



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Area inspection of 14–19 provision

Guidance on the characteristics relating to the grades allocated, following 14–19 area inspections

HMI 1780

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Introduction

The *Area Inspection Framework*¹, HMI 1779 (Ofsted, 2003) provides the basis for evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of the education and training provision in an area to meet the needs of 14 to 19-year-old learners. To summarise the judgments made by inspectors, grades will be attributed to each of the six aspects identified in the framework and referred to in this document. These grades will be published together with a summative grade for the provision as a whole, which represents the assessment against the overall criterion: how effective and efficient is the provision of education and training across the area in meeting the needs of learners, employers and the community?

This document provides guidance on the characteristics that inspectors would expect to be associated with grades summarising the judgements for each of the aspects of provision. These characteristics do not specify additional criteria but should be considered in relation to the framework. The characteristics provide an indication of the features most likely to be associated with provision which is described as good or better, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory. Not all the characteristics will be required to be present in provision that is allocated a particular grade. Inspectors will make a judgement about the most appropriate grade based on the framework and the best fit using this guidance.

The guidance is published to provide assistance to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), local education authorities (LEAs) and their partners in preparing for and responding to inspection. The guidance will be reviewed and updated annually.

Strategy for education and training (14 to 19) in the area

Key question 1: How effective are the strategies for education (14 to 19) in raising achievement and increasing participation in education and training?

Good or better (grades 1–2)	Satisfactory (grade 3)	Unsatisfactory (grades 4–5)
The strategies for raising standards and improving education and training opportunities for 14–19 year olds across the area are understood and actively supported by education and training providers, parents and employers.	The strategies for raising standards and improving education and training opportunities for 14–19 year olds across the area have been shared and are understood by education and training providers, parents and employers.	The strategies for raising standards and improving education and training opportunities for 14–19 year olds across the area are not agreed or understood by education and training providers, parents, and employers.

¹ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubs.summary&id=3403> (to follow this link, press Ctrl and click)

<p>The strategic and operational plans of key partners and providers are consistent with the overall strategy for the area, include explicit aims relating to equality of opportunity for all groups of learners, and contribute to the achievement of demanding targets for participation, retention, attainment and progression of learners at all levels.</p>	<p>The strategic and operational plans of key partners and providers address equality of opportunity issues and are contributing to improvement in participation, retention, attainment and progression of most learners.</p>	<p>The strategic and operational plans of key partners and providers are contributing little to improvement in participation, retention, attainment and progression of significant groups of learners.</p>
<p>There are effective structures and partnerships which implement the strategies and lead to widening opportunities for all groups of 14–19 year old learners, and lead to high-quality provision and high standards of achievement across the area.</p>	<p>There are structures and partnerships which support strategies for widening opportunities for 14–19 year old learners and for raising standards of achievement across the area.</p>	<p>There are insufficient structures and partnerships to support strategies for widening opportunities for 14–19 year old learners, and for raising standards of achievement across the area. Strategies do not sufficiently lead to improvements in quality of provision.</p>

Achievement

Key question 2: How well do learners achieve?

Good or better (grades 1–2)	Satisfactory (grade 3)	Unsatisfactory (grades 4–5)
<p>The standards achieved by learners are high and prepare them well for further study, training or employment by ages 16 and 19.</p>	<p>The standards achieved by learners are at national averages and in line with statistical neighbours, and prepare them appropriately for further study, training or employment by ages 16 and 19.</p>	<p>The standards achieved by learners are low and are not preparing them well for further study, training or employment by ages 16 and 19.</p>
<p>Many learners make good progress and are successful in achieving their learning goals. Value-added scores are high.</p>	<p>Most learners make at least the progress expected of them, and are successful in achieving their learning goals. Value-added scores are improving.</p>	<p>Many learners make insufficient progress. They do not achieve their learning goals. Value-added scores are low.</p>
<p>Progression rates to higher education, further education and training are high. There are few young people not in employment, education or training.</p>	<p>Progression rates to higher education, further education and training have reached national averages and are satisfactory or improving.</p>	<p>Progression rates, to higher education, further education and training are below national averages and are not improving</p>

<p>The attainment of nearly all young people meets their needs and the needs of employers. They achieve the skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT (information and communication technology) that enable them to progress and participate effectively in employment.</p>	<p>The attainment of most young people meets their needs and the needs of employers. Learners' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are adequately developed and improving.</p>	<p>The attainment of many young people is failing to meet their needs and the needs of employers. Their skill levels in literacy, numeracy and ICT are too low and do not enable them to progress.</p>
<p>Appropriate, local and national targets, for course completion and progression to further and higher education, employment and training are consistently met by nearly all schools, colleges and work-based training providers.</p>	<p>Progress is being made towards the achievement of appropriate, local and national targets for course completion and progression to further and higher education, employment and training. Most schools, colleges and work-based training providers meet these targets.</p>	<p>Appropriate local and national targets for course completion and progression to further and higher education, employment and training are not being met for significant groups of learners and/or many schools, colleges and work-based training providers.</p>

Access to and participation in education and training

Key question 3: How effective are the curricula and the configuration of provision in meeting the needs of all learners, employers and the community?

Good or better (grades 1–2)	Satisfactory (grade 3)	Unsatisfactory (grades 4–5)
<p>The local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), local education authorities (LEAs), schools, colleges and other providers and partnerships respond to the needs of learners and employers, and have ensured a wide range of general, vocational and work-based learning opportunities at suitable levels and locations which meet the needs of all groups of learners.</p>	<p>Local LSC, LEA(s), schools, colleges and other providers respond to the needs of young people by ensuring an appropriate range of general, vocational and work-based learning opportunities at suitable levels and locations.</p>	<p>There is an inadequate range of general, vocational and work-based learning opportunities at suitable levels and locations for significant groups of learners. The local LSC, LEA(s), schools, colleges and other providers and partnerships have not accurately assessed the needs of learners, employers and the community in the area.</p>
<p>Schools, colleges and other providers collaborate extensively to increase access and participation in further and higher education and training, including by vulnerable and disaffected young people.</p>	<p>Schools, colleges and other providers have begun to collaborate to increase access and participation in further and higher education and training for most groups of young people.</p>	<p>Schools, colleges and other providers are not collaborating to increase access and participation in further and higher education and training. Significant groups of young people are not participating in further education and/or training.</p>

Schools, colleges and other providers offer coherent programmes which provide clear access routes to education and training and support the continued participation and progression of all young people, including those who are vulnerable or disaffected.	Schools, colleges and other providers offer an adequate range of programmes which support continued participation and progression of most young people, including those who are vulnerable or disaffected.	The programmes of study offered in schools, colleges, and by other providers lack coherence and do not support continued participation and progression of significant groups of young people, especially those who are vulnerable or disaffected.
Challenging targets for participation in post-16 education and training, and for progression to employment and higher education are met for all groups of learners.	Appropriate targets for participation in post-16 education and training, and for progression to employment and higher education are met for most groups of learners.	Targets for participation in post-16 education and training, and for progression to employment and higher education are met for only very few groups of learners.
The curriculum meets the needs of learners and employers – for example, it effectively provides for development of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, provides for effective work-related learning, and enables all learners to explore effectively personal, social, spiritual and moral issues.	The curriculum meets the needs of most learners and includes development of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, offers appropriate opportunities for work-related learning and allows learners to explore personal, social, spiritual and moral issues.	The curriculum is failing to meet the needs of learners – for example, key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are not developed adequately to support progression for significant groups of learners. There are inadequate opportunities for work-related learning.

Quality of education and training 14 to 19

Key question 4: How effective are teaching, learning and training?

Key question 5: How do resources affect achievement and the quality of education, training, guidance and support?

Good or better (grades 1–2)	Satisfactory (grade 3)	Unsatisfactory (grades 4–5)
Teaching and training across the area effectively meet the learning needs of individual young people. All course and programme requirements are met. High levels of attendance and behaviour are successfully encouraged through high standards of teaching and training.	Teaching and training across the area meet the learning needs of most individual young people. All course and programme requirements are met. Attendance and behaviour are satisfactory and improving.	Teaching and training across the area are failing to meet the learning needs of many young people. Not all course and programme requirements are being met. Appropriate standards of attendance and behaviour are insufficiently encouraged. There are low levels attendance and behaviour.

Teaching and training promote the progress and achievement of young people. Demanding local and national targets for course completion, achievement and progression are met or exceeded.	Teaching and training promote the progress and achievement of most young people. Demanding local and national targets for course completion, achievement and progression are met for most learners.	Teaching and training is failing to promote the progress and achievement of many young people. Appropriate local and national targets for course completion, achievement and progression are not being met for many learners.
Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are effectively developed and support the progress and achievement of all learners.	Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are developed sufficiently to support the progress and achievement of most learners.	Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are insufficiently developed to support the progress and achievement of many learners.
Learners' needs are assessed, planned for and met by the full range of educational and training providers. Teaching and training promotes equality of opportunity and effectively enhances the personal development of individual learners.	Learners' needs are assessed, planned for and met by most educational and training providers across the area. Teaching and training promotes equality of opportunity and contributes to the personal development of learners.	There is insufficient assessment and planning for learners' needs by educational and training providers across the area. Equality of opportunity is inadequately addressed and promoted through teaching and training.
Teaching and training effectively support, and are successful in enabling, appropriate progress and destinations of young people in relation to their prior achievement and learning programmes.	Teaching and training support, and in most cases enable, appropriate progress and destinations of young people in relation to their prior achievement and learning programmes.	Teaching and training are failing to support appropriate progress and destinations of many young people in relation to their prior achievement and learning programmes.
Learners' education, training, guidance and support needs are met through the effective and efficient deployment and use of resources provided across the area. Equality of opportunity is promoted through the distribution of resources to support education, training, guidance and support.	The education, training, guidance and support needs of most learners are met through the satisfactory deployment and use of resources provided across the area. Equality of opportunity is promoted through the distribution of resources to support education, training, guidance and support.	The deployment and use of resources across the area hinders the promotion of equality of opportunity and does not adequately support learning for significant groups. Equality of opportunity is inadequately promoted.
Resources and accommodation across the area support and enhance the teaching, training and learning of all young people.	Resources and accommodation are adequate to support the teaching, training and learning of most young people.	Teaching, training and learning are inadequately supported by appropriate resources and accommodation for significant groups of learners.
The learning, guidance and support needs of nearly all young people are met through the support of highly trained and knowledgeable staff.	Staff are sufficiently trained and knowledgeable to meet the learning, guidance and support needs of most young people.	There are many instances of staff being insufficiently trained and knowledgeable to meet the learning, support and guidance needs of young people.

Guidance and support

Key question 6: How well are learners guided and supported?

Good or better (grades 1–2)	Satisfactory (grade 3)	Unsatisfactory (grades 4–5)
<p>Procedures for the assessment and reporting of young a person’s learning and support needs are well established and used effectively by educational and training providers.</p>	<p>Procedures for the assessment and reporting of young people’s learning and support needs are used by some providers and are being developed further for the area.</p>	<p>Procedures for the assessment and reporting of young people’s learning and support needs are not established or not used effectively by many educational and training providers .</p>
<p>All young people have access to a full range of impartial information, and receive advice and guidance which are appropriate to their needs They follow suitable courses and programmes to enable them to achieve their goals for progression to further study or employment.</p>	<p>Most young people have access to some impartial information, advice and guidance appropriate to their needs. Most follow appropriate courses and programmes to enable them to achieve their goals for progression to further study or employment.</p>	<p>Many young people do not have access to impartial information, advice and guidance appropriate to their needs, and do not follow appropriate courses and programmes to enable them to achieve their goals for progression to further study or employment.</p>
<p>There are well-established arrangements made across the area by all educational and training providers for effective assessment, referral and on-course support which meet the learning and support needs of young people, and help them to participate and achieve fully in further education, training and employment.</p>	<p>Arrangements are in place for assessment, referral and on-course support to meet most young people’s learning and support needs, and help most young people to participate and achieve fully in further education, training and employment.</p>	<p>In many educational and training providers arrangements for assessment, referral and on-course support are not in place, or help very few young people to meet their learning and support needs.</p>

<p>Arrangements for monitoring young people's progress, particularly through key points of transition, are well established in all educational and training providers. Comprehensive and accurate data on young people's destinations are analysed and used effectively by individual educational and training providers, and for the area to inform decisions regarding further education, training and employment.</p>	<p>Arrangements are in place to enable the effective monitoring of most young people's progress, particularly through key points of transition. Data on young people's destinations are analysed by some educational and training providers and are used effectively to inform decisions regarding further education, training and employment.</p>	<p>There are no arrangements in place to enable the monitoring of young people's progress, particularly through key points of transition, in many educational and training providers. Data on the destinations of young people are incomplete and not used effectively by educational and training providers to inform decisions regarding further education, training and employment.</p>
<p>All young people have access to relevant and effective support on personal issues and are fully assisted in overcoming barriers to progression to further and higher education, training.</p>	<p>Most young people have access to relevant and effective support on personal issues and are assisted in overcoming barriers to progression to further and higher education, training and employment.</p>	<p>Many young people do not have access to relevant and effective support on personal issues, and are failing to overcome barriers to progression to further and higher education, training and employment.</p>

Leadership and management

Key question 7: How effective are the leadership and management of the partners in developing and implementing the strategies for 14–19 education and training for the area?

Good or better (grades 1–2)	Satisfactory (grade 3)	Unsatisfactory (grades 4–5)
<p>The local LSC and LEA(s) communicate a clear vision for 14–19 education and training, support effective and continuing collaboration and effectively lead the development of well-defined strategies for 14–19 education and training in the area.</p>	<p>The local LSC and LEA(s) are developing a vision for 14–19 education and training, but are not yet effectively leading the development of clear and focused strategies for 14–19 education and training in the area. Arrangements are in place to encourage collaboration between statutory bodies, providers and employer, and community organisations.</p>	<p>There is a lack of clear vision and leadership by the local LSC and LEA(s) for the development of 14–19 education and training in the area. Arrangements to support collaboration between statutory bodies, providers and employer, and community organisations are under-developed.</p>
<p>The strategies for improvement are implemented effectively for the benefit of all learners by all educational and training providers.</p>	<p>The strategies for improvement are in place and beginning to benefit learners.</p>	<p>The strategies for improvement are under developed and not leading to benefits for the learners.</p>

Quality assurance at all levels is based on accurate data and the systematic monitoring and analysis of learners' achievements, learning and support needs. It contributes to the assessment of the overall effectiveness of the strategy and leads to clearly identified priorities and challenging targets for improvement.	Quality assurance contributes to the assessment of the overall effectiveness of the strategy and leads to the identification of areas for improvement.	Quality assurance is under-developed at many levels. The assessment of performance is insufficiently based on a systematic analysis of learners' achievements, and their learning and support needs.
Partners ensure resources are used efficiently and effectively to achieve the strategic priorities, and achieve high value for money.	Resources are used effectively, to support the achievement of value for money and the priorities for the area.	Partners make insufficient effort to ensure resources are used to support the achievement of value for money and the priorities for the area.
Aims and measures relating to promotion of equality, especially regarding discrimination against gender, race and disability are successfully implemented at all levels.	Aims and measures relating to equality are promoted and are being implemented at all levels.	Aims and measures relating to the promotion of equality, especially regarding discrimination against gender, race and disability are not yet in place or are not implemented for significant groups.

The overall assessment

The overall judgement of the quality of provision in an area will be a summary one based upon the evaluations for each of the above aspects. The inspection team will consider the extent to which the inspection outcomes associated with the key questions lead to an evaluation that demonstrates the provision in the area is being planned and managed effectively to support the needs of learners and meet adequately the criteria set out in the framework.

The overall judgement will not generally be a simple statement but a summary which takes into account the evaluations of the inspection team on the key questions in the evaluation schedule. This overall assessment will describe the provision as one of the following: outstanding, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory, very weak.

The characteristics most likely to be associated with unsatisfactory provision include:

- inadequate strategic plans, poorly co-ordinated and ineffectively implemented (there is likely to be poor analysis of needs, duplication of provision and lack of collaboration)
- standards achieved which are well below national norms, or inadequate plans or measures to bring about improvement where provision is unsatisfactory
- education and training for 14 to 19 year olds which is not responsive to the needs of the young people or employers, and

does not sufficiently support access and coherent progression to further and higher education, training and employment

- lack of appropriate policies and strategies to promote social inclusion (provision does not meet the needs of significant groups within the community, or significant groups are excluded from education and training)
- information, guidance and support provided to young people which does not reliably support transition to further education and training, or promote increased participation
- ineffective leadership which has little impact on improving the quality of provision or the effectiveness and efficiency with which it is managed and its quality assured
- low value for money.

An area which has significant weaknesses in relation to the framework and where the overall evaluation is less than satisfactory will be re-inspected within three years. The significance of the weaknesses and the capacity of the partners to address them through effective strategic planning will be a key determinant in the timing of re-inspection.