

**Office for Standards
in Education**

Strategic Plan 2004 to 2007



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Introduction by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England

After eleven years of regular inspection of schools, inspection remains an essential part of the government's education policy. Inspection ensures accountability through public reporting and contributes to the improvement of education. Regulation and inspection together contribute to the improvement of childcare.

The work of Ofsted rests on four principles. First, Ofsted has constitutional independence under the Crown and Parliament which requires inspection and reporting to be fair, rigorous and impartial. We inspect and report 'without fear or favour'.

Second, Ofsted gives priority to its extensive statutory duties: to regulate and inspect childcare, and to inspect schools, colleges and teacher education, the work of local education authorities (LEAs), and a range of other provision.

Third, we continue to report directly and openly to the public: to parents and others who are clients of those who provide education and care.

Fourth, we ensure that all our reporting and advice to government, those who work in education and care, and the public, are authoritatively rooted in robust evidence.

Our approaches to inspection will continue to evolve. I am committed not only to improvement **through** inspection but also to improvement **of** inspection. I shall ensure that inspection:

- is actively reviewed, so that the demand placed on those being inspected is kept to the minimum and that resources are used to best effect
- promotes accountability, informs strategies for improvement and results in public reporting
- reflects the nature, circumstances and performance of the provision being inspected
- becomes increasingly focused on the things that make a real difference to the quality of education and care.

Such developments are part of our continuing process of refining inspection frameworks so that we make intelligent use of the best evidence and data available. I also want to be sure that we make the best and most efficient use of all the inspection resources available to us, be they employees of Ofsted – childcare inspectors, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and additional inspectors – or independent inspectors.

The government has recently published the Green Paper, *Every child matters*. Subject to the outcome of consultation and any necessary changes to legislation, it proposes that Ofsted should lead the development of inspections of children's services in local authority areas. We have already begun discussions with the other inspectorates involved on the development of an integrated approach. This will have potentially significant implications for some of our existing inspection activities. We shall take the opportunity to develop inspection arrangements which will look at the range of education and childcare throughout a community, concentrating on the needs of parents and the quality of the varied services that provide for children and young people aged 0 to 19 years.

There are three particular strands of work that we shall explore further over the life of this Plan. The first is to **evaluate in greater depth the effects of major government policies** for raising standards in education. The Primary National Strategy, for example, is worthy of an extensive evaluation which will trace its effect over the lifetime of this Plan. Equally the Key Stage 3 strategy, changes in curriculum and examinations post 14 and workforce reform will merit close attention. This focus on major strategies may mean that Ofsted undertakes fewer small-scale exercises, but it will allow us to comment more effectively on new policies and emerging issues of national importance. My annual report will reflect this approach, and will play an important part in informing the inspection agenda each year.

The second strand is to ensure that Ofsted's **inspection findings are disseminated in the most effective ways possible** and that they have the greatest possible impact on the quality and standards of education and care. I have a duty to use inspection evidence to advise ministers on the development and effectiveness of their policies for education. I am equally keen to ensure that inspection is used to contribute to the improvement of all aspects of performance in a variety of ways. These include:

- making best use of the considerable expertise of HMI and childcare inspectors
- issuing pertinent, informative and timely reports which illuminate important topics and identify successful practice
- making greater use of our web site to disseminate inspection findings
- using Ofsted's inspection database as effectively as possible
- organising briefings, seminars, training programmes and conferences to ensure that important findings are widely known and understood.

In addition, every thematic inspection will have an inbuilt dissemination strategy, and we shall review how institutions, providers and other partners make use of inspection findings.

The third strand will entail a **review of inspection** as one aspect of the government's overall strategy for standards and accountability in education. The framework for school inspections has recently been revised and the new version has been in use in inspections since September 2003. We shall be closely monitoring its impact. At the same time, we shall assess the implications of other recent developments, including the inspection of children's services. Bearing in mind the lead time for changes to inspection arrangements, we propose to undertake wide consultation in 2004.

Ofsted has achieved much in its first eleven years. This has been done by working in close partnership with other inspectorates, on behalf of government, its departments and agencies, the public, those who engage in education, and the people and institutions who provide it. We shall continue to seek to improve all that we do; we can never be complacent. This Plan gives shape to our aspirations for Ofsted's work and I commend it to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Bell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

David Bell

Ofsted's purpose and values

Ofsted is the non-ministerial government department responsible for regulating childcare and inspecting schools, colleges, teacher education and local education authorities in England.

Aim

Ofsted aims to serve the interests of children and young people, their parents and the community by providing impartial and authoritative inspection, evaluation and reporting of the quality and standards of education and childcare in England.

We are committed to promoting the highest quality of education and care, to help enable all children and young people to reach their full potential and be well prepared for adult and working life. We shall provide the public with frank, timely and accurate assessments of the provision available to them; educators and carers with a diagnosis of what is working well and what needs to be improved; and the government with rigorous assessments of the quality and standards of education and care, and the effect of its policies.

Our aim will be achieved through the objectives and programmes described in this Plan.

Values

We are committed to:

- reporting without fear or favour
- acting with integrity and impartiality
- communicating clearly and frankly, using our knowledge to promote high standards and high-quality provision.

In doing so, we will:

- have high expectations of ourselves and others
- be open about our work and methods
- carry out evaluations rigorously
- act with courtesy and sensitivity, respecting diversity
- meet our objectives in partnership with others.

We articulate these values more specifically in the principles of inspection (annex A) upon which all our inspection and regulatory frameworks are based.

Ofsted will advise, on the basis of its evidence, on such matters as approaches to caring for and supporting children, the effectiveness of different types of educational provision, and the effect of particular innovations and government strategies. We hold to:

- the importance of a coherent approach to children's and young people's care and education, linking cognitive development to healthy personal and emotional growth and security
- the principle of the entitlement of children and young people to curricula that are accessible, challenging, motivating and relevant to their needs across the 3 to 19 age range, combining secure knowledge and understanding with the development of the skills, values and attitudes to prepare them for adult and working life
- the promotion of excellence and high standards for all, recognising the importance of teaching that is knowledgeable and stimulating, together with early identification and development of particular skills, gifts and talents
- a belief in the importance of parents, families, carers and other adults in laying effective foundations for future success
- a commitment to inclusive approaches to care and education. These must aim to overcome the barriers that result in unacceptable levels of failure for individuals or groups and should respond to specific needs and interests. As part of this last commitment, we are determined to report on whatever works for or against successful inclusion.

In support of our central strategic aim, we set ourselves the goal of being a well-run organisation, using public resources efficiently and effectively, and being an exemplary employer. We aim to become a national exemplar of home-based working. We are committed to equality of opportunity and access, and to promoting race equality in our work. Our plans for this are set out in our *Race Equality Scheme*, published on our web site at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Structure of this Strategic Plan

Six core **objectives** contribute to our aim. Each objective relates to a statutory requirement to regulate or inspect a sector of education and care provision, but may also include programmes that respond to ministerial remits, priorities of government departments, particularly the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), or matters identified by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI). These objectives are supported by an seventh objective for Ofsted's development as an organisation.

Each objective covers several operational **programmes**. A programme may include a range of inspection activities. The programmes are of four types, covering:

- institutional inspection or regulation
- thematic or cross-cutting inspection
- inspection of the quality of provision across areas or partnerships
- the development and improvement of inspection.

The **outcomes** of inspection always include feedback to those inspected and reports, written to high-quality standards and in most cases publicly available. An important duty is the provision of advice to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills through HMCI's annual report and other publications, and briefings and seminars for ministers and officials. We also work in partnership with other national bodies in conducting inspection and providing information and advice.

We seek to go further in making all our inspection work as useful and effective as we can. From April 2004, the planning for all inspection programmes and exercises will include a dissemination strategy in order to spread the lessons learned through inspection as widely as possible. We also specify in this Plan the main **targets** that our inspection and regulation programmes aim to achieve.

Accountability

Ofsted is accountable through ministers to Parliament and is subject to regular scrutiny through twice-yearly evidence to the House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee. Our inspection findings are normally published openly (other than reports on individual childminders, on which we are currently consulting). The work of Ofsted and its inspectors is subject to formal complaints procedures and recourse to an independent adjudicator.

Objectives and programmes

Section I: care and early learning

The Care Standards Act 2000 transferred responsibility for the regulation and inspection of childminding and day care from local authorities to Ofsted. The Early Years Directorate was established to fulfil this remit. Childcare inspectors, supported by administrative staff in eight regional centres, register, inspect and investigate the continuing suitability of providers following a complaint and, if necessary, take enforcement action.

Ofsted's first duty is to assure parents that those who care for their children are suitable to do so and contribute to their development and early learning. Second, regular inspection aims to ensure that providers meet the National Standards for Childcare, identify good practice and promote improvement in quality. The inspection of nursery education providers evaluates the quality of education and standards achieved by children in terms of the Foundation Curriculum. Where possible, Ofsted combines the care and nursery education inspections to reduce the demands on providers.

Over the period of this Plan we shall review our approaches to securing the well-being of children and align the inspection of early education more closely with the inspection of maintained provision in nursery and reception classes. We shall also respond as appropriate to national developments, including the establishment of Children's Centres, extended provision in schools and developments in policy relating to children's services. Evidence from our work in early years will also inform the development work on children's services referred to in Section III of the Plan.

Objective I

Ensure that children in the registered care of others are safe, well cared for, and engaged in activity that promotes their development and learning.

PROGRAMMES

I.1 The registration of providers. Each year, we receive some 20,000 applications for registration from potential childminders and providers of day care. We establish that the applicant is qualified, that is, a suitable person to provide day care and meets the National Standards for Childcare. This involves a significant administrative task in carrying out a number of prescribed checks. Establishing that the person can meet the National Standards involves a visit to the premises by a childcare inspector and may involve a formal interview.

1.2 The inspection of providers. We inspect day-care providers within two years of their previous inspection, and providers of nursery education within four years. We also aim to inspect those settings causing concern more frequently and new settings within seven months of their registration. These inspections lead to a quality standard and a written report which, in the case of group day care, is published. We will carry out a minimum of 50,000 inspections annually. We also inspect settings where a variation of the conditions of registration is requested.

1.3 The investigation of complaints against providers to ensure their continuing suitability. To date we have investigated about 7,500 complaints annually where concerns are raised about the suitability of the provider. These complaints vary widely in their content: from issues relating to child protection to issues relating to child–adult ratios, qualifications of managers and matters relating to premises.

1.4 The enforcement of action against registered or unregistered providers. To date we have taken some 250 enforcement actions against providers each year. About a third of these relate to unregistered childminders.

1.5 Inspection development. During the next year, we shall review and, where necessary, revise all our inspection and regulatory arrangements to take account of the forthcoming revision of the National Standards and the need for more tailored inspection of complex providers of **children’s services**. This will entail working closely with those in the school inspection system and with other inspection services beyond Ofsted.

TARGETS

Recurrent targets include:

- registering providers within target timescales
- on receipt of a relevant complaint, investigating the continued suitability of the provider within 30 working days
- taking necessary enforcement action within prescribed time limits.

Milestone targets include:

- inspecting all providers at least once by 31 March 2005
- publishing a report annually on findings from our Early Years regulatory work.

Section II: schools and colleges

In 2003, we created a single Inspection Directorate with the central purpose of planning coherently for all school, college, teacher education and area-wide inspections in a way that brings together the best of our methods and expertise and creates systems that are as clear, consistent and comparable as possible. The directorate is also responsible for the inspection of LEAs (Section III).

Our strategy and approach for the next three to five years, informed by an appraisal of current strengths, weaknesses and challenges, are based on the following frame of reference. The central purpose of inspection remains that of reporting clearly, independently and unambiguously on quality and standards, through effective feedback and well-written reports which convey rigorous professional judgements. In order to maintain the rigour of inspection standards, inspection development will be guided by the principle of using the same frameworks, methods, criteria, standards and gradings for inspections which are led by HMI and those contracted out, except where specific characteristics justify differences. There is a vital place for HMI, working alongside registered inspectors, in assuring the quality of inspections and accuracy of judgements.

Inspection contributes much – and we intend that it should contribute more – to what education providers themselves do to improve quality and raise standards. We have started by involving the school or college more in contributing to the shape of its inspection. Inspections should also create as little disruption and as little bureaucratic demand as possible, and seek to fit into and take account of institutional planning, providers' self-evaluation and performance management processes.

Over the next three years we shall undertake a further review of the school inspection model, aiming to introduce improved arrangements during this period. We shall complete the first cycle of inspections of further education colleges and introduce a revised approach to subsequent inspections of colleges. We shall also undertake the development needed, in partnership with other inspectorates, to provide co-ordinated inspection of education and care in residential schools and other establishments, Children's Centres and extended schools.

MAINTAINED AND INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Objective 2

Ensure that every school is inspected on a regular basis, that all schools causing concern are monitored, and that national strategies and other initiatives for the improvement of schools are evaluated rigorously.

PROGRAMMES

2.1 The regular inspection of maintained schools under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996. The third cycle of school inspections began in September 2003. We shall keep the new framework, *Inspecting Schools*, and guidance under review, working with our registered inspectors who are responsible for implementing the new arrangements and the contractors for whom they work. We shall ensure that the supply of enrolled and registered inspectors is sufficient to meet the demands of the system and we shall respond to their training, assessment and professional development needs. HMI will lead a small proportion of section 10 inspections and will continue to inspect service children's schools as requested by the Ministry of Defence.

2.2 Quality assurance. Ofsted will review and develop its arrangements for assuring the quality of inspections and the competence and effectiveness of inspectors, and will work with registered inspectors and contractors to improve quality further. HMI will continue to monitor a sample of inspections and reports. Procedures for handling complaints about inspectors and inspections will be maintained.

2.3 Monitoring schools causing concern. We shall strengthen our school improvement work, maintaining our programme of HMI monitoring visits to schools in special measures and others whose performance causes concern, and extending the scope of such visits to take in more schools within and beyond these categories. In doing so we shall be building on the strong track record of HMIs' work with individual schools, which we know is valued for the external and rigorous check it provides on their progress to improvement.

2.4 The regular inspection of independent schools under section 163 of the Education Act 2002. We shall inspect independent schools that are not members of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) on a six-year cycle which began in September 2003. ISC schools will be inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate, which is subject to monitoring by HMI. Inspection reports will normally be published. Any funded nursery education, required to be inspected under section 122 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, will be inspected, wherever possible, as an integral part of independent school inspections.

2.5 The effects of national policy aimed at raising standards in schools. We identify annually, in discussion with the DfES, the major issues on which we should provide advice to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, especially those involving the evaluation of policy. We have already begun to develop an approach to inspecting the Primary National Strategy, which will continue over the period of this Plan. We shall continue to evaluate the Key Stage 3 strategy and cover teaching and assessment, and attitudes and behaviour throughout the secondary phase. Inspection will look at 14 to 19 developments

including moves towards a more flexible curriculum at Key Stage 4 and the expansion of work-related learning. We also plan to evaluate the implementation of the national agreement on workforce reform. We shall undertake more analysis of evidence on issues such as the continuing underachievement in some schools and by some groups of pupils. We propose to strengthen such exercises through the more systematic use of educational research, both in the United Kingdom and internationally. We shall inspect and report specifically on a variety of subject work in schools and intend to strengthen our evaluation of standards in subjects, to provide an independent view of standards and corroborative evidence about the assessment regime.

2.6 Strategic review of inspection. As a contribution to the government's strategy for educational improvement and intelligent accountability, we are embarking on a review of our inspection work. This will encompass the full range of school inspections, both those conducted by enrolled inspectors and those by HMI, looking at how they might develop in the medium to longer term. The review begins immediately after the introduction of the revised school inspection framework (see 2.1 above), given the long lead times for any kind of change to a system that involves so many people. The objectives will be:

- up-to-date information for parents about the quality and standards of the schools their children attend
- co-ordinated approaches to inspecting services for children and young people
- a close link between inspection and self-evaluation and use of improved performance data
- a more targeted approach to the inspection of individual institutions, with continued intensive monitoring of those causing concern
- a slimming down of inspection surveys, to focus on key priorities of government policy.

We expect to begin consultation in early 2004 with all those with an interest in the development of school inspection.

TARGETS

- arrange inspections of all maintained schools within six years of their previous inspection
- produce a set of reports and organise dissemination events related to the thematic inspections outlined in paragraph 2.5.

FURTHER EDUCATION AND RELATED PROVISION

Over the next three years, we shall complete the first cycle of college inspections and review the inspection arrangements needed for subsequent programmes. Government policy for the 14 to 19 phase of education and issues arising from *Success for All, 21st Century Skills – Realising Our Potential* and the enquiry into post-16 qualifications will mean further change and development in the course of this Plan. We shall continue to advise on the effects of those changes on the basis of inspection evidence from schools and colleges.

Objective 3

Ensure that every college is inspected on a regular basis, that a broad range of local provision for the 14 to 19 age group is assessed, and that national strategies for improving the education of this age group are evaluated rigorously.

PROGRAMMES

3.1 The first cycle of college inspections. This will be completed by summer 2005, in partnership with the Adult Learning Inspectorate. We intend to develop an approach to the regular inspection of colleges which enables the second cycle from September 2005 to take account in a more differentiated way of performance evidence, including evidence from the first cycle.

3.2 Evaluate access to post-compulsory education and the effects of policy initiatives. We shall complete the first cycle of **Connexions** inspections by September 2006 (see also paragraph 5.2). There will be a continuing programme of 14 to 19 **area-wide inspections** as well as **thematic inspections**.

3.3 From January 2004, we shall replace the current pattern of **youth service inspections** with a four-year cycle, to be co-ordinated with LEA inspections. These arrangements may be subject to further change in the light of further work on children's services inspections.

TARGETS

- complete the current programme of college inspections by summer 2005, and commence a new cycle after that
- complete a new cycle of youth service inspections by December 2007
- complete an area-wide inspection in each of the 47 Local Learning and Skills Council areas by September 2006.

TEACHER TRAINING

Working in co-operation with the Teacher Training Agency and the DfES, we shall evaluate the initial training and professional development of those engaged in teaching and related roles, taking account of workforce reform and the changing needs of schools and the education system.

Objective 4

Inspect the provision for the initial training of teachers to work in schools and further education, and the training provided in support of new policy initiatives.

PROGRAMMES

4.1 Initial teacher training (ITT) inspections. ITT inspection will be two years into a six-year programme by summer 2004. The inspection model must take account of the needs of the Teacher Training Agency, who are required to consider Ofsted evidence in the allocation of funding to ITT providers. We shall pursue, in discussion with the agency and the DfES, the scope for a less intensive model in the short to medium term.

4.2 Graduate Teacher Programme. We are in the first year of a three-year programme of accreditation inspections of all designated recommending bodies for the Graduate Teacher Programme to be completed by the end of 2006.

4.3 Further education (FE) teacher training. Our initial survey of FE teacher training was completed in summer 2003 and we plan to start a full three-year inspection programme in September 2004.

4.4 Evaluation of policy initiatives. This is likely to include inspection of the training of school leaders and support staff, including the wider role of teaching assistants. We intend to plan more effective exercises by better co-ordination of the inspection of training with evidence of the impact of such training in schools.

TARGETS

- complete the first round of inspections of all ITT providers in the current six-year inspection programme (2002 to 2008) by July 2005
- complete accreditation inspections of all designated recommending bodies by July 2006
- complete the inspection of all higher education providers of further education teacher training by July 2007.

Section III: local education authorities, children's services and area-wide provision

Subject to developments in relation to the inspection of children's services, our inspection of LEAs will continue to focus strongly on the effectiveness of their support for educational improvement. Inspections will increasingly be tailored to the local authority through a differentiated approach, working in partnership with the Audit Commission and other inspectorates. As we prepare for our proposed new role in leading co-ordinated inspections of children's services (subject to consultation and legislation in the light of the recent Green Paper, *Every child matters*) it is likely that Ofsted's LEA work will be aligned with those inspections.

Objective 5(a)

Inspect LEAs to a new inspection model from January 2004, taking account of developments in comprehensive performance assessment (CPA).

Objective 5(b)

Establish, with other inspectorates, an integrated inspection framework and methodology for the inspection of children's services in local authority areas.

PROGRAMMES

5.1 LEA inspections. From January 2004, these will move to a highly differentiated model, designed to fit with CPA, with light touch for the best LEAs and fuller inspections for weaker LEAs. We shall, however, need to review this approach as we develop the framework for inspection of children's services.

5.2 Children's services and other joint inspections. These will include local authority early years, education and social care services as well as some health services and, potentially, the work of Connexions and Youth Offending Teams. We will consult widely on changes to inspection arrangements, in collaboration with our partner inspectorates. In this context we intend to develop further our existing work with other inspectorates on **joint and co-ordinated inspections** which will include the inspection of education in prisons and the secure estate.

5.3 Inspections of education provision in areas. As we work through the implications of the new children's services work for a number of our existing activities, we shall look at the possibility of inspections that undertake a synoptic approach to educational provision, looking at the quality of access, continuity, coherence and consistency of this provision across the full age range from 0 to 19 in a given area.

TARGETS

- develop arrangements, with other inspectorates, for the integrated inspection of children's services to the government's timetable
- complete the inspection of 27 LEAs in 2004 to 2005, and review the programme for future years.

Section IV: improvement through inspection

Ofsted is committed to the continuing improvement and refinement of its inspection approaches, signalled in other places in this Plan. Equally, we intend to incorporate dissemination strategies into the planning of every inspection exercise in order to maximise the effect of inspection findings upon the improvement of education and care provision. This approach will draw on the resources and expertise of all directorates within Ofsted.

Objective 6

Ensure that Ofsted's data and inspection findings are disseminated and used to make the fullest possible contribution to the inspection process, the improvement of provision and educational debate.

PROGRAMMES

6.1 School performance indicators. We shall work with the DfES and other organisations to ensure that best use is made of pupil-level data, inspection grades and other indicators to inform schools, LEAs and inspectors. This will lead to the development of an interactive PANDA report. We shall also undertake or commission research that uses inspection data to illuminate educational issues and trends.

6.2 Improvement through inspection. We shall disseminate widely the results of our analysis of evidence to inform the education service nationally and locally and promote debate. This will be done principally through HMCI's annual report to Parliament, and also through a range of other publications resulting from specific inspection activities. We are embarking on a significant enquiry into improvement through inspection and expect to report the findings in 2004. We shall publish a wide range of reports resulting from our survey inspections, in which we probe specific issues emerging from inspection evidence, draw together evidence on aspects of education or evaluate policy initiatives. This Plan indicates within different inspection programmes how we see this work developing in the next few years. We shall also develop other strategies to inform the education service of our findings, for example by planning

dissemination strategies into the design of exercises and using conferences and seminars to provide opportunities for discussion. HMI already act as external assessors to the educational work of various other bodies.

TARGETS

- publish HMCI's annual report for the years 2003/04, 2004/05 and 2005/06
- publish in 2004 a report on the impact, use and influence of Ofsted's work.

Section V: organisational development

We have conducted in the past year both an Ofsted-wide staff survey and a review of the skills of HMI and additional inspectors and the way we use these skills. We have also completed the transition to a completely home-based field force and undertaken a review of the corporate services provided by our Strategy and Resources Directorate. We are committed to building on these developments to ensure that Ofsted operates efficiently and economically, and that our staff have the resources and support they need to do their jobs effectively.

Objective 7

Implement an organisational development plan aimed at improving Ofsted's working practices through projects in four key areas:

- **communication**
- **home-based working**
- **personal and professional development**
- **improving the quality of corporate services.**

PROGRAMMES

7.1 Development of a communication strategy. Ofsted has a workforce of over 2,700 people and also relies on a large group of inspectors trained by Ofsted. We need to make sure that communications between staff and others who contribute to our work in this organisation are as rapid and effective as possible; it is important that all our staff are able to keep in touch with new national policies and developments across the organisation. This means making the best possible use of electronic media such as the Ofsted intranet, as well as other more traditional forms of communication, such as staff bulletins and workshops. It also entails a clear commitment to applying best practice in strengthening the way we use face-to-face communication within Ofsted.

7.2 Home-based working. The majority of Ofsted's staff are home based. The home-based working project is overseeing developments designed to enable home-based staff to work safely, effectively and efficiently. Home-based working eliminates the inconvenience to staff of having to travel regularly to an office for administrative parts of the job; it allows us to develop increasingly flexible ways of working, both for the individual and for the organisation; and it allows us to invest in supporting Ofsted's core work rather than in expensive estate. We are looking at practice in other organisations which support significant numbers of home-based staff: during the period of this Strategic Plan, our aim is to become a leading exemplar of an effective organisation with a largely home-based workforce.

7.3 Personal and professional development. The personal and professional development project is overseeing the introduction of a number of initiatives across Ofsted, including new arrangements for the induction of staff joining Ofsted and new programmes covering administrative skills, management and leadership training and development. In the period of this Strategic Plan we shall make more systematic use of both the generic inspection skills of HMI and of their subject and phase specialisms, in order to maintain a flexible workforce with up-to-date skills and capabilities. We shall also make better informed decisions about the balance of HMI and additional inspectors needed on each inspection programme, managing the latter as part of the overall inspection resource. We have agreed a set of requirements to be incorporated in a professional development strategy for HMI. To support this, we shall organise national conferences and regional professional development seminars for HMI, ensure that we plan for sufficient time to be allocated to professional development activities, and support and encourage HMI to represent Ofsted at national events and initiatives.

7.4 Improving the quality of corporate services. This project will ensure that corporate functions are provided in the way that best meets Ofsted's needs. Responsibility for appropriate aspects of corporate functions, including personnel and finance, will give managers more control over the resources and management processes that support the delivery of their objectives while ensuring an appropriate level of consistency across Ofsted.

TARGETS

- year-on-year improvements demonstrated in the annual staff survey, in areas such as leadership and internal communications
- introduce by 2004 arrangements to monitor performance of Ofsted's support services in key areas
- meet milestones for delivering targets on electronic government to ensure that 100% of dealings with Ofsted can be carried out by the public electronically by March 2005
- introduce (from April 2004) systems to ensure that all correspondence is dealt with within 20 working days
- reduce levels of sickness absence by 10% by March 2004 and set further targets for reductions thereafter
- respond to complaints about Ofsted's work within published target times and report information on complaints annually in Ofsted's departmental report.

Next steps

This Strategic Plan focuses on major areas of activity and important themes. We have already begun to work from the strategy set out here to produce more detailed and costed business plans for the financial year 2004-05. As part of that process, we are agreeing with the DfES a range of areas in which we will mount smaller-scale studies next year. These will cover topics from drug education in schools to the education of gifted and talented pupils. We shall report progress against the targets in this Plan in our annual departmental report and update the Plan annually.

Annex A – principles of inspection

The following principles apply to **all** inspection activities carried out by or on behalf of Ofsted. They are intended to ensure that:

- the findings of inspection contribute to **improvement**
- the process of inspection promotes **inclusion**
- inspection is carried out **openly** with those being inspected
- the findings of inspection are **valid, reliable and consistent**.

The principles

- Inspection acts in the interests of children, young people and adult learners and, where relevant, their parents to encourage high-quality provision that meets diverse needs and promotes equality.
- Inspection is evaluative and diagnostic, assessing quality and compliance and providing a clear basis for improvement.
- The purpose of inspection and the procedures to be used are communicated clearly to those involved.
- Inspection invites and takes account of any self-evaluation by those inspected.
- Inspection will, as far as possible, minimise disturbance to the work of the institution concerned.
- Inspection informs those responsible for taking decisions about provision.
- Inspection is carried out by those who have sufficient and relevant professional expertise and training.
- Evidence is recorded and is of sufficient range and quality to secure and justify judgements.
- Judgements are based on systematic evaluation requirements and criteria, are reached corporately where more than one inspector is involved and reflect a common understanding in Ofsted about quality.
- Effectiveness is central to judging the quality of provision and processes.
- Inspection includes clear and helpful oral feedback and leads to written reporting that evaluates performance and quality and identifies strengths and areas for improvement.
- The work of all inspectors reflects Ofsted's stated Values and Code of Conduct.
- Quality assurance is built into all inspection activities to ensure that these principles are met and inspection is improved.

Annex B – senior management structure (from October 2003)

	HMCI David Bell	
Early Years Directorate Maurice Smith	Directorate of Inspection David Taylor	Strategy and Resources Directorate Robert Green
Eastern Region David Gane	Subjects and Quality Assurance Miriam Rosen	Contract Management Ceridwen Clarke
East Midlands Region Toni Smith	LEA Sheila Brown	Corporate Management Roger Knight
Early Years HQ Dorian Bradley	Post Compulsory Education David Singleton	Strategic Communications Gemma Malley
London Region Clive Bramley	Primary and Independent Education Roger Shippam	Finance Peter Jolly
Yorkshire & North East Region Nancy Palmer	Secondary Education Michael Raleigh	Information Systems Peter Duffy
North West Region Bryan Roberts	School Improvement Andy Reid (from 1 Nov)	Human Resources and Corporate Development Andrew White
South East Region Marion Witton	Teacher Education Cliff Gould	Research, Analysis and International Tim Key
South West Region Elsbeth Davis		
West Midlands Region Heather Mytton-Sanneh		

