


Learning and skills inspections

Welcome to *Learning and skills inspections*, providing information and guidance for inspectors of learning and skills settings. To submit feedback or articles for the next edition, or if you have any queries about inspection policy, email Lands@ofsted.gov.uk.

■ Ofsted helpline: 0300 123 1231.

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Welcome from Matthew Coffey, Director, Development, Learning and Skills

I am pleased to welcome you to *Learning and Skills Inspections* in my new role as Director, Development, Learning and Skills.

In article C4 there is a link to the report *Economics, business and enterprise education*, which has received much press attention. The report includes an evaluation of the impact on learning for students studying vocational business courses that are wholly or mainly assessed by internally set and marked coursework. It finds that some students who achieve good results on vocational business courses are not developing appropriate knowledge and skills.

I hope you find the report and the other articles interesting.

Part A. Revisions and additions to core inspection activity



[Deferral of inspections: learning and skills providers and colleges](#)

We have recently answered a query from a provider about the criteria that we take into account when we consider whether to defer or cancel an inspection.

A deferral is where it is decided, after the provider or college has been notified, to move the start date of the inspection by more than five working days. A cancellation arises where it is decided that the inspection of a provider or college should not go ahead at all – either now or in the future – perhaps because it is closing, ceases to operate altogether or ceases to receive relevant funding.

To fulfil these principles, and in the interest of all involved, deferral or cancellation of an inspection may only take place in exceptional and fully justifiable circumstances.

A deferral or cancellation will only be considered if one or more of the following apply.

- The principal or a member of the provider's senior management team is subject to a current police investigation which would be compromised by an inspection of the provider.
- The college or provider is due to merge or close and it is decided that no useful purpose will be served in inspecting it.
- The college or provider is no longer in receipt of funding or will not be in receipt of funding at the time of the proposed inspection.
- At least three quarters of the learners will not be at the provider, or with their employer, for at least half of the period for which the inspection has been scheduled.
- The provider is closed to all learners, and learners are not available at their employers' premises, for at least half of the period for which the inspection has been scheduled.
- There are other very exceptional circumstances which, in the judgement of the relevant inspection divisional manager or regional director, justify deferral or cancellation of the inspection.

Where the provision is still operating, building work or the temporary absence of a principal or senior representative would not be grounds for deferral because learners will still be receiving education and training. The full guidance for providers is called *Deferral of inspections: learning and skills providers and colleges*, and is available on our website via the link above.

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The Common Inspection Framework

The current learning and skills Common Inspection Framework was introduced in September 2009. It applies to the inspection of provision offered by sixth form colleges, general further education colleges, independent learning providers, local authorities who offer provision for those over 16 and the judicial estate.

The combination of a new government post-16 education and training policy, a rapidly changing learning and skills sector and the requirements of the current Ofsted Departmental Business Plan 2011-2015 means that a review and refocus of the framework, as well as the supporting inspection methodology, are both timely and necessary.

The revised framework will build on the work recently completed on the evaluation of the Common Inspection Framework 2009. The revised framework needs to meet objectives:

- to ensure the revised and streamlined Common Inspection Framework is implemented in September 2012
- to ensure that it contributes to Ofsted's 30% cost reduction by 2014–2015
- to ensure that the current inspection framework and methodology are best adapted to the changing further education and skills sector to ensure maximum impact, taking account of the views of learners, employers and providers
- to ensure that the framework for the inspection of further education colleges with residential accommodation is introduced by September 2012 with coordinated inspection of education and welfare.

A public consultation will be carried out in autumn 2011 when all interested parties will have an opportunity to comment on the proposals.

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Part B. Supplementary information from Ofsted



Official statistics

Ofsted's new strategy for official statistics will bring it into compliance with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice as well a general drive for greater transparency in the civil service. A central part of the new strategy will be a new, improved approach to releasing quarterly statistics. The new strategy for official statistics will:

- make statistics available in as much detail as possible
- ensure statistics are disseminated in forms that are accessible to a variety of audiences
- ensure greater consistency across different products
- create an Ofsted statistical brand and identity.

On 28 June 2011, Ofsted will publish the first Learning and Skills official statistics. This will start with the data published for the fourth quarter of the 2010–11 financial year, covering January, February and March 2011. Over the coming year we will publish more information every financial quarter (the second release, in September 2011, will encompass data for the first quarter of 2011–12).

Once published, *Learning and Skills official statistics* will be available in the [Publications and research](#) section of the Ofsted website.

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Part C. Other material



C1

[Tackling the challenge of low numeracy skills in young people and adults](#)

This report, available via the link above, evaluates the quality of numeracy provision for young people and adults as seen in visits between May and November 2010 to 59 providers, including colleges, independent learning providers, local authority providers of adult and community learning, prisons and probation trusts.

Key features of effective practice and the most commonly identified reasons for underperformance are explored in detail. The report also presents the main challenges faced by providers in securing further improvement.

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C2

[Best practice in safeguarding in colleges](#)

This survey of best practice in safeguarding is based on visits to 14 of the 15 colleges that received an outstanding grade for the leadership and management of their safeguarding arrangements in 2009/10.

The colleges that were awarded outstanding grades included four general further education colleges, five sixth form colleges, five independent specialist colleges catering for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and one land-based further education college.

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C3

[Girls' career aspirations](#)

This report evaluates the extent to which careers education, guidance and other provision raise aspirations and inform the choices of courses and careers by girls and young women to support their long-term achievement. It identifies weaknesses and examples of good practice in these areas.

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C4

[Economics, business and enterprise education](#)

This report evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in economics, business and enterprise education in primary schools, secondary schools and colleges. It covers two separate aspects of the curriculum. These are:

- formally assessed economics and business courses taken by students aged 14–18 in secondary schools and colleges
- whole-school enterprise education; that is provision to promote economic and business understanding and enterprise and financial capability for all pupils in primary schools and students in secondary schools.

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