



An Open Letter to Parents and Carers

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Dear Parent and Carers,

www.havering.gov.uk

Understanding Changes to Ofsted Inspections and What They Mean for You

We are writing to explain important changes to the way schools and other education providers are inspected by Ofsted, and what these changes mean for you and your child.

From November 2025, Ofsted introduced a new way of inspecting schools and reporting inspection outcomes. This letter explains what has changed, what parents will now see, and how to understand the new inspection reports.

Inspection outcomes under the new Ofsted framework cannot be compared with previous inspection grades. The old one-word judgements (such as *Outstanding* or *Good*) will no longer be used, the new system measures schools in a different and more detailed way, and changes in inspection outcomes do not mean a school has suddenly improved or declined.

Parents are encouraged to read the full inspection report card, rather than trying to compare it with past judgements.

What has changed?

No more single overall judgement

Previously, schools were given one overall grade to summarise the inspection. Now, Ofsted produces a report card that shows how a school is performing across several important areas of school life.

A wider picture of school life

Schools are now assessed across a broader range of areas, including:

- Curriculum and teaching
- Achievement
- Attendance and behaviour
- Personal development and wellbeing
- Leadership and governance
- Inclusion, including support for children with SEND and vulnerable pupils

Safeguarding continues to be judged separately as either “met” or “not met”.

A new grading scale

Each inspection area is graded using a five-point scale:

- Exceptional
- Strong standard
- Expected standard
- Needs attention
- Urgent improvement

These grades are not replacements for the old grades and do not match them directly.

Clearer, more accessible reports

The new report cards are designed with parents in mind. They include:

- Separate grades for each inspection area
- Short explanations of strengths and areas for improvement
- A clearer, more visual layout that is easier to read online and on mobile devices.

What does this mean for parents?

The new system aims to help parents, understand what a school does well, see where improvements are being made, and helps you to gain a more balanced and realistic picture of how a school supports children academically, socially and emotionally.

Because the framework has changed so significantly, parents should not compare new report cards with previous inspection grades.

What happens if a school needs to improve?

Where inspectors identify areas that need attention or urgent improvement, Ofsted will carry out additional monitoring visits to check progress and ensure improvement is happening. This means concerns will be followed up earlier and more closely than under the old system.

As a local authority, we welcome changes that both help parents better understand how schools are supporting their children, and encourage continuous improvement across our education system.

If you would like to read inspection reports or learn more about the new framework, these are available on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely,



Trevor Cook

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