

Ofsted Inspection Grades

Ofsted has introduced a new grading system for schools, moving away from the previous four-grade model. Instead of giving one overall judgement, inspectors now provide a multi-area report card, offering a more rounded picture of how a school is performing across several key areas. Schools are now graded using the following categories: Exceptional, Strong Standard, Expected Standard, Needs Attention, Urgent Improvement.

These categories are **not comparable** with the old grades because the inspection approach has changed significantly.

Ofsted have produced a video for parents: [New Ofsted report cards and grades: a guide for parents](#)

What Each Grade Means for Parents

Expected Standard

This is the national benchmark. A school meeting the expected standard is doing everything it should to ensure children receive a high-quality education. This is a strong and positive judgement, shown in green on the Ofsted report card.

Strong Standard

A grade showing that the school is consistently delivering excellent practice that is making a clear difference for children and learners.

Exceptional

This is a higher bar than the former 'outstanding' grade. It is only awarded when inspectors see practice that is among the very best in the country—approaches that should be shared nationally to help other schools improve.

Needs Attention

This is not a negative judgement. Instead, it signals that certain areas need focused development so the school can reach the expected standard. It is a constructive signal that targeted work is needed and is not the same as the previously used grade of 'requires improvement'.

Urgent Improvement

Used when more serious issues require immediate action.



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