



## OFSTED: AN NUT SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR MEMBERS IN ENGLAND

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Many teachers are concerned about Ofsted inspection. It can be a 'high stakes' process and can leave individual teachers, departments or teams, and whole schools feeling under pressure.

### ***What we say***

Schools can often add to the pressure by insisting that staff are 'Ofsted ready' by conducting unnecessary 'Mocksteds' and endless observations, learning walks and book checks.

The important thing to remember is that you are not alone. There is information available on the new inspection framework and its key changes on the NUT website at <http://www.teachers.org.uk/education-and-equalities/ofsted>.

School inspection affects all members. Being part of the NUT allows us to act collectively in response to inspection, with the weight of the Union behind us. Consider asking your school representative to call a meeting on Ofsted inspection. If your school does not currently have a representative, get together as members to elect one. Further advice is on this is available at [www.teachers.org.uk/node/10513](http://www.teachers.org.uk/node/10513).

Consider asking colleagues to join the NUT, to strengthen your school group, and to include them in the support the NUT offers.

### **How should teachers prepare for inspection?**

#### As an NUT group

Ideally, meet as an NUT group first. Discuss your concerns, aspirations, how you can support each other, and the approach you wish to make collectively with your school leadership team, governors, and others (eg local authority advisers or representatives from an academy chain).

Once you have established a consensus through that process ask, as an NUT group, for you head teacher to call a full staff meeting to discuss the approach of the school to inspection. It doesn't matter how far in the future that may be – the earlier you have a clear, understood, reasonable and collective professional agreement on your approach to inspection as a school, the better.

Items for discussion might include:

- How expected additional work related to inspection can be minimised and managed most effectively;

- How any additional work relates to NUT protocols on workload, observation, planning etc (find out more information from the guide to useful resources at <http://teachers.org.uk/education-and-equalities/ofsted/>);
- Whether you will agree as a school to use the Ofsted staff questionnaire (the NUT recommends this);
- How teaching staff can contribute to the school self evaluation;
- What data or records will be made available to Ofsted. Pages 13 and 14 of the school inspection handbook (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/school-inspection-handbook>) outline the information inspectors will expect school leaders to provide. It should not be necessary for individuals to duplicate such information, or to collect and record other information, except where it has been agreed that this will be useful to inform learning and teaching;
- Whether you will seek feedback from inspectors following lesson observations and, if so, whether this will be individual or as a group; and
- Whether your school will follow the NUT/NASUWT joint pay policy and NUT advice on pay, and how Ofsted inspectors may scrutinise teachers pay, pay progression and performance (<http://teachers.org.uk/node/18469>).

This list is not exhaustive. You may have clear agreements on some of these areas already. In the process of meeting as an NUT school group, you may identify other areas for discussion not listed above.

### As an individual

Remember that you are the professional in your classroom. No one knows your class(es) or students better than you do. Be confident in your approach and don't be tempted to 'put on a show' for the inspectors.

If your lessons are observed, inspectors will not judge or grade these individually. Instead they will be looking for evidence that will inform their judgement on the quality of teaching across the school as a whole. In addition to observing lessons, this might, for example, include looking at students' work in books and folders, talking to pupils or hearing pupils read.

### **Ofsted – busting some myths**

Ofsted has a very useful 'FAQ' guide at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/school-inspection-policy-some-faqs](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/school-inspection-policy-some-faqs)

It might be a good idea to have this available at NUT meetings on inspection, and any subsequent meetings you have with your head teacher, governors, or others. It exposes some misconceptions about Ofsted inspection that can place unnecessary pressure and anxiety on teachers and other school staff. Among the things the document makes clear are:

- Ofsted **does not** have a model lesson;

- Ofsted **does not** advance particular methods of planning, teaching or assessing;
- Ofsted **does not** favour a particular teaching style or lesson structure;
- Ofsted **does not** insist on a particular curriculum design;
- Ofsted **does not** expect to see individual lesson plans for every lesson it inspects;
- Ofsted **will not** expect to see the use of National Curriculum level descriptors from September 2014;
- Ofsted **does not** require that 'independent learning' is demonstrated in every lesson, or part of a lesson, observed;
- Ofsted **does not** require governors to undertake lesson observations (NUT advice is that observations should always have a clear purpose and be agreed with teachers in advance);
- Ofsted **does not** require all pupils to make a specific number of points progress for a school to be deemed 'good'; and
- Ofsted **does not** require all observations of lessons, or parts of lessons, to meet all of the 'outstanding' grade descriptors in order to determine that teaching overall is outstanding.

### **How should we deal with an unfavourable inspection outcome?**

In a minority of cases, schools may find themselves to be judged by Ofsted as in the categories of having serious weaknesses or requiring special measures. Support is available in those circumstances. Where this occurs, it is advisable for NUT members to ask their school representative to contact the NUT AdviceLine on 0203 006 6266 or [nutadvice@nut.org.uk](mailto:nutadvice@nut.org.uk).

Schools requiring special measures or significant improvement may find themselves 'eligible for intervention' which could result in pressure to become a sponsored academy. An NUT legal advice note, *Forced Conversion Under the Academies Act 2010 - Schools Eligible For Intervention*, explains this situation in more detail and is available on the website at: <http://www.teachers.org.uk/academies>

Where a school is in this situation the Rep should notify the Regional Office and seek advice.

### **How should we deal with concerns about the inspection process, or the conduct of inspectors?**

Concerns may arise about the conduct of inspection from time to time.

- Where members have concerns about the **process of inspection**, including in relation to the appropriate inspection of early years and sixth form provision, they are advised to use the Ofsted complaints procedure (<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/contact-us/how-complain>) at the earliest opportunity.
- Where a complaint regarding the **conduct of an inspection** is considered necessary it is advisable to initiate the complaint at the time. Experience suggests it is extremely difficult to have judgements moderated once the Ofsted report for a school has been completed.

### What should I do next?

In considering a complaint members are advised to:

- Notify their NUT school representative and involve them in discussions about proceeding with a complaint.
- Notify their head teacher or other school manager and seek their agreement and support for such a complaint, or request their NUT representative to discuss the complaint with the head teacher or other school manager.
- Notify their NUT Regional Office of their concerns and details of any complaint that is lodged.
- NUT members requiring further advice on issues related to school inspection are advised to contact their school representative in the first instance, and if necessary refer issues to the NUT AdviceLine on 0203 006 6266 or [nutadvice@nut.org.uk](mailto:nutadvice@nut.org.uk)

### Further Resources

- NUT information and guidance on Ofsted inspection  
<http://www.teachers.org.uk/education-and-equalities/ofsted>
- Become an NUT school representative:  
<http://teachers.org.uk/node/10513>
- Ofsted Inspection framework:  
<http://www.Ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-school-inspection>
- Ofsted school inspection handbook:  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/school-inspection-handbook>
- Ofsted 'FAQ' guide:  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/school-inspection-policy-some-faqs>
- Ofsted inspection questionnaire for school staff:  
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/inspection-questionnaire-for-school-staff>

- Ofsted guidance on monitoring visits for “special measures” schools, <http://www.Ofsted.gov.uk/resources/monitoring-inspections-of-schools-are-subject-special-measures-january-2013>
- Ofsted guidance on monitoring visits for “serious weaknesses” schools, <http://www.Ofsted.gov.uk/resources/monitoring-inspections-of-schools-have-serious-weaknesses>
- Ofsted guidance on complaints procedures <http://www.Ofsted.gov.uk/resources/complaints-procedure-raising-concerns-and-making-complaints-about-Ofsted>
- NUT guidance on forced conversion under the Academies Act 2010 <http://www.teachers.org.uk/academies>
- NUT guidance on excessive workload: <http://www.teachers.org.uk/campaigns/protect-teachers/workload>
- NUT guidance on classroom observations: <http://www.teachers.org.uk/campaigns/appraisal>
- NUT guidance on lesson planning: <http://www.teachers.org.uk/node/5696>
- Teachers’ pay and Ofsted <http://www.teachers.org.uk/node/18799>
- NUT Curriculum guidance: <http://www.teachers.org.uk/campaigns/curriculum>
- Parent View: <http://www.parentview.Ofsted.gov.uk/>