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Liz Fawcett

Our Reference: CAS-279674-1R85KV

liz.fawcett@ntlworld.com

Dear Ms Fawcett

Your request for information

Thank you for your email of 6 December 2013 to our National Business Unit in which you requested the information set out in Annex A at the end of this letter.

You later clarified that your request relates to the inspection of maintained schools.

Where you have referred to 'post-primary' schools, we have understood this to refer to secondary schools.

The Freedom of Information Act

We have dealt with your request in accordance with the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000.

The first requirement of the Act is that we should confirm whether or not we hold information of the description set out in your request. I can confirm that we hold the information required to respond to your questions.

Under the FOI Act, we are under a duty to provide you with all the information we hold which falls within the scope of your request, provided it is not 'exempt' information.

We will address each of your queries in turn:

1. What information, if any, are schools currently required to provide to parents about school inspections (i) when their child enrolls at a particular school (ii) prior to a school inspection?

In order to provide parents with the information they need at the right time, there is certain information schools must publish online, details of which can be



found on the Department for Education website using the following link:
<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/parents/keepinginformed/a00208536/school-prospectus>

When a school receives notification of an inspection it must take all reasonable steps to tell parents that a school is going to be inspected. Ofsted provides schools with a letter to parents to distribute, which outlines the inspection process. The letter provides information regarding the Parent View online questionnaire, which forms part of the evidence for inspection. Ofsted also encloses a leaflet, *School inspections: a guide for parents*¹, which must be provided to parents.

Once an inspection is complete a report is produced and provided to the school. The school must take reasonable steps to secure that every registered parent receives a copy of the report within 5 working days of receipt.

2. Are schools required to publish inspection reports relating to their school on their school website in a timely manner?

Schools must provide certain information on their website, a link to the Ofsted report is one of them. For further details please visit the Department for Education website using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/choosing-schools>. As mentioned in section 1, once the report has been sent to the school and parents, it will be published on the Ofsted website.

3. Are schools required to let parents know how they can access the most recent inspection report relating to that school?

Yes – please see the response to question 1

4. Do all standard inspections of primary schools (other than follow-up inspections and specialist inspections examining only e.g. library provision) examine the following:

- The quality of play-based learning in Reception and Year 1

A revised *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*² commenced in September 2012 and the previous six areas of learning became seven. The Department for Education has placed on its website a new document called *Early Years Outcomes*³ as a non-statutory aide to support practitioners. It can be used by child-minders, nurseries and others, such as Ofsted inspectors, as a guide to making best-fit judgements about whether a child is showing typical development for their age, may be at risk of delay or is ahead for their age.

¹ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/school-inspections-guide-for-parents>

² <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/e/eyfs%20statutory%20framework%20march%202012.pdf>

³ <http://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/earlylearningandchildcare/delivery>

Further guidance can be found in paragraphs 24, 26, and 33 of the *Subsidiary guidance*⁴

- The quality of provision relating to the following subjects and areas of learning:
 - i. Physical education, including the quantity of that provision
 - ii. ICT
 - iii. Science and technology
 - iv. History
 - v. Geography
 - vi. Art
 - vii. Music
 - viii. The development of groupwork skills
 - ix. The development of research and investigation skills

Subject specific guidance relating to the quality of provision for the following subjects and areas of learning is available on the Ofsted website on this link:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/generic-grade-descriptors-and-supplementary-subject-specific-guidance-for-inspectors-making-judgements>

The guidance is intended only to inform the judgements made by specialist inspectors carrying out subject surveys and not for use in section 5 whole-school inspections.

- The quality of a school's communication with parents, including the existence of a parent council through which parents can make their views known to the school

Inspectors have a statutory duty to have regard to the views of parents. Inspectors will take account of all results of any surveys carried out by the school or commissioned by the school. It is important schools encourage parents to complete such surveys. Inspectors must consider how effectively the school engages with and promotes the confidence of parents, including how well the school gathers, understands and responds to the views of parents.

- The quality of a school's communication with pupils, including the existence of a school council through which pupils can make their views known and have an input into the running of the school

Inspectors must have regard to the views of pupils and staff when making their judgements. Data from surveys of parents, pupils, or staff should be corroborated with other evidence.

⁴ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/subsidiary-guidance-supporting-inspection-of-maintained-schools-and-academies>

5. Do all inspections of post-primary schools examine the following:

- The quality and quantity of physical education and sports provision

When introducing the new primary school sport funding on pupils' lifestyles and physical wellbeing, inspectors must take account of the following factors;

- the increase in participation rates in such activities as games, dance, gymnastics, swimming and athletics
- the increase and success in competitive school sports
- how much more inclusive the physical education curriculum has become
- the growth in the range of traditional and alternative sporting activities
- the improvement in partnership work on physical education with other schools and other local partners
- links with other subjects that contribute to pupils' overall achievement and their greater social, spiritual, moral and cultural skills
- the greater awareness amongst pupils about the dangers of obesity, smoking and other such activities that undermine pupils' health

- The quality of the school's communication with parents, including the existence of a parent council through which parents can make their views known to the school

Please see response to question 4 above

- The quality of the school's communication with pupils, including the existence of a school council through which pupils can make their views known and have an input into the running of the school

Please see response to question 4 above

6. Could you please supply a copy of the questionnaires which are currently sent to parents whose children attend a primary school or a post-primary school which is being inspected.

The letter provided to parents once an inspection is due to take place provides details and options for providing parents' views. Our survey site, Parent View, is the main source of gathering parents' views about a school. The frequently asked questions page provides the list of 12 questions used on the site. The site is accessible on this link: <http://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>

7. Are the above questionnaires sent to all parents?

Yes

8. Do parents submit their responses direct to Ofsted or via the school?

Parents complete the Parent View questionnaire online:

<http://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk>.

9. Does Ofsted talk to pupils when it inspects a primary or post-primary school?

During an inspection, inspectors will talk to pupils about their work, gauging their understanding and their engagement in learning, and obtaining pupils' perceptions of typical teaching, including those with special needs.

10. If it does, how does Ofsted select the pupils to whom it talks in both primary and post-primary schools respectively?

Each inspection is different and ultimately depends on the circumstances. For instance, when inspectors hear children read, they will listen to lower attaining pupils during the inspections and discuss their reading with them. Inspectors take into account the school's progress data on reading and other information such as lesson observations. Overall, inspectors gather evidence from a wide range of pupils, included disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those for whom the pupil premium provides support, pupils who are receiving other forms of support and the most able.

11. If it does speak to pupils, typically, how many primary school pupils and how many post-primary school pupils does Ofsted speak to when it carries out an inspection?

There is no typical fixed number of pupils inspectors plan to speak, but rather depends on the inspectors during inspection.

12. Are post-primary schools assessed on the provision of all subjects which are taught at that school during full standard inspections?

No. Inspectors will consider the planning and implementation of learning activities across the whole of the school's curriculum, together with teachers' marking, assessment and feedback to pupils. Further information can be found in *The framework for school inspection*⁵ found on the website.

13. Is the provision of some subjects examined in greater depth during full standard inspections of post-primary schools?

No. Please see response to question 12. The specific-subject guidance is intended only to inform the judgements made by specialist inspectors carrying out subject surveys and not for use in section 5 whole-school inspections.

14. If the answer to Q13 is 'yes', how does Ofsted select the subjects which it investigates in-depth with regard to each full standard inspection of a post-primary school?

N/A

15. What is the ratio of inspectors to teachers which Ofsted uses to determine how many inspectors are required to visit a particular school?

The size of the inspection team will vary according to the size and nature of the school. The size of the school is not determined by the number of teachers but the number of pupils on roll.

⁵ <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/framework-for-school-inspection>

16. What is the minimum proportion and number of lessons observed by Ofsted during a focused or standard primary school inspection?

In a typical secondary school inspection, about a third of inspection activity involves formal observation of lessons. In primary inspections the proportion appears to be slightly less. However, teaching and learning are also observed in other ways. It is common for inspectors to make short visits to a number of lessons to examine, for example, teachers' use of assessment information across a range of classes. Inspectors may also observe teaching and learning during extra-curricular and enrichment activities or by tracking a particular group of pupils at tutorial sessions, as well as observing the learning which takes place at breaks and lunchtimes.

17. What is the minimum proportion and number of lessons observed by Ofsted during a full standard post-primary school inspection?

Please see response 16

18. What is the minimum proportion of teachers whose teaching is observed by Ofsted during a standard primary school inspection?

Please see response 16

19. What is the minimum proportion of teachers whose teaching is observed by Ofsted during a standard post-primary school inspection?

Please see response 16

20. How often does Ofsted carry out a full standard inspection of each primary and post-primary school?

Under section 5(1) of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Ofsted is required to inspect all schools to which section 5 applies at prescribed intervals. With the exception of those exempt from routine section 5 inspection, regulations require that each school must be inspected within five school years from the end of the school year in which the last inspection took place. The inspection arrangements ensure that the frequency of inspection is proportionate to the performance and circumstances of schools. This means that some schools will be inspected more frequently than at five-year intervals.

Detailed information can be found in *The framework for school inspection* on the Ofsted website.

21. What was the total expenditure in 2011-12 for primary school inspections, and for post-primary school inspections respectively?

Based upon financial year 1 April 2011 to 30 March 2012:

The full cost of s5 primary school full inspections was £30,274,230

The full cost of s5 secondary school full inspections was £10,368,742

This represents the full cost of delivering the activity to Ofsted, including indirect costs and corporate overhead, based on the 2011/12 Ofsted Pricing Model. It does not include the inspection of Academies, Special Educational Needs schools or those in the Independent sector. It represents s5 full inspection only and

therefore excludes the cost of special measures visits, Grade 3 and Notice to Improve visits.

These costs should be considered in line with the number of inspections undertaken, as in questions 24 and 25.

22. How many staff inspectors are employed by Ofsted to carry out primary and post-primary inspections, respectively, and at what grades?

As at 31 December 2013, Ofsted employed 175 Grade 7 HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors) and 25 Grade 6 SHMI (Senior Her Majesty's Inspectors) in the Education remit. Please find attached a copy of the HMI job specification to show the types of provision that they are expected to inspect.

23. How many inspectors are employed on a freelance or contractual/sub-contractual basis by Ofsted to carry out primary and post-primary inspections, respectively, and at what grades?

As at 31 December 2013 Ofsted was contracted with one Grade 7 Inspector in the Education remit. For information regarding Inspectors employed by our inspection service providers (ISPs), you would need to contact the ISPs directly.

24. How many full standard inspections of primary schools were carried out in the financial year 2011-12 (or the calendar year 2011)?

4,530 inspections of primary schools were carried out in the financial year 2011-12.

Please note this includes only (and all) section 5 inspections. Therefore independent schools inspected under section 162a are not included, neither are monitoring or survey visits to maintained schools.

25. How many full standard inspections of post-primary schools were carried out in the financial year 2011-12 (or the calendar year 2011)?

901 inspections of secondary schools were carried out in the financial year 2011-12.

Please note this includes only (and all) section 5 inspections. Therefore independent schools inspected under section 162a are not included, neither are monitoring or survey visits to maintained schools.

In addition to the above information, it may be of assistance to you to know that we publish statistics about maintained schools inspections and outcomes on our website here: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/latest-official-statistics-maintained-school-inspections-and-outcomes> and we also publish a wealth of inspection guidance (some of which has been referred to above) here: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/for-inspectors>.

I trust that this letter clearly explains our position. If you have any queries about our response, please contact us and we will do our best to address them.

Alternatively, if you are dissatisfied with our response or the handling of your request, you may request a formal internal review. In order to do this, please write

to the following address, setting out which areas of the response you are unhappy with:

Email: alma.kucera@ofsted.gov.uk or write to:

Head of Information
Ofsted
Aviation House
125 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you also have the right to apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision as to whether or not we have complied with our obligations under the FOI Act with respect to your request. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

First Contact Team
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Jas Chohan
Schools Policy Team

Annex A – Your request

1. What information, if any, are schools currently required to provide to parents about school inspections (i) when their child enrolls at a particular school (ii) prior to a school inspection?
2. Are schools required to publish inspection reports relating to their school on their school website in a timely manner?
3. Are schools required to let parents know how they can access the most recent inspection report relating to that school?
4. Do all standard inspections of primary schools (other than follow-up inspections and specialist inspections examining only e.g. library provision) examine the following:
 - The quality of play-based learning in Reception and Year 1
 - The quality of provision relating to the following subjects and areas of learning:
 - i. Physical education, including the quantity of that provision
 - ii. ICT
 - iii. Science and technology
 - iv. History
 - v. Geography
 - vi. Art
 - vii. Music
 - viii. The development of groupwork skills
 - ix. The development of research and investigation skills
 - The quality of a school's communication with parents, including the existence of a parent council through which parents can make their views known to the school
 - The quality of a school's communication with pupils, including the existence of a school council through which pupils can make their views known and have an input into the running of the school
5. Do all inspections of post-primary schools examine the following:
 - The quality and quantity of physical education and sports provision
 - The quality of the school's communication with parents, including the existence of a parent council through which parents can make their views known to the school
 - The quality of the school's communication with pupils, including the existence of a school council through which pupils can make their views known and have an input into the running of the school

6. Could you please supply a copy of the questionnaires which are currently sent to parents whose children attend a primary school or a post-primary school which is being inspected.
7. Are the above questionnaires sent to all parents?
8. Do parents submit their responses direct to Ofsted or via the school?
9. Does Ofsted talk to pupils when it inspects a primary or post-primary school?
10. If it does, how does Ofsted select the pupils to whom it talks in both primary and post-primary schools respectively?
11. If it does speak to pupils, typically, how many primary school pupils and how many post-primary school pupils does Ofsted speak to when it carries out an inspection?
12. Are post-primary schools assessed on the provision of all subjects which are taught at that school during full standard inspections?
13. Is the provision of some subjects examined in greater depth during full standard inspections of post-primary schools?
14. If the answer to Q13 is 'yes', how does Ofsted select the subjects which it investigates in-depth with regard to each full standard inspection of a post-primary school?
15. What is the ratio of inspectors to teachers which Ofsted uses to determine how many inspectors are required to visit a particular school?
16. What is the minimum proportion and number of lessons observed by Ofsted during a focused or standard primary school inspection?
17. What is the minimum proportion and number of lessons observed by Ofsted during a full standard post-primary school inspection?
18. What is the minimum proportion of teachers whose teaching is observed by Ofsted during a standard primary school inspection?
19. What is the minimum proportion of teachers whose teaching is observed by Ofsted during a standard post-primary primary school inspection?
20. How often does Ofsted carry out a full standard inspection of each primary and post-primary school?
21. What was the total expenditure in 2011-12 for primary school inspections, and for post-primary school inspections respectively?
22. How many staff inspectors are employed by Ofsted to carry out primary and post-primary inspections, respectively, and at what grades?
23. How many inspectors are employed on a freelance or contractual/sub-contractual basis by Ofsted to carry out primary and post-primary inspections, respectively, and at what grades?
24. How many full standard inspections of primary schools were carried out in the financial year 2011-12 (or the calendar year 2011)?

25. How many full standard inspections of post-primary schools were carried out in the financial year 2011-12 (or the calendar year 2011)?