

Inspecting academies and academy predecessor schools

Guidance for section 8 inspections of sponsored academies established before 31 August 2011 and their predecessor schools

Age group: 0–19

Published: September 2011

Reference no: 110109



Corporate member of
Plain English Campaign
Committed to clearer communication

361

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/110109.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

No. 110109

© Crown copyright 2011



Contents

Introduction	4
The purpose of this guidance	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Background	4
Monitoring inspections of academy predecessor schools	6
Scheduling	6
Pre-inspection contact	6
Pre-inspection preparation	7
Focus of the inspection	7
Conducting the monitoring inspection	9
Feedback to the school	10
Writing, editing and publishing the letter	11
The evidence base	12
Pre-registration inspections of academies	12
Monitoring inspections of academies	12
Conducting the monitoring inspection	15
Pre-inspection preparation	15
Feedback to the academy	17
Writing, editing and publishing the letter	18
The evidence base	18
Section 5 inspections of academies	18

Introduction

1. This guidance is for the monitoring inspections of academies and academy predecessor schools. It does **not** apply to schools that have converted to academy status under the Academies Act 2010. Monitoring inspections are carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, but Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) may elect to treat them as section 5 inspections using her powers under section 9 of the Act. The first full inspection of an academy is carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
2. All monitoring inspections are conducted in accordance with the principles and code of conduct for inspectors set out in *The framework for school inspection*¹ and *Conducting school inspections*.²
3. This guidance **only** applies to sponsor academies that opened prior to September 2011. It does not apply to sponsor academies which came into being from September 2011³ onward or to converter academies created under the 2010 Academies Act.

Background

4. Academies are independent schools supported by sponsors from the business and voluntary sectors, and maintained by the Department for Education (DfE) using powers under the Learning and Skills Act 2000.⁴ The first academies opened in 2002. They are all-ability schools, usually located in areas of disadvantage, which have either replaced one or more existing schools or were established where there was a need for additional school places. A number of former City Technology Colleges (CTCs) and independent schools have re-opened as academies. Most academies admit pupils in the 11–16 or 11–18 age range, although some are all-age with pupils aged 3–18, and legislation now allows for primary academies, special academies and alternative provision academies. By September 2011 there are expected to be around 325 sponsor academies, including some studio schools, and University Technical Colleges (UTCs).

¹ *The framework for school inspection* (090019), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-inspection-of-maintained-schools-england-september-2009.

² *Conducting school inspections* (090097), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/conducting-school-inspections-guidance-for-inspectors-of-schools-september-2009,

³ To ensure a consistent approach to inspection of all 'academy family' schools, Ofsted and DfE have agreed a policy that new sponsor academy schools opening from September 2011 onward will be inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 in their second year of operation. There will no longer be an initial monitoring visit prior to this inspection.

⁴ The Academies Act 2010 has led to the establishment of many more academies since September 2010. The profile of these converter academies is different from most of the sponsor academies. For inspection purposes, the converter academies are not treated as new schools.

5. The original aim of the academies programme was to develop a new model of school leadership and governance with greater autonomy and more flexibility, and to deliver significant improvement in standards where there was a culture of educational under-attainment. An academy is expected to promote innovation and raise standards of attainment for its pupils and for those at other local schools. As an academy becomes successfully established, it should share its expertise and facilities with other schools and the wider community as part of its mission to help the regeneration of communities and break the cycle of under-achievement in areas of social and economic deprivation.
6. The academy sponsor sets up the Academy Trust, appoints the majority of the governors and although the number of governors is not prescribed, the expectation is that the governing body will be relatively small. Academies are set up with the backing of their local authority, which also has a seat on the academy's governing body – or two seats if the local authority is a co-sponsor of the academy. Academies are not maintained by the local authority, but they collaborate closely with it and with other schools in the area. Academies are funded at a level comparable with other local schools.
7. All academies are bound by the same school admissions code, the code of practice for special educational needs and/or disabilities, and pupil exclusion regulations as all other state-funded schools.
8. Academies have a specialism in one or more subjects. They are required to follow the National Curriculum programmes of study in English, mathematics, science, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT), but have greater flexibility than other schools. Nonetheless, an academy should offer a broad and balanced curriculum to pupils of all abilities. Other specific requirements, such as delivering religious education, are set out in its funding agreement.
9. A protocol agreed between Ofsted and the DfE outlines the role of Ofsted in inspecting academy predecessor schools⁵ and academies. The purpose of the monitoring inspections and section 5 inspections is to keep HMCI and the Secretary of State for Education informed about the progress being made by academies and predecessor schools in raising pupils' attainment, and the effectiveness and impact of any special initiatives, such as collaborative working, in helping them to do this. There are four types of inspection:
 - monitoring inspections of academy predecessor schools
 - pre-registration inspections for academies prior to their opening
 - monitoring inspections of academies
 - section 5 inspections of academies.

⁵ The term 'predecessor school' refers to the school that has been replaced by the sponsor academy. The sponsor academy is a new school and upon its opening the predecessor school closes.

Monitoring inspections of academy predecessor schools

Scheduling

10. Monitoring inspections are usually undertaken by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).
11. Monitoring inspections take place during the academy's implementation phase, but will not normally include schools that are about to have, or have just had, a section 5 inspection or any other section 8 monitoring inspection. Monitoring inspections will not usually be scheduled in the final few weeks prior to the school's closure.
12. Academy predecessor schools that are already in Ofsted categories of concern are programmed for inspection in accordance with the usual procedures for monitoring inspections of schools requiring special measures or given a notice to improve. Predecessor schools in Ofsted categories of concern will be monitored until they close. Predecessor schools formerly subject to special measures or a notice to improve will not normally be visited until a year after the removal of the designation. However, once they have become an academy, predecessor schools do not retain their previous category of concern designation.

Pre-inspection contact

13. The inspection service provider will contact the school, giving up to two working days' notice of the monitoring inspection, and will then send email confirmation. The pre-inspection email lists the documents that the school should make available during the inspection.
14. The lead inspector then telephones the headteacher to confirm the arrangements for the inspection. Schools are not required to provide copies of any information in advance of the inspection. However, during this pre-inspection telephone call, the lead inspector should explain that s/he might find it useful to have copies of any existing documents (such as those listed in the pre-inspection letter) that could be provided in advance. The lead inspector should also make these available, as appropriate, to any team members. Inspectors should not expect an evaluation specifically prepared for their use or ask schools to update their self-evaluation in readiness for monitoring inspections.

Pre-inspection preparation

15. Inspectors should consider **all** the relevant guidance before planning their inspection. This includes *The evaluation schedule for schools*,⁶ *Conducting school inspections* and *The framework for school inspection*.
16. A pre-inspection briefing is not required for a monitoring inspection, but the lead inspector should plan the visit and make the outline plan available to any team inspector(s). Inspectors are not required to provide the headteacher with a written copy of the inspection plan, though they may do so at their discretion. However, the focus of the inspection should always be made clear to the headteacher during the pre-inspection telephone call, so that s/he understands the purpose of the inspection and the judgements that will be made. The lead inspector should plan the observation schedule or allocate specific areas for any team inspectors to observe and inspect. Inspectors may, at their discretion, ask the school to suggest particular developments or aspects of their provision that would be useful for them to observe and evaluate.

Focus of the inspection

17. During the monitoring inspection, inspectors judge:
 - the progress with preparations for the school's transition to become an academy
 - whether the school has made outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate progress towards raising standards
 - the quality and impact of **external support** for the school
 - whether to carry out a **further** monitoring inspection, taking into account the school's capacity to improve and the scheduled date for opening as an academy
 - what further action the school should consider before it closes to become an academy – clear priorities should be set for the school, derived from the inspection findings.
18. The focus of monitoring inspections is on selected aspects of *The framework for school inspection*. Not all aspects will be covered in detail. Inspectors will use their judgement in the light of the particular circumstances of the school in deciding where to place the emphasis and how much of the evaluation schedule to report on. Inspectors should take account of the following.
 - **Contextual matters** such as staffing and plans for school closure.
 - **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils:**

⁶ www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/evaluation-schedule-of-judgements-for-schools-inspected-under-section-five-of-education-act-2005-sep

- **pupils' attainment and the quality of their learning and progress:** taking into account pupils' progress based on first-hand evidence and school data, including for different groups of pupils and, where appropriate, recent test and examination results
 - **other relevant pupil outcomes**, with particular emphasis on attitudes, behaviour, attendance and exclusions, and where appropriate, the Every Child Matters outcomes.
- **The effectiveness of the provision:** the quality of teaching and the factors that affect learning, the use of assessment to support learning, taking into particular account inclusion and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the curriculum, and the effectiveness of care, guidance and support for pupils.
 - **The effectiveness of leadership and management:**
 - the effectiveness and impact of the school's actions to raise the pupils' standards of attainment, and the role of senior and middle leaders in determining and implementing these actions, and in monitoring and analysing their impact
 - the quality of the school's self-evaluation and its capacity for sustained improvement
 - the progress with preparations for the school's transition to an academy, including: strategic planning for implementation; the establishment of a shadow governing body; the development of policies and procedures; and progress with any building development, staff recruitment, pupil admissions and curriculum specialism.
 - **The impact of external support**, including from the local authority, from consultants and other members of any collaborative group in helping the school to raise the pupils' attainment.
 - **Safeguarding arrangements:** inspectors **must** always check the single central register and may need to review other procedures if they have any concerns.
19. In making a judgement on progress with preparations for the school's transition to an academy, it is useful for the lead inspector to speak directly with a representative of the academy sponsors, or the Principal designate and/or the academy's attached adviser from the DfE. This should be arranged through the headteacher during the initial telephone conversation. However, it is important to emphasise that the monitoring inspection is of the predecessor school, not the (unopened) academy, and that judgements about the progress with the transition arrangements should be carefully checked before any judgements are made about their suitability and impact on the school. Where transitional arrangements are problematic or contentious and are having a negative impact on the school, the issues must be explored with both the school and representatives of the academy, and/or the DfE.

20. In considering the impact of local authority support, inspectors may judge it appropriate to request that a representative from the local authority comes to the school for a discussion. The evaluation of the work of the local authority should take into account the additional support provided for the school. Inspectors should seek to identify the **specific** impact this support is having on the pupils' attainment.
21. If inspectors have concerns, these must be identified clearly and may lead to one or more further monitoring inspections before the school closes.
22. During any further monitoring inspection, inspectors make and report on additional judgements about:
 - the school's progress in dealing with the serious or very serious concerns identified at the previous inspection
 and:
 - whether or not the school requires special measures or a notice to improve. Inspectors should follow the relevant guidance in *Conducting school inspections*.
23. If inspectors judge that the school requires special measures or a notice to improve, the monitoring inspection will be deemed a section 5 inspection. In these circumstances, all the judgements required by the evaluation schedule must be made and a full section 5 inspection report be written.

Conducting the monitoring inspection

24. The initial meeting with the headteacher/senior leadership team should:
 - cover pertinent contextual issues about the school
 - reiterate the focus of the inspection, as stated in the pre-inspection telephone call (see paragraph 14)
 - establish the key inspection activities, including observations, interviews and scrutiny of documents that the team will need to undertake
 - ascertain whether there are particular reasons why any teachers should not be observed, for example if they are subject to informal or formal capability procedures where the use of observations by Ofsted may compromise those procedures
 - ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from lesson observations, whether joint or otherwise, should not be used as evidence in competency/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management.
25. At the end of the first day of the inspection, the team should consider:
 - the school's progress on the areas requiring evaluation

- any adjustments required to the focus of the second day of the inspection.

Before the final feedback, inspectors will consider:

- what the priorities are for the school, given its context
- whether a further monitoring visit is needed.

26. **Feedback** to individual teachers should be offered in accordance with Ofsted guidance. Inspectors should respond flexibly to the school's circumstances. Feedback on the quality of teaching and learning is an integral and essential part of the inspection. Feedback is valued by schools and is a valuable means of furthering improvement. For any observation of 20 minutes or more, inspectors should offer feedback to the teacher concerned. If, as the inspection proceeds, it becomes clear that inspectors are seeing a significant proportion of inadequate teaching, the lead inspector should discuss with the headteacher the most appropriate way of handling feedback to individual teachers.
27. Inspectors should speak to pupils during lessons and over break and lunchtimes and, where appropriate, meet with pupils to discuss issues relating to the school. There is no requirement for schools to inform parents about monitoring inspections; however, headteachers should be encouraged to let parents know about these inspections and their outcomes. It is the duty of the governing body to keep parents informed about the progress the school is making. Monitoring letters and reports will be published on the Ofsted website.

Feedback to the school

28. The lead inspector should maintain an ongoing dialogue with the headteacher and appropriate senior leaders. Emerging issues should be discussed so that the final feedback, especially when challenging, should not come as a surprise. Feedback is not usually provided for middle leaders, such as heads of year and subject leaders, though interviews should involve dialogue that will often include informal feedback.
29. The final feedback to the school is attended by: the headteacher; the chair of the governing body (or her/his equivalent); senior leaders (as appropriate); a representative of the sponsor (as appropriate and only if agreed with the school); and a representative from the local authority, the DfE and other external partners.
30. The lead inspector should make clear that the text of the letter or report may differ slightly from the oral feedback, but that the substance of the judgements will not change. It is helpful to summarise the evidence base before covering the areas and judgements outlined in paragraphs 17 and 18, including the key areas for further improvement.
31. If the monitoring visit has raised very serious concerns and the lead inspector recommends a further monitoring inspection because s/he believes the school

may require special measures, this must be discussed with the Ofsted Schools Causing Concern (SCC) helpdesk before this is reported at the feedback meeting. The timing of any further inspection should not be indicated to the school.

32. Where a further inspection takes place and inspectors reach a judgement that either special measures or a notice to improve is required, the section 8 inspection will be deemed a section 5 inspection. In these circumstances, a full report will be written in accordance with *Conducting school inspections*.
33. The outcomes of monitoring inspections are published on the Ofsted website as set in paragraphs 35 to 43.

Writing, editing and publishing the letter

34. The lead inspector is responsible for the quality of the inspection drawing on, where appropriate, Ofsted's quality assurance and support procedures. These may include advice from the SCC quality assurance national team helpline at Ofsted's National Business Unit (NBU), the Managing Inspectors or Principal Officer for SSC.
35. HMI in the SCC quality assurance team will edit a sample of monitoring letters, and quality assure the editing of monitoring letters by inspection service providers.
36. Letters will be sent to the inspection service provider for final editing and distribution to schools no later than eight working days after the end of the inspection.
37. The inspection service provider will edit and then distribute letters to schools within ten working days of the end of the inspection. The letter is addressed to the headteacher.
38. Initially the letter will be sent only to the school for it to check and report any factual inaccuracies to the inspection service provider within 24 hours of the receipt of the letter. Thereafter, the letters will also be copied by the inspection service provider to appropriate recipients; these include the Academies Group at the DfE, the chair of the governing body/interim executive board/proprietor, the local authority, the Young People's Learning Agency and, where appropriate, the diocese and the lead inspector.
39. The inspection service provider will pass the letter to Ofsted for uploading onto the Ofsted website where it should be published within 15 days of the end of the inspection.

The evidence base

40. The evidence base must be sent to the inspection service provider within five working days of the end of the inspection. The inspection service provider will retain and/or destroy evidence in accordance with Ofsted policy.

Pre-registration inspections of academies

41. As independent schools, academies must be entered on the Independent School's Register before they can begin admitting pupils. This is a legal requirement. Pre-registration inspections are currently undertaken by additional inspectors deployed by the inspection service providers for this purpose. The pre-registration inspection of academies occurs under section 160(4) of the Education Act 2002, which stipulates that:

‘The Chief Inspector shall then inspect the school and report to the registration authority on the extent to which the independent school standards are met, and are likely to continue to be met, in relation to the school.’⁷

42. The pre-registration inspection is normally scheduled to take place in the two months prior to the academy opening.

Monitoring inspections of academies

43. Monitoring inspections of academies are normally scheduled within two years of the academy opening and prior to their first section 5 inspection. The inspections are carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with the principles and code of conduct for inspectors set out in The framework for school inspection and *Conducting school inspections*. Monitoring inspections last for two days and are normally led by an HMI with another HMI as a team member. If the inspection is particularly complex, for example with all-age provision or multiple sites, then a larger team including additional inspectors may be deployed. One of the inspection team, usually the lead inspector, will lead the academy's first full section 5 inspection.
44. On the first monitoring inspection, inspectors judge:
 - whether the academy has made outstanding, good, satisfactory or inadequate progress towards raising standards and whether the inspection raises concerns about the academy's progress (or some other aspect of provision such as safeguarding procedures) and its capacity to address weaknesses

⁷ The Education Act 2002, part 10, chapter 1, section 160(4);
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g164.

- whether to recommend a further inspection, taking into account the academy's capacity to improve
- what further action the academy should consider. Clear recommendations for improvement should be set for the academy, derived from the inspection findings. These should help the academy focus on what needs doing next to improve the quality of education and outcomes for pupils. Additional recommendations should be identified only where they are crucial to the academy's further improvement.

45. The focus of the monitoring inspections is on selected aspects of *The framework for school inspection*. Not all aspects will be covered in detail. Inspectors will use their judgement in the light of the particular circumstances of the academy in deciding where to place the emphasis and how much of the evaluation schedule to report on. On the first monitoring inspection of the academy, inspectors should check whether **procedures for safeguarding learners**⁸ meet current government requirements. Inspectors should take account of the following.

- **Contextual matters:** on the first monitoring inspection, inspectors should comment on significant factors that might include staffing and recruitment issues, including the proportion of staff appointed from the predecessor school, progress on any building programme, the academy specialism(s), and changes in pupil intake.
- **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils:**
 - pupils' attainment and the quality of their learning and progress, taking into account pupils' progress based on first-hand evidence and school data, including for different groups of pupils and, where appropriate, recent test and examination results
 - other relevant pupil outcomes with particular emphasis on attitudes, behaviour, attendance and exclusions, and where appropriate, the Every Child Matters outcomes.

⁸ Academies must meet all current government requirements with regard to safeguarding, in the same way as maintained schools. A few additional points need clarification in terms of how the policy applies to academies as follows:

- a) **Governors and CRB checks:** an academy's articles of association and the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 set out which academy governors require a CRB check; Chairs of Governors are always required to have one. All governors who have regular contact with children must have a CRB check.
- b) **Staff and CRB checks:** all staff in academies are required to have had a CRB check as stated in the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003/amendment 2004.
- c) **Who may teach in an academy?** An academy's funding agreement sets out who may teach in the academy and should be referred to for information. The model academy funding agreement requires persons who teach in an academy to be qualified on the same basis as teachers at maintained schools.

- **The effectiveness of the provision:** the quality of teaching and the factors that affect learning, the use of assessment to support learning, taking into particular account inclusion and provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the curriculum, and the effectiveness of care, guidance and support for pupils.
 - **The effectiveness of leadership and management** taking into account:
 - the implementation of plans for the development of the academy
 - the effectiveness and impact of the academy's actions to raise the pupils' standards of attainment, both within the academy and more widely in the local area, and the role of senior and middle leaders in determining and implementing these actions and in monitoring and analysing their impact
 - the quality of the academy's self-evaluation and its capacity for sustained improvement.
 - **The impact of external support**, including from key partners, the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust and other members of a federation or collaborative group in helping the academy to raise the pupils' attainment.
 - **Safeguarding arrangements:** inspectors **must** always check the single central register and may need to review other procedures if they have any concerns.
46. If inspectors have concerns about any aspect of the academy's performance, these will be identified clearly. If these concerns are serious and the academy has not demonstrated the capacity to address the issues, the lead inspector may recommend a further monitoring inspection before the academy has its first section 5 inspection. In exceptional circumstances, where there are very serious concerns related to pupils' safety and well-being such as the failure to meet current requirements for safeguarding or a breakdown of control in the academy, a further monitoring inspection is likely to take place at the earliest opportunity.
47. During any further monitoring inspection, inspectors make and report on **additional judgements** about:
- the academy's progress in dealing with the serious or very serious concerns identified during the previous monitoring inspection
- and:
- whether or not the academy requires special measures or a notice to improve.
48. When inspectors judge that an academy requires special measures or a notice to improve, the monitoring inspection will be deemed to be a section 5

inspection. In these circumstances, all the judgements required by the evaluation schedule must be made and a full report written.

Conducting the monitoring inspection

49. The inspection service provider will inform the academy of the inspection, giving up to two working days' notice. Once the academy has been notified of the inspection, the inspection service provider will send formal confirmation to the school by email. The email will also include contact details for the inspection service provider, an outline of the arrangements for publication of the monitoring letter after the inspection and a list of requested documentation. The lead inspector will make contact with the Principal as soon as possible after notification (and always within 24 hours of notification).
50. Academies are not required to provide copies of any information in advance of the inspection. However, during the pre-inspection telephone call, the lead inspector should explain that s/he might find it useful to have copies of any existing documents (such as those listed in the pre-inspection letter) that could be provided in advance. The lead inspectors should also make these available, as appropriate, to any team members. Inspectors should not expect an evaluation specifically prepared for their use or ask schools to update their self-evaluation in readiness for monitoring inspections.

Pre-inspection preparation

51. A pre-inspection briefing is not required for a monitoring inspection. The lead inspector should plan the inspection and distribute the outline plan to the team. The plan should include important details about the academy and the focus of the inspection. Inspectors are not required to provide the Principal with a written copy of the inspection plan, though they may do so at their discretion. However, the focus of the inspection should always be made clear to the Principal during the pre-inspection telephone call, so that s/he understands the purpose of the inspection and the judgements that will be made. The lead inspector should plan the observation schedule or allocate specific areas for any team inspectors to observe and inspect.
52. The first monitoring inspection should be informed by up to date self-evaluation carried out by the school (where this is available), the most recent RAISEonline data, the pre-inspection telephone conversation with the Principal, and any additional documentation. If available, the academy's development plan (within a broader collaborative plan where appropriate) should be used to inform an initial view of its main priorities and strategies for raising standards. Documents should not be requested when they are already available to Ofsted and/or the inspection service provider.
53. A monitoring inspection should be planned to evaluate one or more of the most important strategies that the academy is taking to raise standards, both in the short term to raise attainment at Key Stage 4, and in the longer term at other

key stages (as appropriate). For each strategy the lead inspector should plan to work with the academy to:

- identify the main action(s) put in place
 - identify the role, if any, of external support, such as a collaborative group
 - evaluate and report on the impact of the actions taken to improve pupils' learning and attainment.
54. Inspectors may, at their discretion, ask the academy to suggest particular developments or aspects of provision that would be useful for them to observe and evaluate.
55. The **initial meeting** with the Principal should:
- cover pertinent contextual issues about the academy
 - reiterate the focus of the inspection
 - establish the key inspection activities, including observations, interviews and scrutiny of documents that the team will need to undertake.
56. The **team meeting** at the end of the first day of the inspection should establish preliminary views on:
- the academy's progress on the areas being evaluated
 - any adjustments required to the focus of the second day of the inspection.
57. **Before the final feedback**, inspectors will consider:
- what the priorities are for the academy, given its context, before it has a section 5 inspection
 - whether a further monitoring inspection is needed.
58. **Feedback** to individual teachers should be offered in accordance with Ofsted guidance. Inspectors should respond flexibly to the academy's circumstances. Feedback on the quality of teaching and learning is an integral and essential part of the inspection. Feedback is valued by schools and is a valuable means of furthering improvement. For any observation of 20 minutes or more, inspectors should offer feedback to the teacher concerned. If, as the inspection proceeds, it becomes clear that inspectors are seeing a significant proportion of inadequate teaching, the lead inspector should discuss with the Principal the most appropriate way of handling feedback to individual teachers.
59. The lead inspector should ensure that the Principal is aware that Ofsted's evidence from lesson observations, whether joint or otherwise, should not be used as evidence in competency/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management.

60. Inspectors should speak to pupils during lessons and over break and lunchtimes and, where appropriate, meet with pupils to discuss issues relating to the academy. There is no requirement for academies to inform parents about monitoring inspections. However, Principals should be encouraged to let parents know about these visits and their outcomes. It is the duty of the governing body (or equivalent) to keep parents informed about the progress the academy is making. Monitoring letters and reports will be published on the Ofsted website. Meetings with pupils and surveys of parents' views are carried out as appropriate. Parents' comments, by letter or via the Ofsted website, will be made available to inspectors.

Feedback to the academy

61. The lead inspector should maintain an ongoing dialogue with the Principal and appropriate senior leaders. Emerging issues should be discussed so that the final feedback, especially when challenging, should not come as a surprise. Feedback is not provided for middle leaders, such as heads of year and subject leaders, though interviews should involve dialogue that will often include informal feedback.
62. The whole inspection team should normally attend and contribute to the final feedback to the academy. The feedback is attended by the Principal, the chair of the governing body (or her/his equivalent), senior leaders (as appropriate), a representative of the sponsor and the DfE (Attached Adviser), and other external partners.
63. The lead inspector should make clear that the text of the letter or report may differ slightly from the oral feedback, but that the substance of the judgements will not change. It is helpful to summarise the evidence base before covering the areas and judgements specified in the template, including the key areas for further improvement.
64. If the monitoring visit raises **serious or very serious concerns** and the inspector recommends a further monitoring inspection (because s/he believes the academy has not demonstrated the capacity to improve and may require special measures), this must be discussed with the Ofsted SCC helpdesk before this is reported at the feedback meeting. The timing of any further inspection should not be indicated to the academy.
65. Any serious or very serious concerns should be made clear to the academy in the oral feedback and the post-inspection letter. In these circumstances, the lead inspector should **not** commit Ofsted to a specific course of action, but should make it clear that it may be necessary for another inspection team to visit the school to gather a more extensive evidence base. When a further monitoring inspection is recommended, the lead inspector must inform Ofsted within 24 hours.

66. The outcomes of monitoring inspections are reported in a letter for which a template is provided. The letter is published on the Ofsted website.
67. Any further monitoring inspection should focus on the issues raised in the earlier monitoring inspection. Where inspectors reach a judgement on any monitoring inspection that either special measures or a notice to improve is required, the section 8 inspection will be deemed a section 5 inspection. In these circumstances, all the judgements required by the evaluation schedule must be made and a full report written.

Writing, editing and publishing the letter

68. The process for writing, editing and publishing letters following monitoring inspections of academies is the same as for monitoring inspections of predecessor schools outlined in paragraphs 33 to 39.

The evidence base

69. The evidence base must be sent to the inspection service provider within five working days of the end of the inspection. Inspection service providers will retain and/or destroy evidence in accordance with Ofsted policy. The lead inspector should retain a copy of the evidence from the first monitoring inspection until the next monitoring inspection or first section 5 inspection.

Section 5 inspections of academies

70. Academies normally have their first full inspection within three years of their opening. These inspections are carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. Section 5 inspections of academies cover all aspects of *The evaluation schedule for schools* and are conducted in accordance with *The framework for school inspection* and *Conducting school inspections*.