

THE EDUCATION INSPECTION FRAMEWORK

101 AUDIT QUESTIONS

to evaluate your practice and prepare for inspection

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HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This audit has been broken down into 3 parts to help you to understand the changes, assess your current ability to meet them and to identify any actions needed when practice may not be where you need it to be.

It provides:

- An overview of the headline changes that have been made to both the Education Inspection Framework and the Early Years Inspection Handbook (which is the criteria that inspectors use to guide their judgements). This will provide you with an understanding of the differences between the old and the new inspection framework.
- A more in-depth view of the criteria used under each of the key headings in the new inspection framework along with a set of questions that will help you to assess your level of 'Ofsted readiness'.
- A risk management framework that will enable you to prioritise the issues of greatest concern and to identify the actions needed to ensure that practice is both effective and consistent.

IMPORTANT! The audit framework doesn't include the 'Overall Effectiveness' key heading because if a setting is meeting all 4 key areas within the inspection framework effectively, this will be reflected in the judgement for Overall Effectiveness.

The audits

Each of the key headings within the inspection framework has been explored to give leaders and managers a deeper understanding of the inspection criteria. Under each key heading you will find:

- Ofsted's intention or rationale,
- Ofsted's grade descriptors,
- A series of questions that will help you to review your current systems, processes and practice.

Each question will help you identify your strengths and weaker areas of practice, whilst also helping you to identify and manage inspection risks and vulnerabilities.

Example of an audit question

	Yes	No
<p>1. Does your setting have a clear purpose, vision, mission statement and a set of values or principles that guide what you do and how you do it? And are they reviewed annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose?</p> <p><i>Think about: Early years settings have strong foundations when they are clear about why they exist (their purpose), where they want to be (vision) and how they are going to get there (mission statement). This is usually supported by a set of principles or values which govern behaviour in the setting.</i></p>	Evidence	
Assessment	Emerging	Developing
	Adequate	Secure

The process

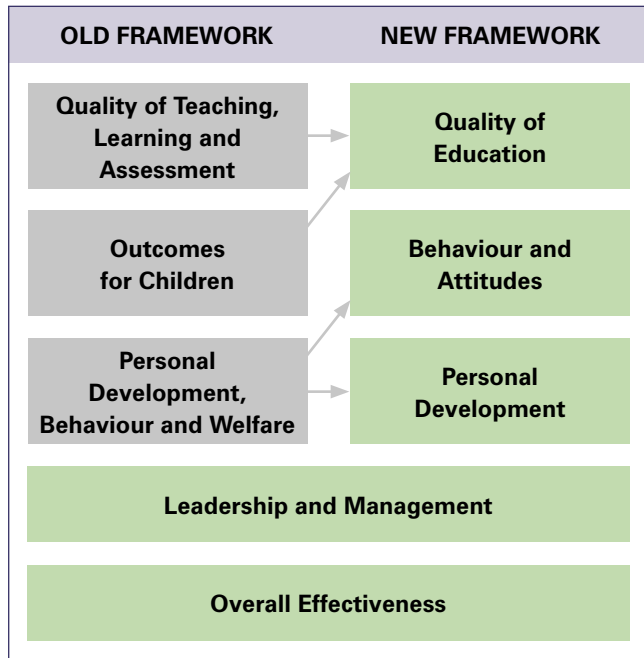
Step 1 - Your initial thoughts

The audit sections have been designed to help you reflect on the effectiveness of practice in depth, but your starting point is what you feel is currently in place. Read

each question and respond initially with a 'yes' or 'no' answer. This is likely to be a reflection based on what you see and hear on a daily basis.

	Yes	No
<p>1. Does your setting have a clear purpose, vision, mission statement and a set of values or principles that guide what you do and how you do it? And are they reviewed annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose?</p>	Evidence	

The diagram below illustrates these changes:



Making judgements

Although the 1-4 grading system made against each of these areas remains the same, achieving an outstanding inspection outcome is likely to be more of a challenge for many settings in the future. The 'outstanding' criteria builds on that of 'good' and it is expected that settings will meet all the criteria set out under both grade descriptors for each judgement.

It will not, however, be enough to merely provide evidence that different elements of practice are in place; providers will need to demonstrate that practice is both secure (embedded and effective) and consistent against all of the grade descriptors.

This is likely to be made doubly difficult by two factors: firstly, the 'sources of evidence', which used to provide guidance as to what inspectors would look at and for have been removed from the EYIH and secondly, the language now used in the EYIH is ambiguous in many places.

Although leadership teams should never generate systems, processes and/or data just to satisfy elements of an inspection the juxtaposition is that the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance sets out the minimum requirements for policy and practice, therefore, every leadership team needs to know and understand what it is that the regulatory body is going to look at and for to ensure that what they do continues to meet the requirements of the 'good' criteria at the very least.

If the grade descriptors are the only way of benchmarking what we do, it stands to reason that if we find gaps or if we feel that what we currently do will not meet the criteria, we will make changes to practice or address any gaps in order to achieve a specific outcome. Logic would also lead us to believe that if an inspector is going to look at and for certain things, we, as a leadership team need to look at the same things to make sure that we have an accurate view or understanding of what is likely to be seen.

Ofsted's rationale for many of these changes are that the inspection process previously has been seen as burdensome. Many leaders, managers and senior leaders in schools have used the inspection framework to generate documents and data that they believe inspectors will want to see, which has led to the creation of 'inspection files' and huge reams of data which serve no other purpose than to support the inspection process. The EIF, therefore, strips back the inspection framework to focus on our core business (meeting the learning and development needs of children) and has tried to reduce the potential for perceived prescription.

The most significant changes are found in the **Quality of Education**.

Ofsted have revised the inspection framework to put the curriculum and learners at the very heart of the inspection process. It is, therefore, expected that providers will be able to discuss how they organise their early years provision, which will include discussing our rationale for curriculum delivery (Ofsted, 2019b) and ensuring that practitioners are able to talk about what their key children know, understand and can do as well as what they want children to learn and have experience of in the future (next steps for learning and development).

The term cultural capital has also been introduced, which has sparked a national debate about what this phrase actually means for educational establishments, and whether Ofsted's focus of cultural capital is likely to be too narrow. (This has been discussed in more detail in the section on the **Quality of Education**).

As seen earlier, the **Quality of Education** has been created by amalgamating the areas of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for children. This clearly communicates Ofsted's desire to rebalance their focus, ensuring that inspectors see children's progress and outcomes as part of the process of teaching children.

This is a welcome move which should give more leaders and managers the confidence to step back and review the entirety of what they do from beginning to end, to

How will inspectors make their judgements?

“140. The EYFS curriculum states:

- The EYFS (educational programmes) provides the curriculum framework that leaders build on to decide what they intend children to learn and develop.
- Leaders and practitioners decide how to implement the curriculum so that children make progress in the seven areas of learning.
- Leaders and practitioners evaluate the impact of the curriculum by checking what children know and can do.

141. Inspectors will evaluate how well:

- leaders assure themselves that the setting’s curriculum (educational programmes) intentions are met and it is sufficiently challenging for the children it serves
 - leaders use additional funding, including the early years pupil premium where applicable, and measure its impact on disadvantaged children’s outcomes.
 - practitioners ensure that the content, sequencing and progression in the areas of learning are secured and whether they demand enough of children
 - children develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills across the areas of learning
 - the provider’s curriculum prepares children for their next stage.”
- (Ofsted, pp.31-32. 2019b).

Considering the implication for practice

Ofsted have been clear that although accountability is important, the previous inspection framework has created a climate which has diverted many headteachers,

leaders and manager away from children’s experiences in favour of scrutinising data, saying...

“...while data will always be an important starting point, our inspections should look beyond published data, explore how results have been achieved and in some cases act as a counterbalance to any unintended incentives in the broader accountability system.” (Ofsted, p.6, 2017a).

Ofsted have shared that inspections have become too focused on children’s data and outcomes which has led to large numbers of schools narrowing their curriculum in order to prepare children for tests. In the early years, a whole industry has been created around tracking children’s data, with large numbers of companies offering magical software solutions that promise to revolutionise observation, assessment, next steps and tracking at the touch of a few buttons.

Unfortunately, many of those software systems have had significant limitations which have led to increased workloads or gaps in data which have been discovered at the point of inspection.

Ofsted want to address this imbalance by ensuring that inspections focus on the substance of education – in other words, Ofsted want to put the curriculum at the heart of the inspection process, by placing greater importance on why we do what we do and what we do (intent), how we do it (implementation) and the difference that it makes to our children (impact).

To do this the previous judgements of teaching, learning, assessment, and outcomes for children have been amalgamated to create the quality of education. This area is dedicated to aspects that ensure that:

- we have high aspirations for our children,
- we and our practitioners have a sound rationale for what they do,
- we deliver high quality teaching and learning experiences,
- all children receive an appropriate level of challenges,
- all children make the progress that they are capable of,
- we deliver a broad and balanced curriculum,
- we provide environments that meet the needs of our children,
- that data is used as a way of verifying how successful we are in helping children to make the progress that they are capable of.

That means that we need to be in a position to discuss:

- what we believe we are there to do and provide for the children that attend,
- how we then translate our aspirations and vision into what we want children to learn and experience during their time with us
- and what that looks like in practice.

The framework introduces the terms **intent**,

implementation and **impact**. So, let’s look at those terms in more detail first:

Intent – If we look at the definition of intention in any dictionary, we are likely to find phrases such as ‘something that you want to do or plan’ or even ‘an aim’. In this context we are, therefore, being asked to describe what we propose to do for our children or what our aims are. In order to do this we need to ask ourselves, do we have a clear rationale for what children learn? Can we talk about what we want for the children in our care? What do we believe that they need to learn and experience?

Below is the good and outstanding grading guidance from the **Quality of Education**.

OUTSTANDING	GOOD
<p>The provider meets all the criteria for a good quality of education securely and consistently.</p> <p>The quality of education at this setting is exceptional. In addition, the following apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The provider's curriculum intent and implementation are embedded securely and consistently across the provision. It is evident from what practitioners do that they have a firm and common understanding of the provider's curriculum intent and what it means for their practice. Across all parts of the provision, practitioners' interactions with children are of a high quality and contribute well to delivering the curriculum intent. ■ Children's experiences over time are consistently and coherently arranged to build cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for their future learning. ■ The impact of the curriculum on what children know, can remember and do is highly effective. Children demonstrate this through being deeply engaged in their work and play and sustaining high levels of concentration. Children, including those children from disadvantaged backgrounds, do well. Children with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes. ■ Children consistently use new vocabulary that enables them to communicate effectively. They speak with increasing confidence and fluency, which means that they secure strong foundations for future learning, especially in preparation for them to become fluent readers. 	<p>Intent</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Leaders adopt or construct a curriculum that is ambitious and designed to give children, particularly the most disadvantaged, the knowledge and cultural capital they need to succeed in life. ■ The provider's curriculum is coherently planned and sequenced. It builds on what children know and can do, towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for their future learning. ■ The provider has the same ambitions for almost all children. For children with particular needs, such as those with high levels of SEND, their curriculum is still ambitious and meets their needs. <p>Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children benefit from meaningful learning across the EYFS curriculum. ■ Practitioners understand the areas of learning they teach and the way in which young children learn. Leaders provide effective support for staff with less experience and knowledge of teaching. ■ Practitioners present information clearly to children, promoting appropriate discussion about the subject matter being taught. They communicate well to check children's understanding, identify misconceptions and provide clear explanations to improve their learning. In so doing, they respond and adapt their teaching as necessary. ■ Practitioners ensure that their own speaking, listening and reading of English enables children to hear and develop their own language and vocabulary well. They read to children in a way that excites and engages them, introducing new ideas, concepts and vocabulary. ■ Over the EYFS, teaching is designed to help children remember long-term what they have been taught and to integrate new knowledge into larger concepts. ■ Practitioners and leaders use assessment well to check what children know and can do to inform teaching. This includes planning suitably challenging activities and responding to specific needs. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and avoid unnecessary burdens for staff or children. ■ Practitioners and leaders create an environment that supports the intent of an ambitious and coherently planned and sequenced curriculum. The available resources meet the children's needs and promote their focus on learning. ■ Practitioners share information with parents about their child's progress in relation to the EYFS. They help parents to support and extend their child's learning at home, including how to encourage a love of reading.

COMMUNICATING YOUR CURRICULUM INTENT		YES		NO
ASSESSMENT	<p>1. Does your setting have a clear purpose, vision, mission statement and a set of values or principles that guide what you do and how you do it? And are they reviewed annually to ensure that they remain fit for purpose?</p> <p><i>Think about: Early years settings have strong foundations when they are clear about why they exist (their purpose), where they want to be (vision) and how they are going to get there (mission statement). This is usually supported by a set of principles or values which govern behaviour in their setting.</i></p>	Evidence		
			DEVELOPING	SECURE
ASSESSMENT	<p>2. Have you undertaken activities with staff to ensure that there is a shared understanding of your setting's purpose, vision, mission statement and values or principles?</p> <p><i>Think about: What support has been given to staff individually, in small groups or as a team to ensure that all staff members understand your setting's purpose, vision, mission statement and values? How do you know that all staff members understand these key elements and how they influence and guide practice?</i></p>	Evidence		
			DEVELOPING	SECURE

SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO MANAGE THEIR FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOUR		YES	NO
<p>36. Have you ensured that all staff have accessed training on supporting children to manage their feelings and behaviour?</p> <p><i>Think about:</i> Child development courses will give practitioners an overview of the ages and stages of development, but are unlikely to go into any depth about children's emotional well-being and how to help children to recognise, name and deal with their feelings and emotions. When children are finding aspects of nursery life challenging, staff need to identify why that may be and to use appropriate strategies to bring the situation to a successful resolution for the child. Practitioners who have a breadth of knowledge in this area are able to reduce potential triggers and to ensure that their environment and routines continue to meet the emotional needs of children, not just their learning needs.</p>	Evidence		
ASSESSMENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	SECURE
	YES	NO	
<p>37. Have you ensured that all staff have accessed training specifically on executive function and self-regulation?</p> <p><i>Think about:</i> Executive function refers to a group of skills that help us (no matter at what age) organise ourselves, stay on task when there are distractions around us, develop and maintain relationships and control our feelings and behaviour to name but a few. Some of those skills support the Characteristics of Effective Learning, but staff still need an understanding of executive function and self-regulation (which includes how we manage our feelings and behaviour) to provide children with an appropriate level of support as those skills are developing.</p>	Evidence		
ASSESSMENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	SECURE
	ADEQUATE	ADEQUATE	SECURE

BEING SENSITIVE TO AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF ALL CHILDREN		YES	NO
<p>53. Does the key person system enable children to form secure attachments with a small number of adults who can get to know each child well?</p> <p><i>Think about:</i> <i>Children will only feel secure in their environment and grow in confidence when they have the support of adults that they trust and who show that they understand them. In setting's where there are staff changes in the day, managers need to plan for continuity of care so that adults can make authentic connections with children, which will provide them with the confidence to explore and to make to most of the opportunities and experience offered.</i></p>	<p style="background-color: #f4cccc;">DEVELOPING</p>	<p style="background-color: #d9ead3;">ADEQUATE</p>	<p style="background-color: #d9ead3;">NO</p>
ASSESSMENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	SECURE
<p>54. Do you observe adults making authentic connections with children, and in particular, their key children?</p> <p><i>Think about:</i> <i>Each relationship that a staff member develops with a child is unique. Each child should be made to feel that they are special and that there is an adult who cares deeply about what they do, the things that happen to them, their interests and who they want to become. The more the staff get to know a child, the deeper the connection.</i></p>	<p style="background-color: #f4cccc;">DEVELOPING</p>	<p style="background-color: #d9ead3;">ADEQUATE</p>	<p style="background-color: #d9ead3;">NO</p>
ASSESSMENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	SECURE

SAFER RECRUITMENT AND SUITABLE STAFF		YES	NO	
<p>71. Do you have evidence that references were sought for all members of staff and that the source of each reference was checked, to ensure that the person writing it was a valid referee?</p> <p><i>Think about:</i> A reference is a good indicator of how a staff member is likely to perform if they take up a post with you. The views of previous employers can help us to understand a staff member's strengths and areas for development, but we do need to check that the referee exists and comes from a valid source, for example not a relative, friend of the family etc.</p>				
ASSESSMENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	ADEQUATE	SECURE
		YES	NO	
<p>72. Do you seek references prior to a member of staff starting with you?</p> <p><i>Think about:</i> A sudden vacancy can leave us with ratio problems and we are likely to be eager to get someone into the post quickly, so with a good interview, a clear DBS and one reference returned we let the successful candidate start. But, what would you do if that final reference arrived and referred to an on-going investigation into a safeguarding issue. Could you say that you had done everything in your power to ensure that the staff member was suitable to work with children before they started work?</p>				
ASSESSMENT	EMERGING	DEVELOPING	ADEQUATE	SECURE
		YES	NO	