



Confederation of School Trusts

Ofsted's Interim Visits in the Autumn term 2020 - guidance

Purpose of the visits

- To gather information at school and national level
- Aggregate information to give a national picture of education
- Inform parents about what is happening in their child's school

In particular HMI will want to find out:

- What schools are doing to get back on track
- What barriers schools face
- How these can be overcome

Visits, not inspections

- Will last for one day and will usually be conducted by two HMI.
- No graded judgements
- Inspectors have been told to be sensitive to anxieties
- Inspectors will work within the safety measures the school has already put in place
- Visits will focus on how schools are dealing with COVID-19 this term and preparing for the future
- No review of the school's policies
- Inspectors will not be asking schools for any particular documents
- Visits could evolve as they are rolled out through the term.
- Inspectors will explore 2 key areas to see the effects of, and response to, Covid-19 this academic year:
 - Curriculum
 - Behaviour, safeguarding & particular needs
- Visits are about the 'what', not the 'so what'
- Inspectors will **not** have access to information gathered from these visits when they next visit your school for routine inspection (other than the published letter – see below)
- But, if inspectors have '*significant concerns*' about the school they could turn the visit into a Section 8 'No Formal Designation' inspection within 48 hours. Ofsted assure us there will be few, if any, instances of this (further details below)
- We have been assured by Ofsted that inspectors will make time to speak to executive leaders where this is requested

Before the visit

- Initial phone call the day before, usually around 10am
- Inspectors will be working from a script

- Inspectors won't have access to any complaints about schools Ofsted has received
- Inspectors will have access to the school's previous inspection grade and report, it's IDACI quintile, school type and phase, and pupils on roll
- Inspectors and leaders will discuss the school's system of controls so safe arrangements for the visit can be made
- The phone call is **not** an educationally focused conversation

The visit

- Starts at around 10am
- Series of discussions which can take place in any order (examples of things to be covered):
 - attendance & behaviour (eg data, expectations & approaches, barriers)
 - safeguarding (within the context of Covid-19, risks, actions taken, meeting with DSL)
 - curriculum: (eg approaches to returning, priorities, reading, remote learning, breadth, assessment, content, sequencing, catch-up, external support, barriers)
- Inspectors won't be visiting lessons
- No formal feedback at the end because it is not an inspection and there are no judgements to feed back
- Inspectors will agree content of the published letter with the school and ask for feedback on the visit
- Inspectors will avoid leaving at the same time as pupils, and usually by 4pm
- All visits will follow the same themes, asking the same basic questions (though the order might be different and inspectors may probe using follow up questions)
- Leaders' answers will be written down but will not result in a judgement

Significant concerns

- Inspectors will stick to the scope of the visit (they won't stray into other areas)
- But if they have **significant** concerns about either of the following *two* areas they can turn the visit into a Section 8 'No Formal Designation' (NFD) inspection:
 - Safeguarding
 - Breakdown in leadership & management
- HMI must call the Ofsted duty desk to discuss any significant concern before making this decision. The Regional Director will make the decision on whether an NFD is necessary.
- The NFD will take place within 48 hours, but would usually happen straight away with the interim visit turning into an NFD.
- Inspectors would then investigate the specific concern(s) through the NFD (the interim visit stops at this point). An NFD is not a full inspection (it doesn't change judgements).
- After the NFD a letter will be published detailing the findings.
- A NFD could lead to a full Section 5 inspection being scheduled as soon as possible (which could be determined by the covid-19 situation and the timing of when routine inspection returns)
- We are assured that conversion to an NFD will be extremely rare

Outcomes of interim visits

- 1) Published letter for parents. The inspector will write the letter once they have left the school site. The school has the opportunity to check the letter for factual accuracy before publication
- 2) Insights fed into the national research picture