

Talking Points

Introduction

The NNPCF is a membership organisation and our mission states that “we aim to empower our members to ensure that their voice is heard at a local, regional and national level.”

Working with our membership we have identified a number of key “talking points” - these are topics and themes that are the most important to our membership and the ones that have been prioritised by the NNPCF.

Based on feedback from our membership and from other partners and stakeholders, the “talking point” summarise:

- The lived experience of our members about each topic,
- What is working and what is not working, and
- What we would like to see changed.

The talking points have been created using a range of feedback which includes:

- Surveys (including the SEND surveys)
- Feedback from our annual conferences
- The topics raised at regional meetings
- Themes and topics raised by our membership on social media
- Face to face conversations with our membership

Ofsted Education Inspection Framework

The NNPCF have been calling for a more holistic approach to education for some time. Our SEN support talking point¹ outlines the concerns our member forums have raised about the experiences of children with SEN in mainstream school settings.

One of the key contributors to this is lack of incentives for schools to adopt a whole school approach to SEND. The focus on academic attainment through

¹ NNPCF SEN Support talking point <http://www.nnpkf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Talking-points-SEN-Support-201807-Final-1.pdf>

published data and the Ofsted school inspection regime means that children with SEND can impact a school's performance. There is a perception that this is a disincentive for schools to retain pupils with SEND who may adversely impact the school's overall academic attainment.

In January 2019, Ofsted published a draft for consultation on its education inspection framework². The NNPCF have been working with representatives from Ofsted to highlight the key concerns our member forums have raised with us. For example, in December 2018, we organised a roundtable for parents of children with SEND in mainstream schools to share their experiences with inspectors³ where concerns such as official and unofficial exclusions, home schooling and off-rolling, the role of SENCOs and schools' culture were raised.

The new Inspection Framework contains much that is good and necessary

We are pleased to see that many of the concerns we have raised with Ofsted have been reflected in the new Inspection Framework (September 2019). Most notably:

- There are strong references to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in the introduction and the leadership and management sections
- The quality of education section requires schools to ensure that learners study the full curriculum and that it is ambitious for children with SEN and specialised where necessary
- The leadership section places great emphasis on "high quality inclusive education"
- There are specific mentions of schools not allowing gaming and off-rolling.

There were some additional things that we asked for

There are though, some areas in which we believed that the draft inspection framework could go further to protect children with SEND against some of the

² Ofsted, draft for consultation – the education inspection framework
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-draft-for-consultation>

³ NNPCF roundtable meeting <http://www.nnpcf.org.uk/ofsted-meet-parent-carers-of-children-with-send-in-mainstream-schools/Sep-2020-NNPCF-Version-1.0>

concerns that have been raised by our membership. We raised the following points in our response:

- Ofsted needed to make a clearer link between school behavioural and disciplinary policies to SEND policies and the Equalities Act 2010. Too many schools adopt a “zero tolerance” approach which does not take into account the necessity to make reasonable adjustments for children and young people with SEND. An upper tribunal decision (August 2018) clarified the requirement to make reasonable adjustments before excluding pupils from schools⁴
- The draft inspection framework mentioned “best possible outcomes” several times in the Quality of Education Section. We wanted to see more clarity around the use of this phrase - in particular a requirement that these outcomes should be person-centred and co-produced with families and young people. For children with SEND, outcomes needed to be broader than academic attainment and looking at their longer term happiness, well-being and independence.
- The behaviour and attitudes section mentioned inspectors checking on why pupils were absent on inspection days. However, inspectors needed to go further and ensure that pupils with SEND have access to the full curriculum and were not being placed on part time timetables.
- We wanted to see a more specific emphasis on preparing for adulthood for children and young people with SEND. Schools should be equipping young people for independence, employment and life in the community.
- We wanted inspectors to have regard to a wide range of indicators to assess how “inclusive” a school is. This might have included:
 - Is the school’s SEN information report accurate, up to date and widely publicised?
 - Does the school SENCO have sufficient time allocated to perform the role effectively and is the SENCO supported by senior leaders?
 - Does the school’s senior leadership understand their responsibilities to pupils with SEN under the Children and Families Act?
 - Does the SENCO have clear “line of sight” to the school’s senior leadership team?
 - Does the school adopt a graduated response that is transparent and well understood by families?
 - Is the school transparent about its use of notional budgets?

⁴ C&C V GOVERNING BODY [2018] UKUT 269 (AAC), <https://www.gov.uk/administrative-appeals-tribunal-decisions/2018-ukut-269-aac-c-c-v-the-governing-body-of-a-school-the-secretary-of-state-for-education-first-interested-party-and-the-national-autistic-society-second-interested-party-sen>

What we secured in the new Framework (EIF)

Parent Carer Forums have made clear that they regard local area Inspections as the cornerstone of the accountability regime for SEND and NNPCF has been representing these views to the Department for Education and to the inspectorates. As a result of our input, Ofsted reflected our feedback in the new framework.

Making sure the concerns of parents of pupils with SEND are heard

Our member forums tell us that they do not feel the voices of parent carers of children and young people with SEND are heard well enough during school inspections. This means that inspectors are often not placing sufficient weight on the experiences of children with SEND in their assessment of schools.

It is vital that Ofsted hear parental views when inspecting schools and we have discussed the ways in which parents are notified about the inspection and how they can share their views:

- Parents can give feedback about schools at any time using parent view⁵. This asks parents to complete a survey about the school. Ofsted will look at feedback about schools on parent view when determining which schools to inspect.
- Ofsted require the school to send a letter to parents notifying them of the inspection. If the school has electronic methods of communication with parents then they should use these to notify parents of the inspection as well. In addition, the school must put up a notice at the school during the inspection.
- During the inspection, a free text facility is available in the parent view tool which allows parents to write about their views of the school.
- Ofsted inspectors will be available to talk to parents during the inspection and will often be available at the start and end of the school day.

⁵ view <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>

APPENDIX: Ofsted Education Inspection Framework 2019

Why is the Inspection Framework changing?

The new Education Inspection Framework (EIF) sets out new inspection principles and revision to the main judgments Ofsted make. Ofsted found that the previous framework accountability system could divert schools: schools focused on the performance data rather than on what children learnt. In some cases, managing the data also increased teacher workload unnecessarily and led to teaching to the test rather than offering a broad and balanced curriculum. There was particular concern that this impacted greatly on our most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people.

Going forward, the focus is on four key outcomes:

- quality of education
- personal development
- behaviour and attitudes
- leadership and management

The grading judgments remain the same: outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate. There remains a sharp focus on safeguarding and on meeting the needs of pupils with SEND.

What are the Key Changes?

Curriculum Focus

The new framework expects schools to talk about their curriculum in terms of the 3 I's:

- Intent - the aims of the programme of education, demonstrating a rich and varied curriculum including the knowledge and skills gained at every stage.
- Implementation - how that broad and balanced curriculum will be delivered over time
- Impact - evaluation what knowledge and skills pupils have gained, with a greater emphasis on behaviour, personal development and pupil's attitudes.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Inspectors will be looking for personal development, which includes: healthy living, citizenship, equality and diversity, careers, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The framework looks for good education, high quality pastoral care and a culture that promotes a strong connection between children and learners and their community.

Curriculum and Knowledge Learned

The new framework puts the curriculum at the heart of the inspection and includes:

- curriculum design, coverage, delivery and appropriateness
- teaching pedagogy
- assessment
- attainment and progress
- reading
- readiness for the next stage of education

Duration of Inspections

Inspections will last two days and start with a 90-minute telephone call between the lead inspector and the head. Day One focuses on gathering the evidence at a top-level and then making 'deep dives' to sample the evidence. Day Two brings the evidence together and tests whether what was seen on day One can be seen throughout the school / provision and is 'systemic'.

Approach Taken

Inspectors will not look at internal data and will now ask leaders at various levels what they understand about progress and attainment in the school or subject. The new approach is 'let's see that first hand together'. The focus will be on what is being taught and learnt through lesson visits, scrutiny of work and

talking with learners. Inspectors are looking for pupils to know more, remember more and be able to do more.

SEND Focus

Inspectors will be looking to see if leaders:

- identify, assess and meet the needs of pupils with SEND;
- develop and adapt the curriculum so that it is coherently sequenced to all pupil's needs, starting points and aspirations;
- successfully involve parent carers and, as necessary, other professionals, / specialist services in deciding how best to support pupils with SEND; and
- include pupils with SEND in all aspects of school life.

They will also look to see:

- how well the school assesses learning and development of pupils with SEND and whether pupils' outcomes are improving as a result of the different or additional provision being made for them; and
- how well SEND pupils are prepared for their next steps in education, employment and training, and their adult lives.

Safeguarding remains the golden thread that runs through everything.

Outstanding schools are no longer exempt from inspections.