COUNTRY PROFILE [TEMPLATE]

In creating this template I’ve made several assumptions about what we’re trying to achieve. The first set of assumptions is that the purpose of the country profile is to (a) allow other countries to access basic information about each other’s inspectorates, (b) allow us to usefully compare inspectorates across countries, (c) allow us to learn more detail by providing links and sources for further information.

The second set of assumptions is that purpose of this template is to (a) provide some structure to the profiles, (b) encourage participating countries to focus on giving the most relevant and useful information, (c) prevent the completion of the template from becoming a long or bureaucratic task, (d) make it easy for us to update the template when our situations change.

By following this template, we should have a short profile that is uploaded directly onto the webpage rather than uploaded through a pdf. Therefore, your completed sheets should be **no longer** than 2 Word doc pages, Tahoma size 12.

1. **Basic information** – this should be as short as possible; doesn’t need to be in paragraphs or full sentences.

**Country name:** England.

**Structure of inspectorate:** Are you organised centrally or by region/state? Does inspection regulation or standards vary across regions or states? We are a non-ministerial government department. The same regulations and standards apply across the whole country. We are divided into eight regions with a central support team.

**Age of inspectorate:** How long have you been established for? What was your predecessor organisation (i.e., who did inspection before you?)

Ofsted (The Office for Standards in Education) was established in 1992.

Before that, education oversight was organised regionally by Local Education Authorities (LEAs). This began in 1902 because of the Education Act. His Majesty’s Inspectorate (HMI) reported directly to the Secretary of State for Education. HMI have been in existence in some form since 1837.

**Size:** How many inspectors do you have? How many central/policy staff do you have?

We have approximately 300 full-time inspectors who are His Majesty’s Inspectors (HMI) and 2,000 ‘Ofsted inspectors’ who work with us part-time. We have approximately 2,000 central and policy staff.

**Remits:** What form of education do you inspect? E.g., early years, schools, universities? Anything that is non-education?

We have 4 remits:

* **Early Years**: This includes childminders, nannies and any pre-school or nursery provision that is not registered as part of a school.​ We have an inspection and regulatory function here.
* **Schools (4-18):** That is schools whose funding comes from the state (maintained schools, academies, and free schools) and some of the smaller independent schools.
* **Further Education and Skills (16-18):** The further education and skills remit covers an equally broad range of providers of post-16 education, including sixth-form colleges, independent learning providers, 16-19 academies or free schools, further education colleges and higher education institutions that provide further education and/or apprenticeship training up to and including level 7 (the equivalent of a master’s degree) and prison education. ​
* **Social care:** The social care remit inspects and regulates across the breadth of children’s social care services, such as children’s homes, adoption and fostering, inspection of LA children’s services and residential provision in schools and colleges.

We carry out **cross-remit** inspections such as inspections of local authority children’s services, and work with the Care Quality Commission to carry out Area SEND inspections, which are inspections of provision for children and young people aged 0-25 special educational needs across the healthcare, social services, and education system in local areas.

We also carry out work for the **Department for Education**, such as pre-registration visits and material change inspections when an organisation wishes to register as a school or change its legal designation.

Finally, we conduct **research, evaluations and analyses** and publish insights into children’s experiences. Examples include “Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges”; ‘T-level thematic review: Final Report” (in further education and skills remit); “Best start in life: A research review in early years”; “How local authorities plan for sufficiency of accommodation that meets the needs of children in care and care leavers” (Social care); and various curriculum subject reports and curriculum research reviews in the schools’ remit.

**Unit of inspection:** Do you inspect schools or groups of schools (or both?) Do you inspect teachers, or subject departments? Do you inspect local authorities?

We inspect individual schools, not individual teachers, or subject departments. We do not have the authority to inspect groups of schools (multi-academy trusts), but we do have a methodology which allows us to review their work on a voluntary basis.

We do not inspect local authority education provision directly, although we do inspect the LA arrangements for children with special educational needs as part of an ‘Area SEND’ inspection, which involves working with social care colleagues and health colleagues at CQC. We also undertake inspections of local authority children’s services with social care colleagues. This work specifically focuses on looked-after children, children missing education and children that are electively home educated.

**What is your strapline?** E.g., Ofsted’s is “Raising standards, improving lives”.

‘Raising standards, improving lives.’

**Relationship with government:** Do you operate as part of the Education Ministry, or are you independent? Briefly explain the legal relationship you have with the Ministry (e.g., any reporting duties)? Are you allowed to report on government policy? Are you allowed to publish reports without govt approval?

We are a non-ministerial government department. We operate independently of the Department for Education (DfE). We report directly to Parliament, parents, carers, and commissioners.

We have a legal duty to report on the effectiveness of school provision under the Education Act 2005. We determine when schools are inspected, within the legal requirements set out in the Act.

For independent schools, our remit is slightly different: the DfE commissions us to inspect some independent schools under the Education and Skills Act 2008. They determine when a school is to be inspected. Our reporting arrangements are the same as above.

We do not routinely report on government policy. However, we would offer relevant insight, based on our findings, if asked about its implementation within the sector.

**Accountability:** What are you accountable for delivering? Where is this set out? (e.g., in legislation or in a policy document?) How are you held to account as an organisation (e.g., must you report annually)?

We work within the Education Act of 2005 to inspect schools which receive public funding. Legally, schools should be inspected at least every 5 years. We inspect schools more regularly if they are less than good or if we have a concern.

The DfE commissions us to inspect some independent schools under the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Each school receives an individual report after it is inspected.

We produce an annual report which provides an overview of the totality of our work.

1. **Evaluation process** – this should be in short paragraphs.

**Self-evaluation:** Do you have a form of self-evaluation (i.e., do you expect institutions to report on themselves?) If so, briefly explain how this relates to external evaluation.

We do not expect schools to report on themselves. Schools may choose to have a form of self-evaluation, and we would expect them to ‘know themselves’. Our judgements are separate to any self-evaluation a school may have.

**What do you examine during inspection?** Do you look at finances? Do you look at legal compliance? Do you observe and/or grade lessons?

When inspecting schools, we judge:

* the quality of education
* personal development
* behaviour and attitudes
* leadership and management
* early years
* sixth form.

Within the above, we do not look at ‘finances’, but may explore if certain additional funding is used effectively. We check that those responsible for governance carry out their statutory duties, for example to safeguard pupils, and in relation to the Equality Act 2010.

We inspect the quality of education using a ‘deep dive’ methodology which explores the intentions, implementation, and impact of leaders’ work to ensure a strong quality curriculum is in place an impacting on what pupils know and can do. This involves visiting lessons, but we do not judge or grade individual lessons or subjects.

We judge some aspects of legal compliance when inspecting independent schools. We have regulatory functions in our early years and social care remits.

**Do you have an inspection framework? Is this a quality or compliance model?** Do you evaluate the quality of education or teaching, or report against a series of non-qualitative standards? How does this work?

Our education inspection framework (EIF) is a quality model. Our published “School inspection handbook” describes the main activities carried out during inspections.

We evaluate 4 key areas: quality of education; leadership and management; behaviour and attitudes and personal development. Provision judgements on early years and sixth form are also made if they exist in a school. The handbook sets out the factors that describe quality in each aspect.

Each aspect is judged against a set of grade descriptors, using a four-point scale: outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate. From this, an overall effectiveness judgement is drawn. This is likely to be the lowest judgement from the separate key judgements made.

The quality of education judgement accounts for approximately half the overall effectiveness judgement. Within this, we check how well the curriculum is implemented. We do not make a separate judgement on the quality of teaching.

A conception of a quality education is borne from our inspection experience and research. We publish the research that informs our work, and we have an ongoing programme of research and insights that supports inspection.

**Inspection time and resource.** How long are your inspections?Do they last several days, or shorter? How many people go on inspection? What sort of qualifications/experience do they have? i.e., are they former headteachers, lawyers or accountants?

School inspections are typically four-day events, consisting of a planning day, two days on site, and a writing day. This varies depending on the size and type of provision. Schools are notified of the inspection on the planning day.

The tariff varies depending on the size of the school. There are more inspectors on the first day than the second. A large secondary school might have four or five inspectors on the first day and fewer on the second. A typical primary school might have two or three inspectors on the first day and one or two on the second.

All our inspectors have an education background and have been school leaders. Not all have headship experience. Typically, they hold either a degree in education or a post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE). All schools’ inspectors have Qualified Teacher Status ‘QTS’.

**Frequency of inspections:** Do you have set inspection cycles? How long are these? Are they risk-based or not? If risk-based, what information do you use for assessing risk?

The maximum legal cycle under the Education Act of 2005 is within 5 years. Ofsted typically works to a 4-year cycle to ensure this happens, but this has been extended because we did not inspect during Covid. We inspect some schools more regularly based on our risk assessment.

Risk assessment has 2 stages:

* Stage 1 involves an assessment of each school based on analysis of school-level performance and contextual data.
* Stage 2 involves a review of a wider range of available information.

At stage 2 Senior His Majesty’s Inspectors (SHMI) review the potential types of inspection to make sure the most appropriate type (if any) is carried out.

**Main business:** Do you do anything that is not inspection? E.g., pre-registration or providers, or other forms of regulation? Are you involved in complaints examination?

Do you take part in competition of headmasters?

Schools HMI carry out a range of non-inspection work, including pre-registration visits and material change visits. Social care and early years have other regulatory functions.

We also carry out research and publish insights into children’s experiences. Examples include “Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges”; ‘T-level thematic review: Final Report” (in further education and skills remit); “Best start in life: A research review in early years”; “How local authorities plan for sufficiency of accommodation that meets the needs of children in care and care leavers” (Social care); and various curriculum subject reports and curriculum research reviews in the schools’ remit.

We receive and record complaints about schools and about Ofsted. Complaints about schools might contribute to a risk assessment and a decision to inspect a school if we have serious concerns.

1. **Consequences of inspection**

**Reporting:** Do you publish your reports on institutions? If so, who reads them and how are they used? (e.g., to help parents make school choices?)

We publish reports on institutions after an inspection. Reports are intended for parents. They describe what it is like to be a child in the school, and the things that leaders do well and need to do better. We know that parents value these and use them to make choices on which school they want their child to attend.

Schools use their own reports to make improvements to the school.

There is a wide range of audiences for our reports, including local authorities, multi-academy trusts, parents, other schools, and government.

We know that our reports are valued for being independent and for clearly describing the quality of provision.

**Grade:** Do you grade institutions? If so, how many do you have? Are there any rewards for getting the top grade? Or any consequences and implications for getting the lowest?

We evaluate four main areas:

* quality of education
* leadership and management
* behaviour and attitudes
* personal development.

Provision judgements on early years and sixth form are also made if they exist in a school.

Each aspect is judged against a set of grade descriptors, using a four-point scale:

* outstanding
* good
* requires improvement
* inadequate.

From this, an overall effectiveness judgement is drawn, which is likely to be the lowest judgement from the separate key judgements made.

There are no formal ‘rewards’ or ‘punishments’ to top or bottom grades – however, we know that schools graded outstanding may well be used by others as examples of ‘best practice’.

An inadequate grade brings more public and professional scrutiny. It results in the DfE issuing a ‘direct academy order’. This order results in the school being sponsored by a multi-academy trust to support improvement. If a school is already a member of a trust it may mean a process of re-brokering to a new trust.

**Knowledge sharing:** How do you use the findings of inspection? Do you use thematic reporting, and publish your findings?

We publish individual reports on schools, an annual report on our collective findings, and thematic report based on our overall findings. For example, we have published a series of subject curriculum reports based on our findings on inspection about the strengths and weaknesses of subject curriculums in schools.

We reported on a range of issues during the pandemic, including sexual abuse, violence and harassment and attendance.

Our chief inspector speaks publicly about issues of concern, for example pupils’ attendance post-pandemic, our worries about children’s safety because of the number of unregistered and unregulated alternative provisions used, or a lack of oversight on children educated at home.

**What happens following an inspection?** Do schools shut down? Are the weak ones partnered with other schools; the strong ones allowed to flourish?

The Department for Education may choose to act after an inspection. For example, an inadequate school may be academized, which is its ownership taken on by a multi-academy trust who work to improve the school.

Strong schools may be inspected less frequently, but within the legal boundaries of 5 years.

Previously, outstanding schools were exempt from inspection, but the exemption was lifted due to concerns about the lack of external oversight and performance over time.

**What is the stated purpose of your inspectorate?** Do you have a theory of action about how improvement is achieved through inspection?

We do not have a specific school improvement function. However, we believe that schools improve because of inspection. Ofsted aims to improve lives by raising standards in education and children’s social care. This is reflected in our core values: we put children and learners first, and we are independent, evidence-led, accountable, and transparent.

Our 2022-27 strategy sets out our strategic priorities:

* Inspections that raise standards: our inspections help education and social care recover and improve.
* Right-touch regulation: our regulation advances high-quality care, education and safeguarding for children.
* Making the most of our insights: we share insights through our research and analysis. Our insights inform practitioners, policymakers and decision-makers and lead to improvements across the system.
* The best start in life: we will develop the evidence base about early years education, including curriculum and pedagogy, and act on it.
* Keeping children safe: we promote children’s safety and welfare in everything we do.
* Keeping pace with sector changes: we keep pace as the education and social care sectors evolve. We will continually review our approach and advocate for additional powers where required.
* Accessible and engaged: we are open and accessible to our different audiences, understanding their needs.
* A skilled workforce: we make sure we have the tools, knowledge, and expertise we need to continue to be a force for improvement.