

What We Say about OFSTED's consultation on the removal of the exemption from inspection for outstanding schools and colleges

We agreed that the exemption should be removed.

This is the MA's full response, excluding the purely administrative questions such as "What is your name?". The questions largely came in pairs, one for schools, and one for "colleges and other organisations delivering publicly-funded education and training". We answered the same for both, almost word for word, and so here we just give the response on schools. Also included here, in italics, are some of the points we discussed that did not get into our response.

Do you agree we should remove the exemption for outstanding schools, which currently means they are not routinely inspected?

Yes

Comments (Optional)

Schools change, as personnel (teachers, leaders and governors), the curriculum and assessments change. With all these potential changes, the quality of education provision in a school may well have changed since the last inspection.

Do you support our proposed approach for currently exempt outstanding schools/colleges set in paragraphs 19-27 of the consultation document?)

Yes (*There was no "Yes with reservations" option. "Yes" is closer to our position than "No"*)

Comments (Optional)

Where a section 8 inspection finds evidence that the school is no longer outstanding, initiating a section 5 inspection "in the next year or so" leaves schools, governors, staff and parents in limbo for too long. An inspection should be seen as positively supporting school improvement rather than being about high stakes judgement, and a school that has dropped down is in urgent need of support. Any interval of more than two months risks punishing schools unnecessarily if staff move or parents withdraw their children.

Do you have any other comments on the proposals set out in this consultation?

We regard this as an issue of fairness – stakeholders need to be assured that a school is what it appears to be.

(We talked about the resource implication for OFSTED itself, but we decided that is their business.)