

Guidance

Understanding Ofsted report cards and grades

This page explains Ofsted report cards for your child's education or childcare, including a video and guidance on what's changed from the old system.

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How we've improved reporting our inspection findings

Ofsted has improved how we report the findings of education inspections.

We've designed our new-look report cards with parents and carers in mind, to give you a clearer picture of what's working well and where the next steps for improvement are – at a childminder, nursery, school, college or apprenticeship provider. That might be where your child already goes, or places you're comparing before you choose the best option for them.

This page explains more about the new report cards and the grades we give in them.

New Ofsted grading system

The main change is that we no longer give one overall judgement, such as 'good', 'outstanding' or 'requires improvement'.

Instead, the report cards show colour-coded grades for different areas – the aspects of education that matter most to you, like 'attendance and behaviour', 'achievement', 'personal development and well-being', and 'inclusion' (meaning how well the school or other provider meets the needs of all children).

We grade these areas on a new scale:

- 'exceptional'
- 'strong standard'

- ‘expected standard’
- ‘needs attention’
- ‘urgent improvement’

We also tell you whether safeguarding responsibilities are ‘met’ or ‘not met’.

It’s important to understand that the new grades can’t be compared to the old ones: this is a different approach to inspection and a new way of reporting to you.

What the new Ofsted grades tell you

The ‘expected standard’ is just that – it means the school or other provider is doing everything that it should be doing, so you’ll see the green colour coding on the report card. It’s a high standard, to make sure your children are receiving everything they need and deserve.

Moving up the scale, ‘strong standard’ marks out excellent, consistent work that’s making a real difference for children and learners.

And finally, there’s ‘exceptional’. We only award this grade when we see practice that is among the very best nationally, which should be shared with other schools or providers to help them improve.

‘Needs attention’ is an indication that there is work to be done to reach the ‘expected standard’. It’s not a ‘fail’ but it highlights where issues can be addressed before they become bigger problems that need ‘urgent improvement’.

You may see a mix of grades across a report card: it’s perfectly possible to achieve highly in some areas, and require a little more focus in others.

Using Ofsted report cards to make decisions

In report cards, alongside the grades, you’ll see detailed descriptions of what inspectors found. This will help you understand why we’ve awarded different grades, and what it’s like to be a child or learner at that childminder, nursery, school or further education provider.

You can also see important data that will give you some context – for example, the number of children at a school, number of apprenticeships at a college, or the age range of children at a nursery. We record this data at the point in time at which we inspected.

We hope the new report cards give you clear and useful information to help you make choices about your child's future – or to reassure you that they are receiving the support and education that's right for them.

You can look up any education provider on our [reports website](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk) (<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>). When they get their next inspection, we will publish a report card on their page.

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