

Ofsted and CQC Local Area SEND Inspection

Briefing for schools based on inspection framework and handbook

How often will local areas be inspected?

All local areas will be inspected at least once during a five-year period.

How long will the inspections last?

Inspections will not normally last longer than 5 days and there will usually be 3 inspectors on the team. Inspections can take place at any point during usual school term time. 5 working days notice will be given.

What is meant by the 'local area'?

The local area is the geographical area of the local authority (LA) but the responsibility of the local area extends to those children and young people with SEND who are residents of the local area but attend educational establishments or receive services outside the LA's borders.

The local area includes the LA, clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), public health, NHS England for specialist services, early years settings, schools and further education providers. The inspections will evaluate how effectively the local area meets its responsibilities, and not just the local authority.

What will be the focus of the inspections?

Inspectors will focus on how effectively the local area identifies, meets the needs of and improves the outcomes of children and young people with SEND as defined in the Children and Families Act 2014 and described in the SEND Code of Practice 2015.

The inspections provide an independent external evaluation of how well a local area carries out its statutory duties in relation to children and young people with SEND. The inspection will review how local areas support them to achieve the best possible educational outcomes, such as being able to live independently, secure meaningful employment and be prepared for adult lives.

Will inspectors visit schools and other providers?

Inspectors will visit providers such as nurseries, schools, colleges and specialist services. However, these providers are not under inspection and inspectors are not there to evaluate the effectiveness or quality of the individual provider or service.

What aspects of SEND will the inspection cover?

Inspectors will gather evidence to answer three primary questions:

- A. The effectiveness of the local area in identifying children and young people who have SEND, including timeliness and the quality of identification and assessment information spanning the 0-25 age range
- B. The effectiveness of the local area in assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people who have SEND.

Inspectors will take into account:

- Engagement and co-production with children and young people and their parents and carers
- Effectiveness of coordination between agencies in joint commissioning
- Satisfaction of parents and carers and children and young people
- The suitability of EHC plans
- The local offer, including its development, accessibility and currency

- The planning is appropriate to meet the needs of children and young people receiving SEND support
- C. The effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people who have SEND. Inspectors will take into account:
 - Outcomes- across education, health and care
 - Leaders' assessment of the effectiveness of the local area in improving outcomes for children and young people.

How will inspection team gather evidence?

- Meetings with a range of leaders from education, health and social care agencies;
- Meetings with children and young people with SEND to discuss their views and experiences; visits to nurseries, schools and colleges;
- Meetings with parents to hear their views on their involvement in identifying and assessing their children's needs and how well they work with leaders in the local area.
- Scrutinising and evaluating documentary evidence; sampling files and other relevant sources of information.
- Visits to agencies and providers;
- Interviewing staff who work with children and young people with SEND to understand the impact of the local area's effectiveness.

The outcomes of the inspection will not include a grading but will be reported in narrative form in a letter. The letter will outline areas of strength and key priorities for improvement.

The inspection framework and handbook can be found at

www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-area-send-inspection-framework

Visits to schools

The inspectors will identify the Early Years settings, schools and colleges they wish to visit. Early Years providers, schools and colleges should now consider informing parents and carers of pupils with SEND about the impending inspection (click here for information sheet for parents) and identifying those parents who would be willing to take part in focus groups should the school be chosen for a visit.

During visits to early years providers, schools and colleges the inspectors will hold focus groups of;

- children and young people and their parents and carers to gather the views of, and, about how effectively their needs have been identified and met;
- Early Years providers, school and college leaders, managers and staff to find out about their contribution to, and understanding of, the local area's evaluation of its effectiveness in identifying needs, and in meeting these needs and improving outcomes for children and young people.

The inspectors will also sample children and young people's files and other relevant sources of information so it will be important that pupils' files and other relevant documents (such as the SEN Information Report and Accessibility Plan) are up to date.

In preparation for the inspection, schools might consider:

- Which support services visit them over the year? E.g. EPS, Sensory, literacy advisers, SALT, behaviour team, etc.
- How they plan together/prioritise with support services to support positive outcomes for children and young people, e.g. assess/plan/do/review.

- What training and SENCO forums they/staff/governors have accessed from/via the LA, including workshops on, for example, the revised Code of Practice or person centred approaches.
- How the LA involves them in statutory processes, including communication and coproduction.
- The support children receive through integrated pathways, such as Early Help.