

# Inspecting Equalities –

what Ofsted has expected

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## Background

In October 2014 Ofsted published a consultation document entitled Better Inspection for All. There were two references to equality and diversity, both of them in the section of the document dealing with management and leadership, to:

Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management by evaluating, where this is applicable, the extent to which leaders, managers and governors ... actively promote equality and diversity and fundamental British values, tackle bullying and discrimination and narrow any gaps in achievement between different groups of children and learners (paragraph 19)

Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment by evaluating, where this is applicable, the extent to which ... equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity are promoted through teaching and learning (paragraph 21)

## Briefings for inspectors

In February 2012 Ofsted first published a briefing paper entitled Inspecting Equalities. The briefing was frequently re-published with slight additions and corrections over the following two years and the most recent edition was dated April 2014. The aim was 'to help inspectors understand schools' responsibilities in relation to the Equality Act 2010, which is that they should have due regard for equalities' and 'to help inspectors judge the impact of schools' work in advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and tackling discrimination'.

Although intended essentially for inspectors, the briefing has been an invaluable source of guidance for schools, for it has provided a substantial indication of what they need to do in order if they are to be considered compliant with equalities legislation and has therefore been an authoritative and reliable resource for a school's self-evaluation, and for reflective discussions between governors and senior leadership teams.

In summer 2014 the document was withdrawn from the Ofsted website. It nevertheless continues to be a valuable reference point and for this reason a long extract is reprinted here.

Ofsted's list of 25 points is quoted verbatim from its publication Inspecting Equalities. But a title has been added to each item for ease of reference.

## OVERVIEW

### 1. Data on attainment

Senior staff and governors should know about the relative attainment and progress of different groups of pupils, monitor their performance and other data relevant to improving outcomes. For example, the school should be aware of gender imbalances in 'upper ability' groups, and which groups of learners, for example by ethnicity, are participating in after-school sport. This is information the school needs to help tackle underachievement and any concerns related to the behaviour and safety of different groups of pupils; it may help to show what action is being taken to tackle any discrepancies, for example, in the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of different pupils.

### 2. Active steps to promote relationships

The school should also be taking active steps to promote its relationships with all parents and pupils and also those in communities or from groups that it finds hard to reach.

### 3. Progression information

It is expected that schools track and analyse progression information, for example, the proportions of pupils who continue education, training or enter employment and identify whether there are any barriers for particular groups of pupils.<sup>5</sup> This will enable schools to evaluate the curriculum and the subject choices of pupils.

## EVALUATING IMPACT

### 4. Analysis and use of data

The specific areas below illustrate aspects mentioned above that inspectors may want to follow up at inspection to provide evidence of how a school advances equality, demonstrating due regard to its duty. Inspectors will look at the impact of actions based on analysis and use of data, not whether data are collected. The points are not exhaustive and they are not a checklist, but are examples to guide inspectors' evaluation.

## ACHIEVEMENT OF PUPILS

### 5. Composition of the school: general

It is expected that a school has data about the school population and differences of outcome, and analyses up-to-date data on the composition of its pupils broken down by year group, ethnicity and gender, and by proficiency in English. This will include detail about significant differences in attainment between girls and boys, and between pupils of different ethnic backgrounds.

### 6. Composition of the school: details

A school should:

- o have data on its pupils broken down by types of impairment and special educational needs

- use entry and transition information to shape provision to meet the diverse needs of pupils
- have data on inequalities of outcome and participation connected with ethnicity, gender and disability, and with proficiency in literacy and numeracy
- use data on inequalities of outcome and participation when setting itself objectives for achievable and measurable improvements
- have clear procedures for supporting the educational achievement of pregnant pupils and young parents.

## THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

### 7. Special provision

Focused attention is paid to the needs of specific groups of pupils, for example those who are learning English as an additional language or disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. There is extra or special provision for certain groups, as appropriate to the school and its circumstances.

### 8. SMSC

There are activities across the curriculum that promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### 9. Seating and grouping

Seating and grouping arrangements help to foster good relations and respect between different groups of pupils.

### 10. Positive images

Teaching and curriculum materials in all subjects have positive images of disabled people; of gay and lesbian people; of both women and men in non-stereotypical gender roles; and of people from a wide range of ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

## BEHAVIOUR AND SAFETY

### 11. Prejudice-related bullying and incidents

There are clear procedures for dealing with prejudice-related bullying and incidents, and appropriate staff training that equips staff to identify and deal with this effectively. The different evidence from inspection confirms the effectiveness of a school's approach.

### 12. Pupils feel safe

Questionnaires and focused discussion groups show that all pupils feel safe from all kinds of bullying, harassment and oppressive behaviour.

### 13. Confidence in staff

Pupils are confident that staff will address all issues of discrimination and prejudice including the use of derogatory language.

#### 14. Data on behaviour

The school has data on the behaviour of different groups of pupils including by ethnicity, gender and disability; on any inequalities in the absence rates and patterns of different groups; and on its use of rewards and sanctions, including permanent and fixed term exclusion, for different groups. It knows where any inequalities exist and takes action to tackle them accordingly.

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

#### 15. Documentation

The school can demonstrate positive action of how the school is advancing equality and tackling discrimination; for example, in a statement of overarching policy, references in the school improvement plan or its self-evaluation documents, the prospectus, routine bulletins and newsletters, and occasional letters to parents.

#### 16. Responsibility

Staff and pupils can point to clear leadership and management responsibility for equality.

#### 17. Curriculum coverage

There is coverage in the curriculum of equalities issues, particularly with regard to tackling prejudice and promoting community cohesion and understanding diversity.

#### 18. Governing body

The governing body demonstrates its impact on the school's promotion and advancement of equality of opportunity and outcomes.

#### 19. Minutes of meetings

Minutes of governors' meetings, staff meetings and senior leadership team meetings, and the minutes of the School Council demonstrate the school's responsibilities under the Equality Act.

#### 20. Impact assessments

Before introducing important new policies or measures, the school carefully assesses their potential impact on equalities, its current and prospective pupils, and parents, positive or negative, and keeps a record of the analysis and judgements which it makes. The data are available for public scrutiny.

## 21. Training

The school's programme for continuing professional development (CPD) is inclusive of all staff and includes equalities matters, both directly and incidentally. Inspectors can identify clear evidence of impact at inspection.<sup>1</sup>

## 22. Employment

There is good equal opportunities practice in the recruitment and promotion of staff (teaching, support and administrative).

## 23. Parents and community

Evidence from parents and other stakeholders will show the effectiveness of the school's procedures for consulting and involving parents, and for engaging with local groups and organisations; these will have regard for the concerns and requirements of the Equality Act.

## 24. Pupils' views

Evidence from pupils will show how the school makes improvements for all pupils based on how pupils individually and collectively think and feel about the school.

## 25. Parents' views

Evidence from parental questionnaires reveals no prejudice or discrimination of a group or individual.

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