

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to tell you about some important changes to the way schools in England are inspected by Ofsted. I also want to explain what this may mean for you and your child's school.

From November 2025, Ofsted started using a new way to inspect schools. This is different from what many parents are used to, so it is important to understand how inspection results now work.

What has changed?

In the past, schools were given one overall judgement, such as *good* or *outstanding*. These single word judgements are no longer used.

Instead, schools now receive a report card. This shows how a school is doing in different areas, such as:

- leadership
- teaching
- inclusion
- attendance
- behaviour
- wellbeing

Each area is checked against what Ofsted expects schools to achieve across the country. This gives more detail about what a school does well and where it needs to improve. However, it can take a bit more time to understand at first.

What this means for parents

The new inspection results are not the same as the old Ofsted grades. If a school does not meet the expected standard in one or more areas, this does not mean it is the same as being judged *inadequate* in the past. The systems are different and should not be compared.

Some schools work in very challenging situations. For example, they may support children and families who face many difficulties. Even when staff work very hard and make a real difference every day, it can be harder to meet national targets. The inspection does not always show the full picture of a school or the progress it is making over time.

For this reason, we encourage parents to read the full inspection report, not just the headlines or grades. The written sections explain what inspectors saw and give important detail.

We also encourage you to think about what you already know about your child's school. This includes how your child feels about school, how well they are supported, and the progress they are making.

Our support for schools

Schools across Lancashire are full of staff who care deeply about the children they work with. The new inspection system has added extra pressure for school leaders and staff, and we know this can affect wellbeing.

As a local authority, we visit schools regularly and work closely with headteachers and governors. We see the hard work, care and commitment that goes on every day, often in very difficult circumstances.

We remain fully committed to supporting schools, supporting staff, and working with families to help children and young people do as well as they can.

In summary

If your child's school is inspected under the new system, the results may look different from what you have seen before. This does not reduce the care, effort or dedication of school staff, or the quality of education and support children receive.

Your trust, understanding and continued involvement with your child's school are very important. By working together, inspection information can be used in a fair and helpful way that supports children's learning and wellbeing.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and for your continued support of Lancashire's schools.

Yours sincerely,

Aby Hardy

Head of Education Improvement