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After the
Ofsted inspection:
involving parents
in school improvement



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This leaflet sets out to explain how parents can be involved in the school's improvement, following an Ofsted inspection when a school is considered to be failing to provide a satisfactory education for its pupils.

What is an Ofsted Inspection?

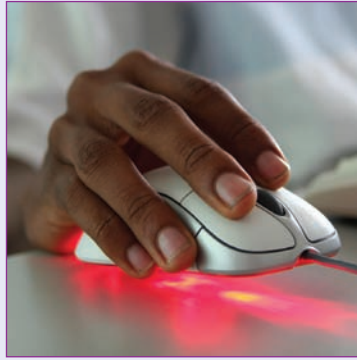
Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) inspects schools to provide information to parents, to promote improvement and to hold schools to account for the public money they receive. School inspections are required by law. Currently Ofsted inspects schools at least every three years and most schools receive only two days notice of their inspection¹. The inspection lasts for one or two days. Inspectors study the school's self evaluation and analyse the pupil's results and their progress. They talk to the head teacher, governors, staff, and pupils, and consider your views as a parent or carer. They observe some lessons and look at how well the school is led and managed.

What happens after the Inspection?

Ofsted gives schools an overall Grade from 1-4.

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

¹ A revised framework for inspection planned for September 2009 may change arrangements



The lead inspector reports the outcome to the head teacher and governors. The Inspector's findings are then published in a report for the school, parents and the wider community. The inspection report will assess the effectiveness of the school's work and give recommendations about what the school should do to improve further. The school must take all reasonable steps to make sure you receive a copy of the report. The report also includes a letter to the pupils, telling them what the inspectors thought about the school and what they can do to improve it.

What happens if Ofsted judges a school to be failing to provide a satisfactory education for its pupils?

If inspectors judge a school to be inadequate it will be placed in one of the following two categories.

Notice to Improve

This means either:

The school is failing to provide its pupils with an acceptable standard of education but it does have the capacity to improve;

or

It is not failing, but is performing significantly less well than is reasonably expected by Ofsted.

If the school is given notice to improve, it will receive a monitoring visit by an inspector and will be re-inspected after about a year.

Special Measures

This means the school is failing to provide its pupils with an acceptable standard of education, and is not showing the capacity to make the improvements needed. Inspectors will visit the school regularly to check its progress, until it can be removed from the category. The school will be re-inspected after about two years.

If a school is judged to require 'Special Measures', Ofsted will state this in a draft report sent to the governors and they will be asked to offer comments on the report within 5 working days.

What can I expect as a parent?

You will receive a copy of the Ofsted report when it is issued to the school. This may not happen until several weeks after the Ofsted inspection. This is because there are set stages for the document to be drafted, questioned and amended as necessary, before it is released to the public. You will have an opportunity to make your views known about what the report says and what happens next. The Parent Support Adviser (PSA) in your child's school will play a key role in ensuring that the whole process is explained to parents and will be able to respond to any questions you have. There is more about this later in this leaflet.

How does the Local Authority respond to the Ofsted inspection report?

Every local authority is required to set out how it supports and challenges schools which are causing concern in order that they improve.

The Education and Inspection Act 2006 says it is the Local Authority's responsibility to prepare a statement of action within 10 working days of receiving the final inspection report from Ofsted.

The statement of action must include:

- how parents will be kept informed about the actions planned for the school.
- how it will gather their views on these actions.
- how their views will be taken into account by the local authority.
- a detailed explanation of the options for the future of the school.

The statement of action should specifically set out:

‘what arrangements the local authority has made to inform parents and carers about the actions planned for the school, and how it will gather and take into account their views’.

A ‘Parent Champion’ can be appointed to ensure parents are kept informed and their views are sought.

What is a Parent Champion?

The name Parent Champion comes from the government guidance 2007 and is defined as ‘a person appointed to ensure good communication with parents and carers and ensure that they are able to influence decisions about the future of the school.’

A Parent Champion is independent of both the local authority and the school.

Key aspects of the Parent Champion role are:

- Impartiality.
- Brokerage skills for working with parents, school and the local authority.
- Good communication skills.

In Plymouth this role is carried out by a Parent Support Adviser (PSA). There is a PSA in all Local Authority schools in the city.

What is the role of the school's PSA after Ofsted judges a school to be failing to provide a satisfactory education for its pupils?

In Plymouth, when a school is deemed to be given either notice to improve or special measures, the Parent Support Adviser (PSA) in the school will take on the role of 'Parent Champion'. PSAs are already working in schools with a clear specification of impartiality and with shared governance arrangements between Parent Partnership and schools.



The PSA will already be known to many parents as a source of information and support. They are best placed to take on the role of Parent Champion because of their impartiality, confidentiality and arm's length status within the school. Staff from Parent Partnership will ensure that the PSA has a high level of support throughout this period. The PSA will ensure that parents are kept fully informed about plans for improvement and that their views are sought and can shape action planning.

So, what will the PSA do?

The PSA will:

- attend the initial meeting for parents arranged by the school, school governors and the local authority, following the Ofsted report being published and be introduced to parents.
- maintain impartiality, confidentiality and provide an 'arm's length' service throughout the consultation process.
- work closely with the School Improvement team and school staff in order that you as parents/carers have a clearer understanding of planned

improvements, are consulted about them, kept informed and offered every opportunity to be involved.

- be a member of the School Review Group and attend the six weekly meetings. A Local Authority Adviser leads this group and their role is to closely monitor the progress and the action taken by the school to improve. The role of the PSA, as a member of this group, is to ensure that parents are kept informed. They will provide accurate, up to date, impartial, two-way flow of information between parents and the School Review group.
- convey the views of parents to the School Review Group in an accurate, impartial report.
- continue to work with parents to help the school with the improvement process particularly around the areas identified by parents for example with improving communication between school and parents or how parents can support their children with homework.
- work intensively within the improvement process for the first several weeks. They will remain involved, to a lesser degree, throughout the 12 months until the Ofsted reinspection, ensuring that parents are kept informed and feeding back their views on progress.
- in the longer term, develop their own role in the school to help maintain partnership working between school staff and parents.

How will the PSA gather the views of parents?

This will vary in different schools and every attempt will be made to use parent friendly ways to gather this information. It is likely that the PSA will:

- arrange a number of focus groups at local venues, for parents to attend to express their views or ask questions. This may include a

group arranged specifically for staff members with children attending the school and a group for school governors with children attending the school.

- reassure parents that their views will be represented anonymously unless they want to be named. No other school staff will attend general focus group meetings for parents.
- inform parents about the dates, times and venue for these focus group meetings through newsletter and at the initial meeting for parents.
- try to find answers to questions that are raised by parents, either individually or at focus group meetings.
- gather and accurately collate the views of parents attending focus groups. This will be done anonymously unless parents need specific answers to individual personal questions.
- ensure that parents have every opportunity to give their views, for example by email, telephone, suggestion box, text.
- gather as wide a range as possible of representative views of the parent population, for example with a questionnaire to all parents whose children attend the school.
- identify emerging themes from issues, concerns raised by parents.
- look at ways that quick, practical changes can be made that would benefit parents, pupils and staff.



How will the PSA keep parents informed about all planning and actions for improvement?

- with a regular newsletter of the actions planned and the progress being made for the school's improvement.
- ensure that all communication taking place with individuals or groups, parents or professionals is accurately logged.
- analyse the data from any information sharing event and present this, in report format, to professionals as well as making it available to parents.
- arrange a school specific page on the Parent Partnership website to keep parents up to date on developments and ensure that the school's website is up to date with information for parents.
- arrange further focus group meetings for parents to give feedback on progress and seek parent's views on the progress being made towards the school's improvement.

If the school is reinspected by Ofsted and is seen to be satisfactory, will this focus on involving parents continue?

We would anticipate that schools and their PSAs will want to build on the experience gained during the intense period of improvement and ensure that good communications with and involvement of parents is maintained. PSAs in Plymouth are ideally placed to develop information and support services to parents and to work alongside school staff to listen to parent's views.



What if I want to move my child to another school?

When an Ofsted inspection raises concern about a school, there is immediate planning by the school and the Local Authority on how to improve the school in the areas of weakness identified. All parents will have the opportunity to express their own concerns and to seek reassurance that everything is being done to support their child's learning and well-being in school. Plymouth has a good record of schools in this situation improving rapidly to address the areas of concern. As a parent you will want what is best for your child and to make sure they are receiving teaching and learning opportunities of a high quality.

The Ofsted process is essentially about ensuring that quality standards in schools are at the correct level. Following an unsatisfactory inspection, your child's school will be supported in all its efforts to make the necessary improvements. The school will also want to maintain all the existing aspects of its work that are valued by parents and children. If you are concerned do ask to talk to your child's teacher or to the Head teacher, or ask the school's PSA to help you think the issues through.

Your views are important to the school's future development and improvement. Please do take part in all the opportunities that are offered to make your views known.

You can find out more from the websites listed below.

Useful Websites

Parent Partnership

www.plymouthparentpartnership.org.uk

Ofsted – information about the inspection process

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct Government

– useful sections on the curriculum and tests at key stages.

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/ExamsTestsAndTheCurriculum/index.htm

Education and Inspection Act 2006, which came into force in April 2007.

www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20070462_en_1

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Plymouth Parent Partnership

Martins Gate, Bretonside, Plymouth PL4 0AT

Telephone: 01752 258933

Email: parent.partnership@plymouth.gov.uk

www.plymouthparentpartnership.org.uk