

## Briefing on Ofsted's 'Big Listen' consultation, closes Friday 31 May

### 1. Overview

HMCI launched [The Big Listen](#) in early March, with four key areas of focus to be applied across all areas of the inspectorate's work. They are: how Ofsted reports on its findings; how inspections are carried out; the positive impact Ofsted has on the sectors it inspects; and what Ofsted can do to become a world class inspectorate and regulator. For each area of inspection activity e.g. schools or social care, a series of more detailed questions are posed under each of these four headings.

This briefing summarises these more granular asks and is intended to support ADCS members to respond to The Big Listen individually, organisationally or in regional groups and to inform the national submission ADCS plans to make. For each of the four areas, respondents are asked to rate how important each of these things are to them on a five-point scale, from not at all important through to very important.

There are some recurring open questions too, outlined in full in the first section and summarised in subsequent sections for the sake of brevity.

ADCS plans to hold some virtual consultation events to feed into our national submission, likely in April. Further details will be cascaded via regions and shared in the e-bulletin once available.

### 2. Early years

#### Reporting

- Be clear what is it like for the children attending this setting, are they safe and happy?
- How effective is the setting at supporting learning and development of children?
- Describe support for children with SEND / support for disadvantaged children
- Learning and development of children in this setting in comparison with local and national outcomes
- Links with other providers e.g. where part of a group or chain that shares staff and practices
- Open question about priorities when reporting, why, and what can be improved.

#### Inspection practices

- Consistency from place to place and across the same types of provider
- Visits are long enough to allow inspectors to make accurate judgements
- The notification period is short but appropriate
- The context of the provider's local area is taken into account in forming judgements
- Open ask for comments on inspection practices and whether they should change.

#### Impact

- Providers are held to account for the quality of education and care on offer as well as safety
- The impact of inspection is equal on all providers, regardless of size
- Reassures parents and carers about learning and development of children plus their safety
- The number of good and outstanding providers gives a strong indication of overall quality in the system
- Ofsted should be able to inspect provider groups
- Open question about how Ofsted can best raise standards and improve lives for children.

#### Culture

- An open question seeking comments on Ofsted's openness and how easy it is to provide feedback to the inspectorate to support improvement.

### **3. FE and skills**

**Reporting** (includes open question about priorities and improvements in reporting)

- What is provision like for learners, do they have a good learning experience, do they feel safe?
- How the provider works with employers, where relevant
- Support for the most disadvantaged to gain skills
- How leaders and staff create a safe, positive environment and the impact this has on behaviours and attitudes
- The impact of leaders, managers and those responsible for governance on learners
- Curriculum and beyond; support for mental health and wellbeing, character development and access to opportunity
- How the curriculum develops knowledge, skills and behaviours plus the contribution of teaching and assessment and learner outcomes
- Training gives apprentices the knowledge and behaviours that helps learners to contribute to their workplace and progress into sustained employment or further study
- Inspectors consider progress and achievement of learners, destinations etc. in overall provider judgments
- Support for SEND learners and those with high needs.

**Inspection practice** (includes open question about current practices and future changes)

- Consistency in carrying out inspection from place to place and across the same types provision and /or provider
- Consistency across the same phases of education across different providers e.g. sixth form colleges and sixth forms in schools
- The inspection is long enough for inspectors to form accurate judgments
- Notifications for inspection are short but appropriate
- Provider context is taken into account in judgements.

**Impact** (includes open question about raising standards and improving lives)

- Ofsted hold FE and skills providers to account for the quality of education / training learners receive and for their safety
- Ofsted holds FE and skills providers to account for the employability and life chances of learners
- The number of good and outstanding providers is truly reflective of the quality of the sector
- Ofsted has equal impact on different types of provision and providers
- Ofsted should be able to inspect part time provision for 14 - 16-year-olds in FE (new power needed)
- Ofsted should be able to inspect higher technical qualifications.

**Culture** – open question as above about openness and ease of providing feedback.

### **4. Initial teacher education and professional development**

**Reporting** (includes open question about priorities and improvements in reporting)

- Ofsted will make it clear what provision is like for trainees, such as how well they are supported in learning
- Make it clear whether the content of DfE frameworks is fully covered in training
- Make a clear judgement on the quality of training and development and on leadership and management
- Be clear on how data are used to inform judgments as well as local context.

### **Inspection practice**

- Be consistent from place to place and across the same types of providers
- The length of inspection allows inspectors to make reliable judgments
- Notifications are short but appropriate
- Consolidate, where possible, by inspecting all courses offered by a provider at the same time.

### **Impact**

- Ofsted holds providers to account for the quality of education and training for ITE / ECF and NPQ programmes
- The number of good and outstanding ITE providers gives a strong indication of the quality of the sector
- Open question on Ofsted's impact on ITE / ECF and NPQ provision.

**Culture** – open question as above about openness and ease of providing feedback.

## **5. Social care**

**Reporting** (includes open question about priorities and improvements in reporting)

- What is it like for a child or young person living in or being supported by a provider, or service, are they safe and happy?
- Provider impact on the experience and progress of children and young people
- How a provider, or service, is contributing to children and young people's long-term health, education and employment outcomes
- How inspectors have taken into account children's experiences and the wider service context
- Make links with other providers clear e.g. where part of a group that shares practices and staff
- Do you read ILACS / SCCIF reports?

**Inspection practice** (includes open question about current practices and future changes)

- Be consistent from place to place
- Be long enough to form accurate judgments
- Inspection focuses not only on compliance and practice but the experience and progress of children too
- Local context is considered in forming provider judgments.

**Impact** (includes open question about raising standards and improving lives)

- Ofsted holds the LA / CSC providers to account for the quality of provision
- The number of good and outstanding grades gives an indication of the quality of the system
- An unintended consequence of Ofsted inspection and regulation is that children's homes sometimes do not accept the children most in need into their care
- An unintended consequence of state inspection is that children's homes sometimes accept children they are not best placed to support
- Ofsted should focus more on the experience and progress of children rather than compliance with regulation
- Ofsted should be able to inspect groups as an entity, such as a large care home provider
- Ofsted should have greater powers to address unregistered providers caring for vulnerable children.

**Culture** – open question as above about openness and ease of providing feedback.

## 6. Schools

**Reporting** (includes open question about priorities and improvements in reporting)

- Be clear what attending this school is like for pupils, are they happy and safe?
- The quality of education including the acquisition of knowledge and skills, teaching and planning
- Leaders and staff foster positive behaviour, attitudes and improved attendance
- Make a clear judgement on the quality of personal development for pupils e.g. character development and preparation for future success
- Effectiveness of keeping children safe and protected from harm
- How well disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND are supported
- Be clear how pupil outcomes, and other data, has affected the overall judgement
- Ofsted should be able to report on the performance of a wider group e.g. MAT (new power needed).

**Inspection practice** (includes open question about current practices and future changes)

- Inspection is carried out in a consistent way from place to place
- Inspection is consistent across the same phases of education offered by different types of schools e.g. grammars or faith schools
- Inspections are long enough to make an informed judgement
- Notification is short but appropriate
- The context of a local area is considered during inspection and informs judgments.

**Impact** (includes open question about raising standards and improving lives)

- Schools are held to account for the quality of education and for keeping children safe
- An unintended consequence of inspection is increased exclusions, suspensions or off rolling
- An unintended consequence of inspection is schools keeping pupils in class who may put other pupils at risk
- The number of good and outstanding schools is a strong indication of quality in the system
- Ofsted should be able to inspect any groups schools are part of e.g. MATs.

**Culture** – open question as above about openness and ease of providing feedback.

## 7. Safeguarding in schools

- Should safeguarding be separate from the leadership and management judgement?
- Given the importance of safeguarding, should it be inspected more regularly than once every four years?
- Where a school is inadequate for safeguarding but otherwise good or better, should Ofsted hold back the final report for three months to allow for improvement and a reinspection before publication?
- Finally, an ask for any comments on the pause policy published in January 2024.

## 8. SEND

**Reporting** (includes open question about priorities and improvements in reporting)

- Be clear what provision is like for children, are they happy and safe?
- The effectiveness of the provision or service in meeting children and individual learners needs
- How well the provider understands outcomes and how this informs their provision

- Explain how well the provider, or service, performs in relation to local area SEND or support services
- Explain how effective the provider, or service, is at supporting learners with SEND to move to the next phase of education or adulthood
- How well the provider, or service, works with parents and carers and responds to children's ambitions
- How well the provider, or service, works with partners to address the needs of children with SEND in their area
- Open question about Ofsted's priorities when reporting on provision, AP or SEND services, and what can be improved.

**Inspection practice** (includes open question about current practices and future changes)

- Work with leaders and practitioners to understand whether a setting, or service, is meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND
- Work with leaders and practitioners to understand whether the setting, service or partnership is offering a positive experience that improves future outcomes
- Uses available data and the outcomes of children and young people to understand positive experiences and the impact on outcomes of an offer
- Uses available feedback to understand positive experiences and impact on outcomes.

**Impact** (includes open question about raising standards and improving lives)

- Ofsted holds: early years settings; mainstream schools, AP and PRUs; special schools; FE and skills providers; local areas to account for the quality of provision
- An unintended consequence of inspection and regulation is mainstream schools exclude, suspend and off roll pupils with SEND
- An unintended consequence of inspection is mainstream schools are less inclusive of SEND pupils
- The number of good and outstanding provision is a strong indication of system quality
- Should Ofsted inspect groups of providers as a single entity e.g. MATs or care homes?
- Should Ofsted have a role with smaller unregulated settings e.g. unregistered AP?

**Culture** – open question as above about openness and ease of providing feedback.

**9. Any other comments or information.**