



The Annual Report of  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education,  
Children's Services and Skills

# The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2011/12

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Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 121  
of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

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**Sir Michael Wilshaw**  
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

November 2012

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London  
SW1P 3BT

Dear Secretary of State

### **The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 2011/12**

I have pleasure in presenting to Parliament my first Annual Report as Chief Inspector, as required by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The report is underpinned by the findings of nearly 25,000 inspections carried out during 2011/12 – of schools, early years and childcare, services for children and families, adult learning and skills, and colleges. These inspections provide a unique evidence base for the conclusions we draw.

In addition to reporting on Ofsted's inspection findings from the past year, I identify significant trends over time which stress the importance of leadership within the education system at every level, while setting out some of the most prominent challenges for the future.

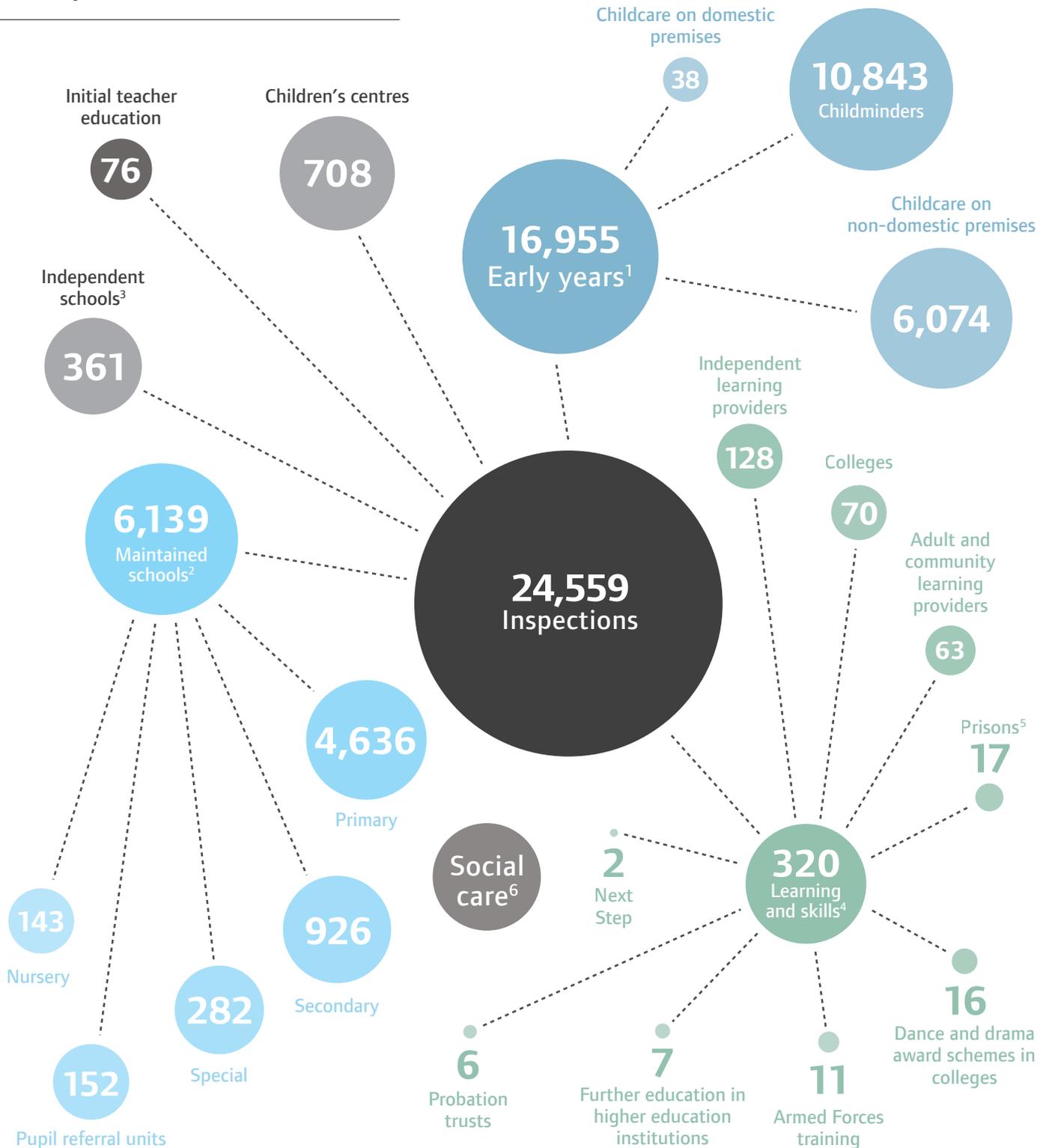
This year, my commentary is supported by three reports that give more detail on the early years, schools, and learning and skills sectors – copies of which will be placed in the Libraries of the House. Because the legal inspection year for most social care provision runs from April to March, the report on social care services will be published in the summer of 2013. This will allow us to report on a full year's inspection following radical changes to several social care frameworks.

Ofsted is committed to supporting improvement and raising standards for every child and every learner – particularly those in the most disadvantaged areas. It is my hope that this report will form a useful contribution to the continuing debate in this regard.

Yours sincerely

**Sir Michael Wilshaw**

## Inspections carried out in 2011/12



**FIGURE 1**

1. These data do not include inspections where there were no children on roll or inspections of providers only on the Childcare Register.
2. Includes Section 5 inspections and Section 8 deemed Section 5 inspections under the Education Act 2005, as amended in 2011.
3. Ofsted only inspects non-association independent schools, which account for around half of the independent schools in England.
4. Data include five pilot inspections and 11 prison inspections undertaken in partnership with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.
5. Inspections of immigration removal centres are undertaken as part of Ofsted's inspection of prisons.
6. Ofsted also carries out inspections of a range of different types of children's social care, including children's homes, and of local authorities. These inspections are not included here because the findings from these inspections will be covered in a separate sector report in June 2013.

Source: Ofsted



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**Data View:** Inspection findings can also be viewed at [www.dataview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.dataview.ofsted.gov.uk). Data View enables users to compare the performance of providers over time from Ofsted inspections across England by region, local authority and constituency area.



# The importance of leadership

Sir Michael Wilshaw, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

I came to this post because I felt I could make a difference, just as I felt when becoming a headteacher. I always felt privileged to be a headteacher with the power and influence to shape young people's lives and through them the society in which we live. In over 40 years in education, I always wanted to run a good institution or turn a poor one into a good one.



This is my first Annual Report as the new Chief Inspector, on the 20th anniversary of Ofsted's creation



As a head working in deprived communities, I made no excuses for children's backgrounds. I was determined that they should have the same chance of a good education as those from more privileged homes. However, I also realised that schools had to compensate for the challenging and sometimes desperate circumstances in which some children lived. Crucially, I was supported by dedicated staff who shared my conviction that every child could succeed, and who gave whatever time and effort was needed – often well beyond the school day – to make that happen.

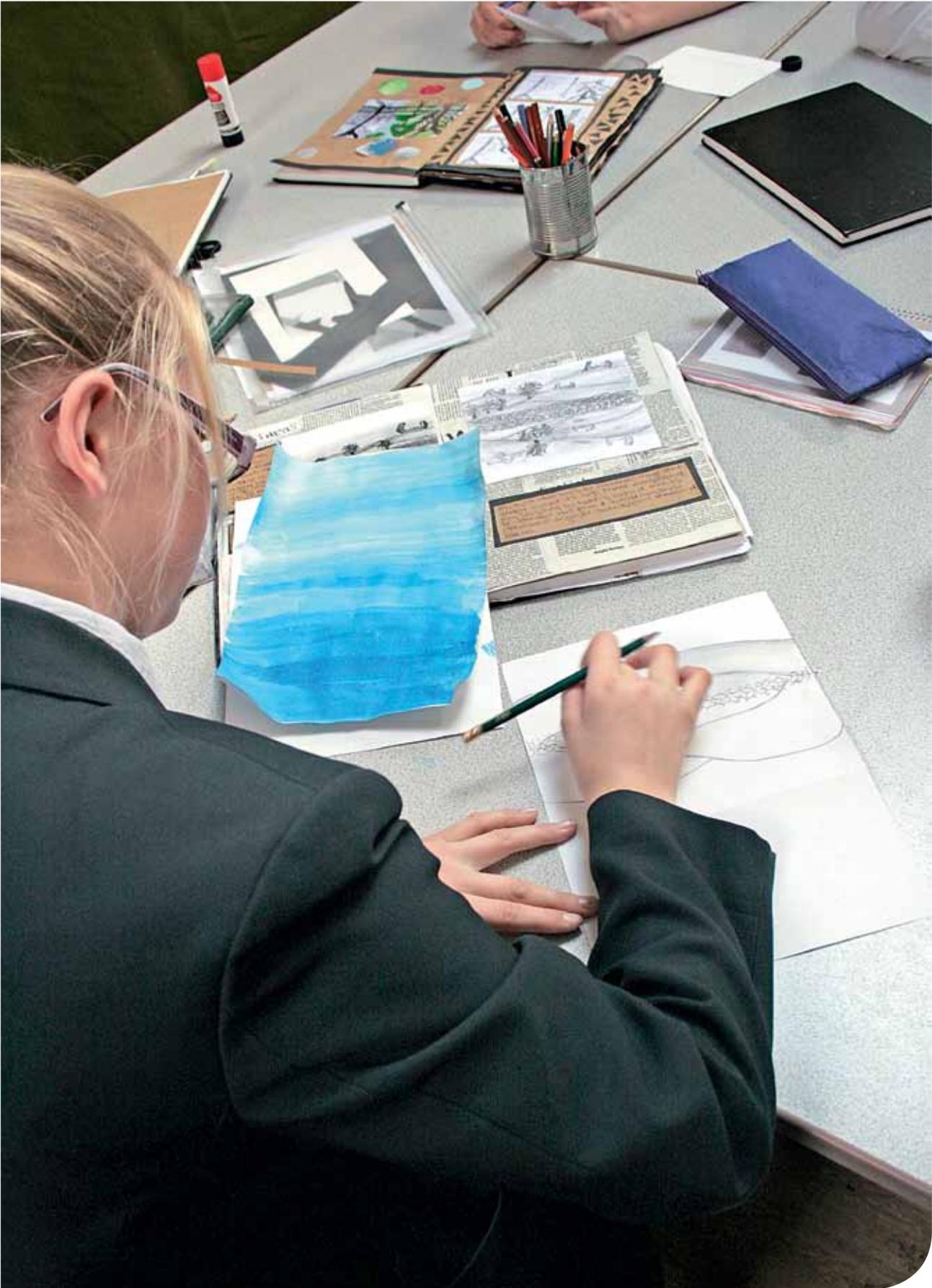
As I have said many times: **teaching, at its best, is the most noble and honourable of professions.**

I am writing this, my first Annual Report as Chief Inspector, on the 20th anniversary of Ofsted's creation in September 1992. It is appropriate, therefore, to reflect on how important the inspection service has been in improving our education and care services and making them more transparent and accountable.

As a result of inspection, children, young people and learners now have a better chance of a good education and high quality care. It is important that we remind those who complain about standards today of how low they were in pre-Ofsted days, and particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, when I worked in places like Peckham, Bermondsey, Hackney and West Ham. In that time, whole generations of children and young people were failed by an unaccountable and, in many ways, self-indulgent school system.

The school where I was head before moving to Ofsted, Mossbourne Academy, in Hackney, stands on the site of Hackney Downs School, which in its day represented the worst excesses of that period. But there were many other dreadful schools that never hit the headlines. Such schools have been rooted out by Ofsted and are unlikely to exist today.







Headteachers and principals have more power and autonomy than ever before to raise standards



Over the last 20 years, Ofsted has been instrumental in changing the educational landscape by challenging an establishment that is sometimes too cosy and complacent, and occasionally attempts to defend the indefensible. Like many other headteachers, I would not have been able to achieve so much without the confidence of being backed by Ofsted's criteria and judgements when setting expectations of both staff and students.

Ofsted replaced a system of irregular and infrequent inspections that sampled the state of the nation but did little to hold individual schools and colleges to account. At that time schools had only recently been given control of their budgets, and were still wrestling with the new skills this required. They were working to implement the new and extremely detailed National Curriculum. School by school test and examination results had not yet been published, and Ofsted had nothing to do with the inspection of childcare, social care or local authorities, and was about to lose responsibility for further education inspection.

Ofsted set out the first national benchmarks for standards in schools, initial teacher education and further education colleges. The first framework and inspection handbook began a culture of setting clear criteria for evaluating performance, making rigorous, evidence-based judgements and reporting without fear or favour.

As the education system improved, Ofsted raised the bar to combat complacency and to encourage schools and other providers to improve. As a result of this and other accountability levers, standards have risen. New inspection frameworks have continued to raise the bar. As a consequence, there is little doubt that a very high proportion of today's schools, if judged on earlier frameworks, would be good or better.





As things stand, the overall picture across Ofsted's inspection remits is that broadly 70% of providers are good or better. In most assessments, a 7/10 mark might equate to 'fair but could do better'. For an aspiring leading nation in a 21st century global economy, it has to be **'not good enough; must do better.'**

If England is to compete with the very best, then strong leadership is absolutely critical.

**Therefore, this report is fundamentally about the importance of leadership at every level.** When I look at any inspection report, my eyes are always drawn to comments on leadership because leaders are the key people in changing and improving the culture and performance of the organisation. Leaders provide the role models for the rest of the institution.

I have learned what a difference schools make when everyone pulls in the same direction, with children's needs and interests at heart. It is leadership that drives improvement by creating the culture and ethos needed in order to push up standards. The same is true of other providers.

In education and in learning and skills, the best leaders focus on the leadership of teaching and learning, no matter what the size of their

**If England is to compete with the very best, then strong leadership is absolutely critical**

institution. Just as in successful business, great leadership is never detached from the core purpose and processes of the enterprise.

When leadership overlooks this, whether in business, schools, colleges, training providers children's homes, voluntary organisations, local authorities or government, success will slip into mediocrity or failure.

Most of our inspection findings are attributable to strengths and weaknesses in leadership, and leadership accounts for all the most important findings in this Annual Report.

Wherever we find success, good leadership is behind it. Where we find inadequacy, questions must be asked of leadership, of governance, and of those accountable at a local and national level. And we shall ask them.



It is leadership that drives improvement by creating the culture and ethos needed in order to push up standards



Leaders in the sectors we inspect are expected to take responsibility for the improvement agenda and deliver on this. It is for the professionals to show what they can do; to lead the way.

**Headteachers and principals have more power and autonomy than ever before to raise standards:** they are in the driving seat in a way I would never have thought possible when I first became a head. They have the freedom to do what they believe is best. It is important they use these new freedoms to deliver improvements in the education service.

Schools also have access to other excellent schools that are accredited to provide advice and support. These are schools led by local or national leaders of education, as well as the new breed of teaching schools. The National College has done much

to promote improvement partnerships between schools, and to develop leaders who can influence, inspire and rise to new challenges. In particular, the College has rightly stressed the primary importance of the leadership of teaching and learning as key to educational improvement.

Ofsted will play its part in supporting leaders who want to raise standards. I shall say more about this later. The remainder of this report focuses on:

- schools and the leadership needed to improve the 30% of schools that are not yet good
- the learning and skills sector, questioning the leadership of too many colleges that are failing to prepare young people and adults for the world of work
- serious inequities in access to good education, asking what local authorities are doing to improve provision in their areas
- the need to raise the quality of early years education, particularly for the most disadvantaged young children
- the role played by Ofsted and the way in which inspection will be complemented by a greater emphasis on support and improvement.





# Schools continue to improve but have further to go



## Standards are rising

A lot has changed in 20 years. Schools have improved tremendously and so have the achievements of children and young people. In 1992, only 38% of 16-year-olds achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A to C. In 2012, the provisional figure was over 80%, with 59% of pupils attaining grades A\* to C in five subjects, including English and mathematics. In primary schools, too, results have improved, at first dramatically in the period 1997 to 2002 then more steadily in mathematics and English, hovering at around 80% for the last few years. Improvement has accelerated in secondary schools in the last five years.

## Challenges remain

The overall performance figures obscure some real challenges for schools and their leadership, of which I shall focus on two.

The first is that the gap between the achievements of children from disadvantaged backgrounds and the rest remains stubbornly wide. Schools that have narrowed this gap have leaders that focus attention on the needs and interests of every individual child or young person, finding the keys to learning, providing the most expert teaching and supporting those who find learning most difficult. School leaders now need to pay particular attention to the way they use their **pupil premium funding** to support disadvantaged learners.

The second challenge relates to our school performance in relation to the rest of the world. In my view, in terms of education and skills internationally, **'Education England'** is not yet on the medal podium but is picking up pace. In the most recent international survey of the reading, mathematics and science skills of 15-year-olds<sup>1</sup> in 2009, England does relatively well in science, but is not significantly different from the average for Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries that participated in the study for reading and mathematics.



The gaps between the outcomes for the most prosperous and the poorest remain stubbornly and shockingly wide



1. PISA 2009: Executive Summary, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2010).



In the survey, the literacy of our 15-year-olds was at a similar level to that of Denmark, France, Ireland, Germany and the United States, but was significantly behind other predominantly English-speaking countries such as New Zealand, Australia and Canada; European partners such as The Netherlands, Belgium and Norway; and world-leading educational – and economic – performers such as Shanghai-China, Hong Kong-China and Singapore.

### Getting to 'good' requires leadership focused on teaching and learning

I worry most about the 30% or so of schools which, at their last inspection, and often before that, were judged to be no better than satisfactory. Heads have got to remember the old adage: 'Leadership is not just about doing things right, but doing the right things.' Where a school is stuck in mediocrity and struggling to get to 'good', the head may be an effective manager, but is probably not exercising leadership on the central issue of raising standards through better teaching.

As a result, Ofsted sees lessons that are too formulaic, with not enough thought given to what really works for young people – lessons where students are not fully engaged or stretched to reach their full potential.

Let me emphasise once again that Ofsted does not have a preferred teaching style. Headteachers and other leaders must not think that inspectors are looking for a set formula. Lessons are judged on how well children are learning, and so, indirectly, is leadership. Leaders that improve their school to good or outstanding have moved on from getting systems in place to:

- leading teaching and learning, identifying and spreading best practice
- challenging underperformance
- growing other instructional leaders
- promoting professional development as an ongoing preoccupation of the whole staff.

It is well understood what it takes for a school to become good. There is no need for any child to attend a school that falls short of this.

“  
**The quality of teaching is gradually improving, but nothing less than consistently good or better teaching is acceptable**  
 ”

# Learning and skills: Is the system fit for purpose?

Effective leadership in the learning and skills sector is no different to good school leadership. Having regard for the learner, the core business of high quality teaching and the development of staff are all evident in the best providers, but many have yet to embrace these principles.

The proportion of learners completing post-16 courses and qualifications has increased steadily over time. But these so-called 'success rates' are an increasingly poor proxy for the attainment of real skills that are valued by employers. A qualification serves little purpose if it adds no value to a CV or application form. True indicators of success must take account of the nature and level of the course and its value in leading to higher-level qualifications and jobs that meet local and national needs.



A qualification serves little purpose if it adds no value to a CV or application form



The timing of inspection of learning and skills providers, like schools, is determined significantly by risk assessment. Over a third of all the learning and skills providers inspected in 2011/12 were identified on this basis, and this figure was higher for colleges.

Inspectors again judged no college to have outstanding teaching overall, and saw much that should have been under closer review by leaders. In the weakest providers, too much emphasis was placed on attracting young people to popular, often low-level, courses that were of little value to employers. Meanwhile, the success rates in the teaching of functional literacy and numeracy skills, fundamental to the needs of students and employers, are too low. There has been too much of a focus on expansion at the expense of improving the quality of provision.

### Issues for national leadership

The learning and skills sector has high levels of autonomy and independence. It is therefore vital that the government has effective oversight of how well this freedom is being used and how public money is being spent.

Our situation can be contrasted with that in Germany, one of our key competitors:

- apprenticeships have not yet achieved the high profile, good quality and wide reach they have in Germany, where they encompass over 300 recognised trades, are mainly at level 3 and take three years to complete
- around 70% of German school leavers who do not enrol in higher education take an apprenticeship
- youth unemployment in Germany has fallen since 2007.

Providers must from now on concern themselves more with the quality and relevance of their provision and the real value of their courses and qualifications. English and mathematics are the top priority. Currently, these are among the weakest areas in the learning and skills sector. Success rates in the new functional skills qualifications are low: 47% in level 2 functional English and 55% in functional mathematics. Poor quality is attributed to weak leadership, insufficient staff development and tutors who lack specialist skills in these areas.



“ Teaching was not good in over half the colleges of further education inspected ”

The further education college sector, complemented by independent and adult community learning providers, is of crucial importance to youth employment, adult skills, economic recovery and, indeed, social cohesion. The learning and skills sector needs **re-orientating towards a moral determination to provide high quality and relevant provision**, which should include reputable apprenticeship opportunities for young people. This is an urgent and major challenge for the system.



# Is the leadership of local authorities good enough?



The opportunity to attend a good nursery, school or college is too dependent on where a child or young person lives



We do not inspect the entire educational remit within local authorities at present but their leadership is vital in securing good provision in education and childcare. Local authorities still have statutory duties that go beyond safeguarding in relation to children and young people, but vary greatly in how well they fulfil these duties. The best local authorities have reformed in anticipation of the changing education landscape by commissioning services that they can no longer provide, contracting out responsibilities to their more effective schools and promoting high standards and fair access to educational opportunities in their areas.

Good local authorities realise that they have a duty to secure the right of every child to go to a good school and that poverty or other features of a child's background should not be a barrier to this opportunity. Such authorities have high regard for the importance of good pre-school education and care. They have raised the quality of children's centres by providing professionally qualified staffing or by linking them with schools, and they have enabled childminders to be part of effective networks which provide them with support and development. Unfortunately, **there is huge variation in the effectiveness of local authorities in these matters.**

One example of local variation is the great inequality of access to good or better schools across different areas. The child of primary school age in England has on average a seven out of 10 (69%) chance of being in a good or outstanding school. However, some have a better than 90% and some worse than 50% chance to attend a good or better school depending on where they live.

Although around 70% of providers across most sectors (early years, schools, and learning and skills) are good or better, this disguises the highly unequal opportunities that children and young people have to gain access to provision of this quality. The inequities are stark:

- Why is it that a child living in **Derby** or **Doncaster** local authority areas has only half the chance of attending a good or better primary or secondary school compared with a child living in **Wigan** or **Darlington**?
- Why is it that **Coventry** has a smaller proportion of pupils attending good or better primary schools than any local authority area in the country? Do local parents realise this? What is being done about it?



It is noticeable that there is no correlation between the degree of access to good primary education, as judged by Ofsted, and the socio-economic profile of the local authority area. Indeed, Oxfordshire is among the 20% of local authority areas with the lowest proportion of pupils attending good or better primary schools. The *Schools report 2011/12* provides a full table of local area performance in terms of access to a good primary education.<sup>2</sup>

Local and regional variations are not confined to schools. Further education college provision in London is among the weakest in the country, being in stark contrast with the unparalleled improvement in London's schools. The differences between local authority areas also apply to much bigger regions of the country. There are sharp regional differences in the proportion of children who make the expected progress in their schools. I am concerned that in regions like Yorkshire and The Humber and the North East fewer than 60% of pupils make the expected progress in English – in contrast to London, where the proportion is close to 80%.



2. *Sector report 2011/12: Schools* (120348), Ofsted, 2012; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120348](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120348).

# More support is needed for childcare and early years education

It is a concern that over 34% of children are not working securely in communication, language and literacy by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This represents over 200,000 children this year and is despite the fact that most three- and four-year-olds have been receiving some free early education since 2008.

Nevertheless, there is evidence that the introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage has made an important contribution to early years education, particularly in nurseries and other non-domestic settings. I believe there needs to be every possible incentive to attract children into such settings, particularly in disadvantaged areas. One of the

biggest drawbacks is the shortage of professionally qualified staff and I would urge the acceleration of the government's current 10-year strategy to address this.

The quality of childminding provision is weaker than nurseries, particularly in disadvantaged areas. Childminders need access to the leadership, expert support and professional development that can be provided through effective networks. Local authorities, working alongside other responsible organisations, hold the key to such provision. But there is a case for linking pre-school provision, including childminders and children's centres, more closely to good and outstanding primary schools.





# Ofsted will contribute more to improving the system

Several of my predecessors have voiced the view that, when it comes to education and care, 'satisfactory is not good enough'. It follows that satisfactory is a condition that 'requires improvement' within a defined period of time, and this change of descriptor was introduced in September 2012. No provider will now be allowed to trundle along year after year performing at a level that is less than good. We have raised the bar higher, but Ofsted will not walk away. We will continue to monitor, inspect, challenge and support these institutions until they improve.

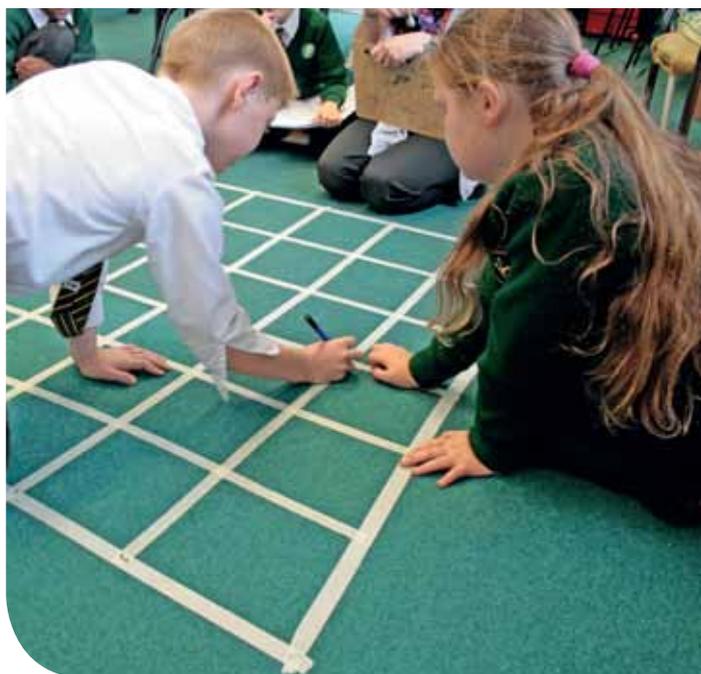
I am determined that Ofsted, through inspection, will support:

- leaders who are trying to improve their organisations
- leaders whose moral purpose centres on the needs and interests of children and young people
- leaders who share their expertise with others, partnering less effective providers
- leaders who expect the best and who challenge anything less.

The greater the challenges such leaders face, the more we shall work alongside them.

**Our new regional structure will contribute to improving the system** by gaining a better understanding of the provision across the country. This means Ofsted will not only provide independent evaluation of progress, but will also do more to spread good practice.

We shall look more critically at the effectiveness of governance in all forms, of individual institutions and more widely. In this regard, Ofsted will play an increasingly important role through its new regional structure in asking questions of local authorities, academy chains, trust boards, and diocesan authorities.



We shall look more critically at the effectiveness of governance in all forms









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