

The Big Listen

Your response

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Yes - please provide name of organisation (optional)

Special Educational Consortium

If yes, where does your organisation operate?

Nationally

Please tell us the local authority in which you live. If you are responding in a professional capacity, and work in a different local authority to where you live, please tell us the local authority in which you work.

London Borough of Hackney

Your response

Please tell us in which capacity you are completing this survey. (Tick all that apply)

Representative group or union representative

If you are responding in a professional capacity, please specify where you work.

Not-for-profit organisation

If you work for a school or early years provider, does your school or setting have a faith ethos?

If yes, please specify:

N/A

Question

We know that our reports are important. Below, we have set out the aims that we believe every report should achieve. Some of these are already required by law. We would like to know your views on these.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
Make it clear what it is like for children who attend the setting, such as whether they are safe and happy there.	X				
Make it clear and easy to understand how effective the setting is at supporting the learning and development of children.	X				
Make clear what the setting does to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).	X				
Make clear how well children learn and develop in this setting (and compare their outcomes with local and national ones, where this data is available).		X			
Make it clear how well the most disadvantaged children learn and develop in the setting.	X				
Make clear any links with other providers, for example where an early years setting is part of a group or chain that shares staff and practices.		X			

Your views

Please tell us what you think Ofsted's priorities should be when reporting on outcomes, and why, and what we can improve.

Comments:

Priorities in the early years should examine whether settings are being inclusive with their admissions and provision for disabled children and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Anecdotal evidence suggests that disabled children and those with SEN in the early years are on reduced timetables, have deferred entry or are being turned away from settings as a result of their needs.

Settings should be judged on their ability to effectively business plan in advance to ensure that their funding and provision is sufficient to support a wide range of different needs.

In the early years, research from the 'Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education Project' provides a robust evidence base for the key features of that high-quality provision. There are consistent themes in the research:

- The association between high quality settings and a higher proportion of trained teachers and;
- the importance of strong leadership and long serving staff with a good knowledge of the early years curriculum, child development and young children as learners (Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P. and Siraj, I., 2015).
- A better educated early years workforce leads to better outcomes for children (National Audit Office, 2016)
- Qualitative studies that putting in place the support needed at the earliest years for children with SEN and Disabilities results in positive outcomes for children with SEND (Office for National Statistics, 2022)

Ofsted should showcase settings that exemplify inclusive practice, and provide support and guidance to settings that are less inclusive.

Question

Our ambition is that we should always do the following.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
The way we carry out our work is consistent from place to place and across the same type of provider.			X		
Inspections and regulatory visits are long enough to allow inspectors to make accurate judgements.	X				
The time between notifying an early years setting about a forthcoming inspection and carrying out the inspection is short but appropriate.			X		
We consider the context of the provider's local area as part of our inspections, and in the judgements that we make.		X			

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted's current inspection practices and whether they should change?

Comments:

Ofsted should only grade a school/setting/provider as 'good' or 'outstanding' if their SEN and disability provision is also 'good' or 'outstanding'.

Question

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
Ofsted holds early years providers to account for the quality of education and care they offer.	X			
Ofsted holds early years providers to account for keeping children safe.	X			
Ofsted has an equal impact on the performance of providers, regardless of size, location or type.		X		
Ofsted reassures parents and carers about the learning and development of children in the providers we inspect and regulate.	X			
Ofsted reassures parents and carers that the providers we inspect and regulate keep children safe.	X			
The number of good and outstanding early years providers in England gives you a strong indication of the overall quality of the early years system.		X		
Ofsted should be able to inspect groups that early years providers might be part of, such as large private early years providers and multiple providers.	X			

Your views

How do you think Ofsted could best raise standards and improve lives for children?

Comments:

We advocate for better understanding of Equality Act duties ranging from EY practitioners to FE providers, particularly in relation to disability. With the better understanding and awareness of legal responsibilities to make reasonable adjustments and not discriminate against disabled children and young people and those with SEN, learners will have a more positive and inclusive experience within their educational setting. Ofsted could better raise standards and improve lives for children if Equality Act duties were more central to the inspection framework.

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted's openness, and how easy it is to provide feedback to help us improve?

Comments:

In previous consultation, Ofsted have built in conversations with a range of different parent/carer groups and also meeting with disabled children and young people and those with SEN. However, our parent carer representation in SEC feel that current opportunities for discussion have been limited to PCF areas. Feedback mechanisms should be available nationally and not limited to specific groups, in order to hear the views and opinions of a wide ranging cohort of parent, carers, children and young people.

Question

We know that our inspection reports are important. Below, we have set out the aims that we believe every inspection report should achieve. Some of these are already required by law. We would like to know your views on these.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
Make sure it is clear what attending the provision is like for the learner, such as whether they are having a good learning experience and feel safe.		X			
Make sure, where relevant, that it is clear for employers what the provider is like and how it works with employers.			X		
Make it clear how well the most disadvantaged learners gain knowledge and skills, achieve and are supported by the provider.	X				
Make it clear how leaders and staff create a safe, disciplined and positive environment and the impact this has on the behaviour and attitudes of learners.	X				
Make it clear how leaders, managers and those responsible for governance ensure that the education and training have a positive impact on all learners.	X				
Make it clear how the curriculum should support learners to develop their knowledge and skills beyond the purely academic, technical or vocational. This includes how the provider supports learners' mental health, develops their character and promotes equality of opportunity.	X				
Make it clear how the provider's curriculum develops the knowledge, skills and behaviours its learners need, how teachers teach and assess, and the outcomes that learners achieve as a result of the education they have received.	X				
Where relevant, make it clear that apprenticeship training gives apprentices the knowledge, skills and behaviours that contribute to their workplace and help them progress to their intended job role, other sustained employment, promotion or higher level of apprenticeship/qualification.			X		
Make it clear that inspectors have considered learners' progress, their achievement and their progression to positive destinations, and how this has affected the overall judgements about the provider.	X				
Make clear what the provider does to support learners with SEND and those	X				

Question

We know that our inspection reports are important. Below, we have set out the aims that we believe every inspection report should achieve. Some of these are already required by law. We would like to know your views on these.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
with high needs.					

Your views

Please tell us what you think Ofsted's priorities should be when reporting on inspection, and why, and what we can improve.

Comments:

Our FE leads within SEC share that Ofsted's primary objective should be reporting inspection findings against the criteria published in its inspection framework. The reports should help learners (and their families) and SEND commissioners understand the quality of the provision of different providers and make fair comparisons between providers to support the making of informed decisions about their FE options. The reports should give providers useful information in terms of understanding their strengths and weaknesses and how they might improve their provision.

Nationally organised, cross-regional moderation of reports would lead to greater consistency in length, detail, use of examples and qualifying statements. It would also support greater consistency in the awarding of overall grades and grades for provision types and judgement areas.

Question

Our ambition is that Ofsted education inspections should always do the following.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
The way we carry out inspections is consistent from place to place and across the same type of FE and skills provision and provider.		X			
The way we carry out inspections is consistent across the same phases of education offered by different providers, such as sixth-form provision in schools and sixth-form provision in colleges.		X			
Inspections are long enough to allow inspectors to form accurate judgements.		X			
The time between notifying an FE and skills provider about a forthcoming inspection and carrying out the inspection is short but appropriate.		X			
We consider the context of the provider's local area(s) as part of our inspections, and in the judgements that we make, accepting that many providers operate regionally or nationally.			X		

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted's current inspection practices and whether they should change?

Comments:

Statements should also refer to 'college' in order to fully appreciate the value of FE provision.

Our FE leads in SEC share that there needs to be a willingness to apply specific approaches relevant and proportionate to provision and provider types. The judgements and expectations of providers, in terms of quality of provision/standards need to be consistent, but inspectors will need to be flexible in terms of specific activities completed in order to arrive at those judgements.

In terms of improvements to inspection practice in relation to young people with SEND in FES settings, we would like to see Ofsted:

- Improve consistency across regions in application of inspection methodology within provision of the same/similar type, reporting and assigning of grades, e.g. through nationally coordinated cross-region moderation.
- Improve consistency in terms of depth of inspection across high needs provision, regardless of FES provider type. While specialist colleges can expect a greater degree of scrutiny on the basis that high needs provision typically accounts for all of their provision, it would be helpful if reports on GFES, where the vast majority of high needs-funded 16-25 year olds are enrolled, made more explicit reference to the quality of high needs provision. Young people with SEND and their families, and commissioners would then be able to make more informed comparisons between potential providers. This may require more inspection time within GFES to be spent on reviewing high needs provision and greater use of specialist high needs inspectors. Ofsted should also ensure its annual report includes a proportionate analysis of the quality of high needs provision across both mainstream and specialist settings, unlike in recent years where the focus has been either solely or largely on specialist colleges.
- Increase the notice period to 6 days for specialist colleges, bringing it into line with the revised notice period for GFES to help ensure a level playing field.
- Ensure proportionality in terms of the inspector tariff, so that very small specialist providers are not faced with an unnecessarily large inspection team and avoid adding shadow inspectors to teams inspecting very small providers. We are aware of at least one instance where a provider with fewer than 15 learners was subject to a 3-day inspection by a 5-strong team.
- Apply a greater flexibility of approach to inspections and be more responsive to specific learner cohorts (e.g. those with PMLD/accessing end of life care). This might include a greater willingness to request and listen to staff explanations of what an inspector is seeing in sessions where appropriate pedagogy might be substantially different from that used with more cognitively able learners.
- Better understand learners' needs in advance so that the inspection team is appropriately staffed to be able to communicate with learners and staff and to have sufficient familiarity with the provision type to be able to make informed judgements
- Make available a desk-based expert to whom high needs inspectors can refer during inspection when they would benefit from specialist advice on a particular cohort (e.g. learners with PMLD)
- Use more accessible tools and a longer timeframe to hear learner voice than the standard learner survey which excludes many learners with SEND from giving their feedback. Ofsted must also refrain from attempting to give notice of inspection during half term.

Question

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
Ofsted holds FE and skills providers to account for the quality of education and training that learners receive.	X			
Ofsted holds providers to account for keeping learners safe.	X			
Ofsted holds FE and skills providers to account for the employability and life chances of learners.	X			
The number of good and outstanding FE and skills providers in England is truly reflective of the overall quality of the FE and skills sector.				X
Ofsted has an equal impact on the performance of different types of FE and skills provision (for example, education programmes for young people, apprenticeships, adult learning programmes) and providers (for example, FE colleges, independent learning providers, adult learning providers).				X
Ofsted should be able to inspect part-time provision for 14- to 16-year-old learners who are in FE colleges but not registered at a school (we currently do not have the power to do this).		X		
Ofsted should be able to inspect higher technical qualifications.		X		

Your views

How do you think Ofsted could best raise standards and improve lives for learners?

Comments:

- Ofsted's primary role should be to judge the quality of provision, leaving the raising of standards and improving of lives to the providers who work directly with children and young people. However, there are changes that Ofsted could make to be more supportive of providers in their quality improvement role. Examples include making the provision to learning providers of information to support QI a publicly stated key purpose of inspection; running sector-specific events in which analysis of recent reports is presented to providers as a way of sharing effective practice or key success indicators (building on the support events some regional HMIs have helpfully begun to offer Natspec members and on the annual national events led by the HMI with the policy lead for high needs); engaging in more professional dialogue with staff during inspections; an increased willingness to engage in learning visits to improve inspector understanding of more specialist types of provision and to engage in, lead, and share findings from research.
- Ofsted should further develop its understanding of provision for learners with SEND, including those with more complex needs, and design more appropriate methodologies for its inspection. This will require strong leadership from a senior policy adviser whose role is to oversee high needs inspections in FE and Skills settings.
- Ofsted should inspect any provision directly commissioned by LAs using high needs funding, and not just where the provider has its own ESFA contract.
- Ofsted should inspect residential provision in specialist FE settings for 19-25 year olds with EHC Plans, which are funded by ESFA for 16-19 education, where the FE setting carries out no CQC-regulated activities, and is therefore not subject to CQC inspection. Currently a small number of specialist colleges are subject to Ofsted inspection under the SCCIF, where they offer residential provision for 16-18 year olds but undertake no CQC-regulated activities. However, there is an inspection vacuum for specialist residential FE colleges in a similar position whose learners are aged 19 – 25 (with EHCPs).

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted's openness, and how easy it is to provide feedback to help us improve?

Comments:

Inspectors are not always arriving with sufficient understanding of the learner group in specialist colleges to communicate with learners effectively or to be appropriately sensitive as they go about their business. For example, having no/too few members of the inspection team being able to converse with deaf students and teachers.

Question

We know that our inspection reports are important. Below, we have set out the aims that we believe every inspection report should achieve. Some of these are already required by law. We would like your views on these.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
Make it clear what the provider is like for the trainee or participant, such as how well supported they are in their learning.		X			
Make it clear whether the content in the DfE's frameworks is covered fully in the development and training.		X			
Give a clear judgement on the quality of education/professional development and training.		X			
Give a clear judgement on the quality of leadership and management.		X			
Make it clear how we use any data to inform our judgement, such as any relevant outcomes or context the provider is working in.		X			

Your views

Please tell us what you think Ofsted's priorities should be when reporting on inspection, and why, and what we can improve.

Comments:

When inspecting ITT providers/learning, inspections should prioritise the quality of teaching in relation to SEND provision and support. Inspections should ensure this is of high quality and inclusivity underpins the key principles of the training. The core values of inclusive teaching and education form the basis of the ITT core content and ECF.

Question

Our ambition is that Ofsted education inspections should always do the following.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
The way we carry out inspections is consistent from place to place and across the same type of provider.			X		
The length of inspections allows inspectors to make secure and reliable judgements.		X			
The time between notifying a provider about a forthcoming inspection and carrying out the inspection is short but appropriate.		X			
We should consolidate our inspection practices where possible. For example, if an ITE or ECF/NPQ programme provider is delivering 2 or 3 courses, we should inspect all of them at the same time.			X		

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted’s current inspection practices and whether they should change?

Which inspection type would you like to comment on (tick one or more as apply):

ITE/training (also known as ITT) provider

ECF programme provider

Comments:

SEC advocates for improvement on both SEND-related knowledge and training to promote inclusive practice in general terms for all ECTs. SEC urges that SEN and disabilities are not treated as an add-on, but as an essential part of the knowledge and skills all teachers should have, so that they feel more confident about teaching the full range of pupils they may engage with in their classes.

ITT should include in-depth and specific training on the statutory framework for identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEN and disabilities, specifically Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND Regulations 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice. Similarly, training should include the law on disability discrimination (both direct and indirect discrimination) and the legal duties to make reasonable and anticipatory adjustments as set out in the Equality Act 2010. Ofsted should review ITT in light of these legal requirements.

Question

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
Ofsted holds ITE providers to account for the quality of education and training that trainees receive.	X			
Ofsted holds ECF and NPQ programme providers to account for the quality of education and training that trainees receive.	X			
The number of good and outstanding ITE providers in England gives you a strong indication of the overall quality of the teacher training sector.		X		

Your views:

Do you have any comments on Ofsted's impact on ITE and ECF/NPQ provision?

Which inspection type would you like to comment on (tick as many as appropriate):

ITE/training (also known as ITT)

ECF

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted's openness, and how easy it is to provide feedback to help us improve?

Comments:

In previous consultation, Ofsted have built in conversations with a range of different parent/carer groups and also meeting with disabled children and young people and those with SEN. However, our parent carer representation in SEC feel that current opportunities for discussion have been limited to PCF areas. Feedback mechanisms should be available nationally and not limited to specific groups, in order to hear the views and opinions of a wide ranging cohort of parent, carers, children and young people.

Question

We know that our inspection reports are important. Below, we have set out the aims that we believe every inspection report should achieve. Some of these are already required by law. We would like to know your views on these.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
Make it clear what it is like to be a child or young person living in or being supported by the provider or service, such as whether they are safe and happy.	X				
Make it clear what impact the provider or service is having on the experiences and progress of children and young people.		X			
Make it clear how the provider or service is contributing to children and young people's long-term education, health and employment outcomes.	X				
Make it clear how inspectors have taken full account of children's experiences, their progress, and the wider context of the service.	X				
Make clear any links with other providers, for example where the provider or service is part of a group that shares staff and practices.		X			

Do you currently read any of the following Ofsted children's social care reports?

	Regularly	Sometimes	Only the inspection judgements	Never
Inspections of local authority children's services (ILACS) reports		X		
Children's homes reports under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF)			X	
Other children's social care inspection reports under the SCCIF				X

Your views

Please tell us what you think Ofsted's priorities should be when reporting on inspection and regulation, and why, and what we can improve.

Comments:

The inspection by Ofsted (with CQC) of local area support for disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs is separate from their inspection of children's social care. There appears to be a disconnect in the two inspections; for example, Kent County Council's children's services have been judged by Ofsted to be outstanding, despite significant weaknesses being found through the local area SEND inspection. The lack of progressions in addressing these weaknesses led to the Government issuing an improvement notice in March 2023.

SEC feel a local area should not be judged as Good/Outstanding unless their local area SEND inspection is also Good/Outstanding. The needs of disabled children and young people and those with SEN must be seen as a whole, rather than a distinct part of the system.

Question

Our ambition is that Ofsted's children's social care inspections should always do the following.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
Inspections are carried out in a way that is consistent from place to place.		X			
Inspections are long enough to allow inspectors to form accurate judgements		X			
Inspections hold providers and services to account based not only on compliance and practice, but also on the experiences and progress of the children and young people they care for and support.	X				
We consider the context of the provider's local area as part of our inspections, in our reports, and in the judgements that we make about the provider.		X			

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted's current inspection practices and whether they should change?

Comments:

SEC feel a local area should not be judged as Good/Outstanding unless their local area SEND inspection is also Good/Outstanding.

Question

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
Ofsted holds local authority children's services to account for the quality of their provision.	X			
Ofsted holds children's social care providers to account for the quality of their provision.	X			
The number of good and outstanding children's social care providers and services in England gives you a strong indication of the overall quality of the children's social care system.		X		
An unintended consequence of Ofsted's inspection and regulation is that children's homes sometimes do not accept the children most in need into their care.				X
An unintended consequence of Ofsted's inspection and regulation is that children's homes sometimes accept children into their care that they are not best placed to support.				X
Ofsted should focus more on the experiences and progress of children who are cared for/supported by providers and services than on compliance with regulations.		X		
Ofsted should focus more on compliance with regulations than the experiences and progress of children who are cared for/supported by providers and services.		X		
Ofsted should be able to inspect groups as an entity, such as large private care home providers.		X		
Ofsted should have greater powers to address unregistered providers that have vulnerable children in their care.	X			

Your views

How do you think Ofsted could best raise standards and improve lives for children and young people?

Comments:

The needs of disabled children and young people and those with SEN must be seen as a whole, rather than a distinct part of the system.

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted's openness, and how easy it is to provide feedback to help us improve?

Comments:

In previous consultation, Ofsted have built in conversations with a range of different parent/carer groups and also meeting with disabled children and young people and those with SEN. However, our parent carer representation in SEC feel that current opportunities for discussion have been limited to PCF areas. Feedback mechanisms should be available nationally and not limited to specific groups, in order to hear the views and opinions of a wide ranging cohort of parent, carers, children and young people.

Question

We know that our inspection reports are important. Below, we have set out the aims that we believe every inspection report should achieve. Some of these are already required by law. We would like to know your views on these.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
Make it clear what attending the school is like for the pupil, such as whether children or learners are safe and happy there.	X				
Give a clear judgement on the quality of education at the school. This includes how well children or learners acquire the knowledge and skills that they need and how well the school plans and teaches the curriculum and checks that children/learners have learned it.		X			
Give a clear judgement on how well school leaders and staff have fostered positive behaviour and attitudes among children, including what they are doing to ensure good or improved attendance levels.			X		
Give a clear judgement on the quality of personal development for children. This includes the extent to which the curriculum extends beyond the academic, how well children are supported to develop their character, and whether the school prepares children for future success in their next steps.	X				
Give a clear judgement on the quality of leadership and management at a school, and how this impacts children or learners.		X			
Make clear how effective the school is at keeping children safe and protected from harm.	X				
Make clear what the school does to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.	X				
Make clear how inspectors have considered pupils' outcomes (such as educational performance and wider local context) and other data (such as attendance) and how these have affected the overall grade for the school.			X		
Make it clear how well the most disadvantaged pupils learn, achieve, and are supported in the school.	X				
Report on the performance of the wider group (such as the multi-academy trust, diocese, or chain of independent		X			

Question

We know that our inspection reports are important. Below, we have set out the aims that we believe every inspection report should achieve. Some of these are already required by law. We would like to know your views on these.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
schools) that the school is part of and may share resources, staff, and practice with (Ofsted does not have authority to do this currently).					

Your views

Please tell us what you think Ofsted's priorities should be when reporting on inspection and regulation, and why, and what we can improve.

Comments:

SEC would want to see a much sharper focus on how adjustments to the school environment can improve sense of 'belonging' in school. Duties in the Children and Families Act require schools and others to make 'additional or different' provision for pupils with SEN; and the Equality Act requires schools and others to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils. Priorities should be how a school is able to implement their legal duties and ensure reasonable adjustments are anticipated and followed through. Ofsted should inspect this and whether a whole school approach to SEND is applied within the school environment.

We also believe consideration should be given to tightening the links between inspection frameworks. This will allow significant local data to be considered in respect of schools' performances, for example in relation to school absences and exclusions.

Question

Our ambition is that Ofsted education inspections should always do the following.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
Inspections are carried out in a way that is consistent from place to place.		X			
The way we carry out inspections is consistent across the same phases of education (such as primary or secondary) offered by different types of schools (such as local authority maintained, academy, faith school, grammar school).		X			
Inspections are long enough to allow inspectors to make accurate judgements.		X			
The time between notifying a school about a forthcoming inspection and carrying out the inspection is short but appropriate (for school inspections, the notice period is half a day).		X			
We consider the context of the school's local area as part of our inspections, and in the judgements that we make.		X			

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted's current inspection practices and whether they should change?

Comments:

SEC feel a school should not be judged as Good/Outstanding unless their SEND provision is also judged as Good/Outstanding.

Question

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
Ofsted holds schools to account for the quality of education they provide.		X		
Ofsted holds schools to account for keeping children safe.	X			
An unintended consequence of Ofsted's inspection process is that schools exclude, suspend, 'off-roll'* or place pupils off site.	X			
An unintended consequence of Ofsted's inspection process is that schools keep pupils in the classroom who may put other pupils at risk, may benefit from off-site provision or may require suspension or even exclusion.		X		
The number of schools graded good and outstanding in England gives you a strong indication of the overall quality of the schools system.		X		
Ofsted should be able to inspect groups that schools may be a part of, such as multi-academy trusts, local authorities, dioceses, or owners of large private independent school providers, in order to understand their overall impact on children and learners	X			

Your views

How do you think Ofsted could best raise standards and improve lives for children and learners?

Comments:

To clarify our response to the first question above on accountability, it is important that schools are held to account for the quality of education and safety of their pupils, however this can only happen if there is appropriate funding, support and sufficient provision in place so that teaching staff can put in place adequate provision and provide high quality teaching of disabled children and young people and those with SEN.

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted's openness, and how easy it is to provide feedback to help us improve?

Comments:

In previous consultation, Ofsted have built in conversations with a range of different parent/carer groups and also meeting with disabled children and young people and those with SEN. However, our parent representation in SEC feel that current opportunities for discussion have been limited to PCF areas. Feedback mechanisms should be available nationally and not limited to specific groups, in order to hear the views and opinions of a wide ranging cohort of parent, carers, children and young people.

Question

We know that our inspection reports are important. Below, we have set out the aims that we believe every inspection report should cover. Some of these are already required by law. We would like to know your views on these.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
Make it clear what attending the provision or service is like for the child or learner, such as whether children and learners are safe and happy there.	X				
Make it clear how effective the provision or service is, including whether it is meeting children and learners' individual needs.	X				
Make it clear how well the provider or service understands the outcomes for children and learners with SEND and/or in AP, and how that understanding informs the provision they offer to support children and learners.	X				
Explain how well the provider or service is performing in relation to the quality of local SEND or support services (for example, where the health or local authority provision is weak but the school's provision is strong).	X				
Explain how effectively a setting or service supports children and learners with SEND and prepares them to move on to a suitable and appropriately challenging next phase of education and/or adulthood.	X				
Explain how effectively the provider or service works with parents and carers and responds to children's ambitions.	X				
Explain how effectively the provider or service works with partners to address the needs of children with SEND in the local area.	X				

Your views

Please tell us what you think Ofsted's priorities should be when reporting on provision, AP or services for children and learners with SEND and why, and what you think we could improve.

Comments:

Local areas must be incentivised to develop creative solutions and alternative pathways to ensure children and young people have developed the knowledge and skills to gain employment and meaningful occupation, move on to further or higher education, live as healthily and as independently as possible, have good self-esteem, have made friends and feel safe, valued and visible in their communities.

SEC are concerned that currently there are too few opportunities, a lack of specialist support and appropriate provision and not enough incentive for local authorities, partners and providers to improve employment inclusivity for those with high support needs. To tackle this, Inspectors must be able to assess the extent to which local area partnerships galvanise local authorities, partners and providers across all sectors to provide further opportunities within the workforce and skills arena for post 16 and transition to adulthood stages.

Senior leaders have engaged in taking some pupils off the register by encouraging some parents to home-educate or to seek different schools for their children (Ofsted, 2019). Another priority should be to ensure there is adequate focus and recording of data around disabled children and young people and those with SEN being excluded (including internal exclusions/seclusions), off-rolled and placed on reduced timetables. Data should include intersectionality characteristics and be publicly available.

The inspection process should additionally consider and report on how well the local partnership identifies and addresses mental health difficulties for children and young people with SEND; the strategic priority given to mental health and SEN and disability and the extent of effective and collaborative commissioning.

Question

Our ambition is that Ofsted inspections should always do the following.

How important are each of the following to you?

	Very important	Important	Neutral	Not very important	Not at all important
Work with leaders and practitioners during the inspection to understand whether the school, AP, service or wider local area partnership is meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.	X				
Work with leaders and practitioners during the inspection to understand whether the school, AP, service or wider local area partnership is offering a positive experience for children and young people with SEND that will improve their future outcomes.	X				
Use any available data on the outcomes of children and young people to understand whether the school, AP, service or wider local area partnership is offering them a positive experience that will improve their future outcomes.	X				
Use feedback from parents and carers, and children where appropriate, to understand whether the school, AP, service or wider local area partnership is meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.	X				

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted’s current inspection practices and whether they should change?

Comments:

SEC feel an educational setting should not be judged as Good/Outstanding unless their SEND provision is also judged as Good/Outstanding.

Current inspection practices need to ensure the voices of disabled children and young people, and those with SEN, and their families, are central to the inspection practice. Those with the most complex physical and/or learning needs are often under-represented in information gathering exercises. This may be due to a lack of resource to facilitate their participation, lack of incentive and/or lack of knowledge and skills. Children and young people with non-verbal communication methods or profound and multiple learning disabilities who may struggle with abstract concepts, may be missed from discussions with inspectors and sampling/tracking exercises and surveys.

SEC feel Ofsted should carry out a thematic review of SEN and disability in schools, settings and colleges, and inspect all high needs funded provision.

Question

Do you agree with the following statements?

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know
Ofsted holds early years settings to account for the quality of their SEND provision.		X		
Ofsted holds mainstream schools to account for the quality of their SEND provision.		X		
Ofsted holds schools, independent providers and PRUs to account for the quality of their AP.		X		
Ofsted holds special schools (including special academies, independent and non-maintained special schools) to account for the quality of their SEND provision.		X		
Ofsted holds further education and skills providers to account for the quality of their SEND provision.		X		
Ofsted holds local areas to account for how well they support children with SEND and other vulnerable children, including the provision and services they commission for children.		X		
An unintended consequence of Ofsted's inspection and regulation is that mainstream schools exclude, suspend, off-roll, or place off-site, pupils with SEND.	X			
An unintended consequence of Ofsted's inspection and regulation is that mainstream schools are less inclusive of pupils with SEND, so they are not offered tailored provision off site or in special schools.	X			
The number of good and outstanding SEND and/or AP providers and services in England gives a strong indication of the overall quality of the SEND and/or AP system.		X		
Ofsted should be able to inspect groups of providers as a single entity to understand their overall impact on children and learners. These include multi-academy trusts and owners of large independent school providers or residential care homes.	X			
Ofsted should have an oversight role for smaller unregulated settings such as unregistered AP.	X			

Your views

How do you think Ofsted could best raise standards and improve lives for children and learners with SEND or in AP settings?

Comments:

The questions on accountability should be approached from a multi-agency lens; settings and local areas require sufficient funding and support in order to effectively support children and young people, and therefore avoid 'blame-culture'.

We agree that an emphasis must be placed on the experiences of children and young people who attend AP within inspections, but we are concerned that AP may gradually be viewed as an extension of the special school estate with which we are not in agreement. SEC is keen to ensure that AP placements are not misused due to a lack of special school places or delays in identifying SEND. We believe local inspections are a good vehicle to explore the reasons behind placement within AP. Such explorations could reveal specific difficulties within a local area that requires further investigation. AP is a sector that requires a different lens and as such, would benefit from training for those inspecting AP to take account of the different lines of enquiry required within this sector.

SEC would like to draw attention to the wide range of ways that disabled children and young people and those with SEN may be out of education. There are reports of substantial numbers of children unable to return to education due to anxiety; some are awaiting placement; some families opt for home-education; others struggle to access transport options due to inappropriate support or their own health needs. We would like clarity on how inspections will gather information about children out of school and how this information will be used it to assess how effectively education settings are supporting those children to return to school as well as working with families to reduce barriers to education.

Your views

Do you have any comments on Ofsted's openness, and how easy it is to provide feedback to help us improve?

Comments:

In previous consultation, Ofsted have built in conversations with a range of different parent/carers groups and also meeting with disabled children and young people and those with SEN. However, our parent representation in SEC feel that current opportunities for discussion have been limited to PCF areas. Feedback mechanisms should be available nationally and not limited to specific groups, in order to hear the views and opinions of a wide ranging cohort of parent, carers, children and young people.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us?

Comments:

Our main asks from Ofsted are:

1. No educational setting (from early to post-16) should be judged as Good/Outstanding unless their SEND provision is also judged as Good/Outstanding.
2. A thematic review of SEN and disability in schools, settings and colleges is carried out, along with inspection of all high needs funded provision.
3. Prioritising the monitoring of how the Equality Act duties are being implemented within all education settings from early years to post 16, as well as a key feature in area SEND inspections.

You can read SEC's views on local area SEND inspections in our 2022 consultation response:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/Local%20area%20inspections%20final%20response%2011.09.22.pdf>

We want to know that we are hearing from everyone. Are you happy to answer a few questions about yourself?

No (clicking next page will submit your response)

Gender

Female

Age (Please note: a separate survey aimed at children will be launching soon)

25 to 34