judgement in the Ofsted report. That means inspectors will:

- Look carefully at how well children with SEND are supported.
- Check how settings adapt teaching to meet individual needs.
- Speak to school leaders, staff and (where possible) pupils about inclusion.

Ask your school: *"How are you making classrooms more inclusive?"*

## Parents' Voice: How You Can Be Heard

Your views still matter under the new inspection framework. You can share your thoughts at any time through [Ofsted Parent View](#), an online survey where you can provide feedback about your child's school or nursery. Inspectors use this information during inspections, and it can also help Ofsted decide when to inspect a school. You will be asked questions like:

- Does the school keep your child safe?
- Are you kept informed about your child's progress?
- Is your child happy and supported?

### Quick Summary

- From November 2025, schools and nurseries will no longer receive a single overall grade like **Good** or **Requires Improvement**.
- Instead, they will receive a report card with separate grades across eight key areas.
- Each area will be graded using the new terms: Exceptional, Strong Standard, Expected Standard, Needs Attention, or Urgent Improvement.
- Safeguarding is judged separately as Met or Not Met.
- Inclusion now has its own dedicated judgement, including how children with SEND are supported.
- A "Needs Attention" grade means improvement is needed in one area, but it is not a failure and is now a normal part of the new system.

# Frequently Asked Questions



## **What happens if safeguarding is judged as “Not Met”?**

The school must act immediately to fix the issues. Ofsted will return quickly to check progress, and local authorities are informed to provide support.

## **What happens if a school receives “Needs Attention”?**

This means that one or more areas need to improve, but the school is still meeting overall requirements. Ofsted gives clear feedback, and the school is expected to make changes. The school will receive a follow up check from Ofsted within 24 months.

## **Why are these follow-up checks important?**

These follow-up checks are simply a way for Ofsted to see how the school is moving forward in any areas that need strengthening. They help make sure every school gets the support it needs to meet the expected standards.

## **What happens if a school receives “Urgent Improvement”?**

This indicates serious concerns, and the school must act immediately to address the issues. Ofsted will follow up quickly, and the Department for Education may become more directly involved.

## **If my school was judged Good before, does it lose that rating?**

No. That rating still stands until the next inspection. After November 2025, schools will move to the new report card system when they are next inspected.

## **What if my child’s school gets a mix of grades?**

That’s normal. The report card shows strengths and areas for development. It helps you understand what the school is doing well and where it’s improving.

## **Will I still be able to compare schools?**

Yes. The new format gives more detail, so you can compare how different schools perform in areas like inclusion, wellbeing, and teaching.

## **Who supports a school that needs help?**

Support comes from the academy trust, local authority, or specialist advisers. Ofsted will return to check how the school is progressing.

## **Can I give feedback about my child’s school?**

Yes, use Ofsted’s Parent View website to give your feedback at any time.

