



the Maximilian

Monthly Newsletter for Governors from the Education Commission

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Welcome... *The Maximilian* is a monthly newsletter from the Education Commission to all categories of governors in our schools, highlighting changes in legislation and other news which will be of help to governing bodies.

Education is not given for the purpose of gaining power but as an aid towards a fuller understanding of, and communion with, man, events and things. Knowledge is not to be considered as a means of material prosperity and success, but as a call to serve and be responsible for others.

The Catholic School.
Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education Rome 1977

Ofsted

Inspections Landscape

From the 4th May, some Ofsted inspections under the Education Inspection Framework will restart, taking place physically on site. These include S8 monitoring inspections of schools graded Inadequate and those graded Requires Improvement at their last two consecutive full inspections.

Where inspectors find evidence that an inadequate school has improved and is no longer inadequate, Ofsted will be able to convert this to a full S5 inspection which will be graded. Where inspectors find evidence that a RI school has improved, they will recommend that a full inspection is carried out before the end of the summer term.

Ofsted will also inspect Good schools that, due to the pandemic, have not had an inspection within the statutory five year window. These will be S8 inspections. Outstanding schools will also be able to request an inspection. When considering such requests, Ofsted will prioritise those schools that have gone the longest without an inspection.

Any 'full' EIF inspections carried out in the summer term will maintain the four key judgements, but with additional flexibility in recognition of the current pandemic context. Following the piloting of changes to inspection methods to take account of the challenges raised by Covid-19, Ofsted have now issued an updated set of EIF Handbooks to reflect this. The updated handbooks can be

accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif> which also includes a helpful summary of the key changes. Some of the key changes to the Inspection Handbook, not all of which are directly linked to the pandemic, include:

A new section on 'Inspection during the COVID-19 pandemic' which covers:

Preparation and Planning

- During the preparation phone call with the head, the lead inspector will seek to understand the specific impact of Covid on the school community and how school leaders responded.
- This discussion will also explore how the school implemented the curriculum remotely and what, if any, elements of remote education remain in place at the time of inspection.
- Given these additional discussions, the conversation may take longer than the pre-pandemic allotted time of 90 minutes.

Curriculum

- Inspectors recognise that most schools will have been unable to implement the curriculum in the usual way during the pandemic. They further recognise that schools were not required by the DfE to provide education to all pupils from March 2020 to July 2020 due to Covid and may not have been doing so. Throughout the inspection, inspectors will seek to understand how the school adapted and prioritised the curriculum from September 2020.
- This will include exploring how the school implemented its curriculum remotely. Inspectors will also look at how subject leaders and teachers have identified pupils' learning gaps and new starting points, and how they have responded to that in their curriculum planning.

Remote Education

- The quality of remote education between March and August 2020 will not impact on Ofsted's judgement of the school's quality of education.
- To understand the implementation of the curriculum, inspectors may discuss remote education with teachers, parents and pupils. They may also review completed work and teaching materials. This will be the case regardless of whether remote education is in place at the time of inspection.

External Data

- Inspectors will not expect or accept internal data from schools, either instead of or in addition to published data.

Leadership

- Inspectors will seek to understand how school leaders supported the school community throughout the pandemic, for example by understanding how:
 - remote education was put in place and monitored;
 - teachers and support staff were prepared for remote education;
 - vulnerable pupils were kept safe and prioritised for face-to-face education;
 - parents were kept up to date with developments and changes;
 - Covid related staff absence impacted on the running of the school; and
 - staff and pupils' well-being have been promoted.

Safeguarding and Attendance

- Inspectors will pay close attention to how school leaders adapted approaches to safeguarding during the pandemic to make sure that:
 - vulnerable pupils were prioritised for face-to-face education in school; and

- safeguarding procedures remained effective for those receiving remote education, as well as those attending school.
- Inspectors will discuss how safeguarding arrangements have changed over time due to the pandemic, and how school leaders have made sure that they remain effective.

Personal Development

- Inspectors will seek to understand what took place before the pandemic, what the school has in place currently and what its future plans are. Inspectors recognise that many elements of personal development that were in place before the pandemic may have been disrupted. Therefore, they will focus on understanding the steps that leaders have taken to offer a wide range of personal development opportunities since the school opened to all pupils in March 2021.

Remote Elements of the Inspection

- Although inspections will be carried out on site, some elements of the inspection may be conducted via video/telephone calls; this will be agreed with the head at the start of the inspection. It will usually only be used to involve pupils, parents, Governors/Trustees and others with leadership responsibility in the inspection process who are unable to physically attend at the school site.

Disapplication and Modifications of the Early Years Foundation Stage

- Ofsted recognise that the disruption to learning caused by the pandemic may have impacted on what children have learned which could result in some children having a wider than usual range of starting points and gaps in their knowledge. Inspectors will pay close attention to how schools identify and address any of these delays and gaps.
- When determining inspection judgements, the inspector will take account of all failures to meet EYFS requirements, even where they have been modified (to support early years providers and schools during the pandemic, in April 2020 the Government temporarily disapplied and modified certain elements of the EYFS statutory framework). If the inspector judges the early years provision not to have an acceptable standard of care and/or quality of education, the specific early years judgement and the overall effectiveness will be inadequate.

Between May 2012 and November 2020, primary and secondary schools (maintained and academies) judged to be outstanding at their most recent S5 inspection were exempt from routine inspections. These schools are now once again subject to routine S5 inspections. This also applies to academy converter schools that were formerly exempt because the overall effectiveness of their predecessor school was outstanding at its most recent S5 inspection.

All formerly exempt schools must receive an initial S5 or S8 inspection before 1st August 2026

- Those schools that were last inspected under S5 before September 2015 will receive an initial S5 inspection.
- Those last inspected under S5 after September 2015 will receive an initial s8 inspection.
- If an initial S8 inspection indicates that outstanding performance may not have been maintained, Ofsted will normally carry out an S5 inspection within the next academic year or as soon as possible thereafter and, in any event, before 1st August 2027.

The updated Handbook also clarifies that the Clerk to the Governing Board may attend the final feedback meeting to take notes.

Inspectors will gather evidence about the use of the pupil premium and catch-up funding, particularly regarding:

- the level of funding received by the school in the current academic year and levels of pupil premium funding received in previous academic years;
- how leaders and Governors have spent the funding, their rationale for this spending and its intended impact; and
- the learning and progress of disadvantaged pupils, as shown by published outcomes data.

Ofsted will continue to prioritise inspections of all schools where significant concerns are raised (such as safeguarding), when necessary.

Unless significant concerns are raised, Ofsted will not inspect secondary schools in the first half of the summer term. This will allow staff to focus on assigning and submitting teacher-assessed grades for Year 11 and 13 pupils. Secondary schools will be included in inspection schedules from the 21st June.

Under Ofsted's plans, most schools will not receive an inspection until the programme of routine inspections restarts in September 2021.

Sexual Abuse in Schools

Following the anonymous testimonials posted on the website 'Everyone's Invited', the Government has asked Ofsted to undertake an immediate review of safeguarding policies in both state and independent schools/colleges in relation to sexual abuse. Ofsted's review will look at:

- whether schools and colleges have appropriate processes in place to allow pupils to report sexual abuse concerns freely, knowing these will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately;
- whether there is sufficient guidance for schools and colleges on how they should deal with sexual harassment and violence allegations, and whether they understand and implement guidance well; and
- whether current inspection regimes in both state and private schools are strong enough to address concerns and promote the welfare of children.

Ofsted will visit a sample of schools and colleges where cases have been highlighted although the review will not report on individual schools or cases but present a picture of good and poor practice across the country. As well as talking to school and college leaders, pupils and students, Ofsted will look at how well systems of support and response are working. The review will look at whether schools and colleges need further support in teaching about sex and relationships, and whether current inspection regimes in state and private schools are robust enough around the issue of sexual abuse. It will also consider how well schools and colleges are working with local multi-agency safeguarding partners. Ofsted's aim is to conclude the review by the end of May 2021.

The review will answer the following key questions:

Safeguarding and curriculum

- Is the existing safeguarding framework and guidance for inspectors strong enough to properly assess how schools and colleges safeguard and promote the welfare of children?
- How can schools and colleges be supported further to successfully deliver the new RSHE curriculum, including teaching about sexual abuse, cyber-bullying and pornography as well as healthy relationships and consent?

Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

- How well are safeguarding guidance and processes understood and working between schools, colleges and local multi-agency partners?

- Does working between schools, colleges and local safeguarding partners, including local authority children's social care, the police, health services and other support, need to be strengthened?

Victims' voice and reporting

- How does the current system of safeguarding in schools and colleges listen to the voices of children when reporting sexual abuse whether occurring within or outside school?
- What prevents children from reporting sexual abuse?
- Do victims receive timely and appropriate support from the right place?
- Have inspections by ISI (the Independent Schools Inspectorate) and Ofsted been robust enough in relation to the issues raised?

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mid-March saw a report published by the Anna Freud Centre which found that 93% of 3,298 young people (aged 11-19) surveyed in the UK (between November 2020 and January 2021) want mental health to be brought into the classroom, and for conversations about mental health to be normalised in schools and FE colleges.

The report emerges as the coronavirus pandemic and closure of schools has had a profound impact on children and young people's mental health. According to the Centre, in England, the proportion of children and young people with a probable mental health disorder has risen from one in eight in November 2017, up to one in six in July 2020.

The report was published at the same time as the Anna Freud Centre launched [Mentally Healthy Schools](#) for secondary schools and FE settings, an information and resource hub offering free, quality assured mental health resources and guidance for education professionals. This follows the success of the primary school hub which was previously launched by the centre.

The report, which can be accessed in full via [working-towards-mentally-healthy-schools-and-fe-colleges-final.pdf](#) found that:

- Schools were important places to talk about and learn about mental health as well as seek support for themselves or for their friends.
- Depression and anxiety, body image and identity were the top three most important topics that respondents felt they should learn about in school.
- Friendships, family and relationships were highlighted as the top three positive impacts on respondents' mental health.
- Schoolwork, exams and family were highlighted as the top three negative impacts on respondents' mental health.
- Only 52% of the respondents stated that they would talk to an adult in school if they were worried about their mental health or the mental health of a fellow pupil with 48% stating that they would not speak to any adult within school. The younger the children were, the less likely they were to seek an adult to speak with in school: at age 11-13, 52% said they would not speak to an adult in school, falling to 47% for 14-16 year olds.

The report concludes, unsurprisingly, that there is no single template for creating a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing. Every school and FE college is different with a whole-school approach dependent on the demographics, social and economic circumstances of the school/FE college and its community. However, there are some important questions that school leaders, including Governors, can explore, which include:

Leading Change

- Does your school have access to evidence-based and quality assured materials about mental health?

- Does your school have a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing?
- Do you have a member of staff who leads on mental health?
- Is there a school Governor with overall lead on mental health?
- Is wellbeing embedded in your school ethos? Is there enough time allocated in the timetable to teach mental health and wellbeing?

Working Together

- Does your school work closely with health and voluntary services so that students can be signposted when they need help?
- Is your whole-school or college approach informed by the views of parents and carers and students?
- How do you work with parents and carers to identify and support children with mental health needs? How can you support parents and carers to discuss mental health and wellbeing with their children?

Promoting Wellbeing

- What else can you do as a school to encourage openness throughout your setting?
- Are there trusted adults that children can turn to when they are troubled?
- Do you have a peer support group in your school, and does it give opportunities to address mental health and wellbeing?
- Are students consulted about the school environment? Do you have safe spaces in your school where students can go if they are feeling overwhelmed?
- Is mental health training cascaded to all staff?

Supporting Staff

- Does your school carry out an annual survey of staff wellbeing?
- What actions can you take to improve staff mental health and wellbeing following the pandemic?
- Does your mental health policy include staff wellbeing?
- Do all staff have an understanding of how they can support students?
- Do staff feel confident discussing mental health with pupils? Do staff feel confident that they can report their own mental health and wellbeing problems safely?

Understanding Need

- Children aged 11-13 are least likely to speak to an adult in school about a mental health problem. This is at a time when students are dealing with transition from primary school and may be feeling isolated. What can your school do to encourage this age group to engage more in mental health?
- Does your school carry out an annual survey of children's mental health and wellbeing?
- Do your school transition plans address the impact of changing schools, increased work load and exams on new pupils?
- Do you have open discussions about sexual identity, race and other forms of discrimination at your school? Does your school discuss how you can improve preparation for exams with your pupils?

Firm Foundations updates

A new publication has been added to the library of the Firm Foundations governor training app. It is called 'Guide to Admissions' and has been written by our team to support governors of Catholic schools in the processes. It will be a helpful reminder for some and will be particularly useful for governors unfamiliar with admissions procedures. It should load automatically to the library on apps on smart phones provided you are connected to Wi-Fi when opening the app.

Now is a good time to remind governors to make use of this training app. The diocese has invested in this training app for our governors so that it is 'free as the point of delivery'. The more it is used, the greater the likelihood that time can be given to write fresh materials and an second extension to the licence. We are currently working on some other publications to be added later in the year. There will be one on Relationships & Sex Education to reflect impact to the changes to legislation. Another will be based around Governors responsibilities for buildings. Other dioceses are starting to use Firm Foundations and some are working on adding publications. We hope some of them will be added to the library soon.

Contact Patrick Harrison (patrickharrison@rcaos.org.uk) if you would like him to give a presentation about Firm Foundations at a governing body meeting. New governors (or those who need reminding of their username/password can use our online form <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/ffr/>

There is a facility for one governor (perhaps the Chair or the Clerk) to have oversight right. This will enable the usage of the training app to be monitored by governors. Please email patrickharrison@rcaos.org.uk if you want someone to be given that facility.

Formatio updates

All modules of this Catholic Education Service developed online training programme for governors of Catholic schools and academies are now live. This is a different style of training and complements that material available on our Firm Foundations app. It is free for governors to register and follow the content.

The five modules are:

1. An Introduction to Catholic Education
2. The Environment & Language of Catholic Education
3. Strategic Leadership
4. Accountability
5. Financial Probity.

The link to the website is: <http://formatio-ces.org/moodle/login/index.php>