

Ofsted inspection framework 2019 consultation

Written feedback submitted by Nesta

Nesta welcomes Ofsted's proposal to move towards a more holistic assessment of education quality which focuses on a broad curriculum and values the personal development of young people. Our specific recommendations are:

Recommendations

- 1. Ofsted should publish more detail on the skills schools should be developing in young people, drawn from the best available evidence from education and on the future of employment.**
- 2. Ofsted should provide teachers and inspectors with more clarity around what constitutes high quality, evidence-based provision in the area of personal development. Without this, there is a risk of inconsistency in the way inspectors assess this area of schools' provision. Ofsted should use its research arm to share best practice, monitor what is working and showcase successful approaches.**
- 3. Ofsted should ensure that schools continue to use formative assessment to support students' learning across a broad range of subjects. Artificial Intelligence has the potential to facilitate the collection of data in a more efficient way, and Ofsted should explore its potential to inform inspections.**

Introduction

- 1. Nesta is a global innovation foundation that backs new ideas to tackle the big challenges of our time. We are a UK charity that works all over the world, supported by a financial endowment.**
- 2. Nesta aims to foster a broader, fairer and smarter education system in the UK, and help all learners to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to thrive in the future world of work. Our Future Ready Fund is currently supporting ten innovative, early-stage interventions to help young people develop social and emotional skills and resilience.**

Proposal 1: The proposed introduction of a 'quality of education' judgement in the new Ofsted inspection framework

3. Nesta welcomes a more holistic approach to evaluating the quality of education and broadening the focus beyond performance data. We also welcome the focus on schools adopting curricula that are designed to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and cultural capital that they will need to succeed in life and engage with future learning and employment opportunities.
4. While schools should be allowed agency and freedom in the delivery of the curriculum, there is a lack of clarity in the new framework and inspection handbook about the skills that pupils are likely to need in order to take advantage of the 'opportunities, responsibilities and experiences' in later life. We believe Ofsted should provide more detail on what these skills are and why they are important.
5. Nesta's [Future of Skills: Employment in 2030](#) report found that cross-disciplinary skills -- such as systems thinking, interpersonal skills, critical thinking, complex problem solving and active learning -- are highly likely to be in demand in the future labour market. We recommend that Ofsted focus on these skills, as well as a broad range of subjects, and consider them as part of the quality of education judgement when carrying out inspections.
6. Schools and teachers will need support to shift the focus away from performance data and towards a more holistic curriculum. Nesta has published [resources](#) to help teachers think about the skills needed for the future of work.

We welcome Ofsted's move towards a more holistic assessment of education quality. However, we believe that Ofsted should publish more detail on the skills schools should be developing in young people, drawn from the best available evidence from education and on the future of employment.

Proposal 2: The proposed separation of inspection judgements about learners' personal development and learners' behaviour and attitudes

7. We welcome the move to judge personal development separately from behaviour and attitudes. As distinct and separate areas of focus, it is appropriate for them to be judged separately.

8. There is a significant [body of evidence](#) on the importance of social and emotional skills and resilience to young people's outcomes, and we welcome the explicit reference to capabilities such as confidence and resilience in the Ofsted framework.
9. However, we suggest that 'character' is a relatively narrow and restrictive term to describe personal development and broader skills. We encourage Ofsted to adopt a broader term or framework which provides a more clearly defined and evidence-based structure for schools' provision in this area. For example, the Education Endowment Foundation's [SPECTRUM](#) database provides a useful framework and evidence for thinking about the provision of essential life skills. Providing more detail about the rationale for this area of focus, and using terms more grounded in evidence, will give schools clarity on what should be included in their personal development provision. The importance of supporting schools with guidance around the provision of essential skills is a key recommendation in the [Sutton Trust's Life Lessons report](#).
10. We note with particular concern the lack of guidance in the inspection framework and school handbook around what constitutes high quality, evidence-based provision for the development of skills such as resilience or confidence. Schools and inspectors should be given a clearer sense of what good and outstanding provision could look like for the development of social and emotional skills, possibly through the inclusion of evidence and research in the final framework. Otherwise, there is a risk of significant inconsistency in the way that inspectors assess this area of schools' provision, and a risk that this judgement is not rooted in available evidence on 'what works'.
11. We also recommend that Ofsted encourages schools to consider the impact of their provision on student development. While it is important to judge 'quality and intent', this does not mean that a school's provision will reach or effectively support all students. According to the [Sutton Trust's Life Lessons report](#), only 57% of teachers in the state sector believe their school's curriculum helps the development of pupils' life skills.

We support Ofsted's move to judge personal development separately from behaviour and attitudes. However, we recommend that Ofsted provides teachers and inspectors with more clarity around what constitutes high quality, evidence-based provision in this area. Without this, there is a risk of inconsistency in the way inspectors assess this area of schools' provision. Ofsted should use its research arm to share best practice, monitor what is working and showcase successful approaches.

Proposal 6: The proposed move to not look at non-statutory internal progress and attainment data during inspections

12. We welcome this proposal in so far as it will limit the unnecessary gathering of internal data, and thus reduce teacher workload. However, formative assessment is an important part of teaching and learning across all subjects, and Ofsted should ensure that schools continue to use internal formative assessment to monitor students' learning progress. Ofsted must also be cautious that inspecting external assessment data does not inadvertently shift inspectors' focus away from certain subjects. This should be monitored closely.

13. However, collecting less data should not be the final solution to the challenges of teacher workload. [Educ-AI-tion Rebooted](#), Nesta's recent report on the future of artificial intelligence (AI) in the UK education system, highlights the potential of AI to reduce teacher workload while also broadening the range of assessment that is possible in the future. In light of this, we encourage Ofsted to continue to monitor and reflect on how AI-generated assessment data (both internal and external) alongside human expertise might feed into inspections of school performance and reduce the workload burden on teachers.

We welcome Ofsted's ambition to reduce teacher workload by shifting the inspection focus away from internally-generated assessment data. However, Ofsted should also ensure that schools continue to use formative assessment to support students' learning. Artificial intelligence has the potential to facilitate the collection of data in a more efficient way, and Ofsted should explore its potential to inform inspections.