

Routine Ofsted inspections suspended in response to coronavirus

Ofsted is to temporarily suspend routine inspections of schools, colleges, early years settings, children's social care providers and local authorities to reduce the burden on staff who are providing vital services to the nation in response to coronavirus.

The current medical and scientific advice is for schools and other educational establishments to stay open. If this changes and the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Scientific Adviser say closing schools, colleges, and early years settings is in the best interests of children and teachers the Department will take that step.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I recognise that teachers are doing everything they can to support the children in their care and help make sure that key workers can continue going to work. Teachers are on the frontline of our national effort.

We are following the advice of our medical and scientific community every step of the way. The Chief Medical Officer has said the impact of closing schools on children's education will be substantial, but the benefit to public health may not be.

Given the pressures on our school leaders and their staff, it is only right that Ofsted temporarily suspends its routine inspection timetable. This will help schools to focus on their core functions at a difficult time.

The Secretary of State will write to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman to allow her to suspend routine inspections, although urgent inspections where specific concerns have been raised can still go ahead.

The Secretary of State is working with representatives of school leaders to develop a range of measures to help them stay open, and this is an important part of that plan.