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## **New OfSTED Inspection Framework**

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to update you on the new OfSTED grading method introduced in the OfSTED Evaluation Toolkit launched in November 2025. As this represents a significant national shift in how schools are evaluated, we want to ensure all families across our schools have clear and consistent information. This letter was co-produced between by a number of different local authorities and academy trusts, and was shared with Bracknell Forest Headteachers last week. Personalising this letter and distributing it to parents was on my 'to do' list this week, however this was then superseded by an OfSTED visit itself! This does however make it even more important that this explanation around the new OfSTED Evaluation Toolkit is now shared with you all because this will form the basis of our OfSTED report when it is shared with you and published in a few weeks time.

The new inspection framework is substantially different in all areas from the way in which the inspection is conducted to the number of areas graded and how this information will be presented to parents, children and the wider community.

### **Grading across 7 core areas**

There will be grades published across 7 core areas at a school, these are:

Safeguarding, Inclusion, Curriculum and Teaching, Achievement, Attendance and Behaviour, Personal Development and Well-being, and Leadership and Governance. Additionally, for our school Early Years will also be graded.

### **New Grading Method**

There is a move away from the old grading system with the areas above graded on a 5-point scale. These grades will be Exceptional, Strong Standard, Expected Standard, Needs Attention and Urgent Improvement.



These grades will be given for all of the areas above with exception of Safeguarding which will simply be graded as Met or Not Met.

### **No comparison between old and new grades**

The new grading structure is fundamentally different from the previous one, and the measures used are not directly comparable. It is therefore very important that no comparisons are made between a school's previous grading and its new one. A change in grade under the new system does not reflect a decline or improvement in performance; it simply reflects a new assessment approach.

### **Variable profiles are normal**

The new framework may show what are known as "variable profiles," where different aspects of a school's performance are rated at different grades. This is entirely expected and reflects the inspectorates aim to give a more nuanced, detailed view of school performance rather than a single overall judgement.

### **"Needs Attention" explained**

You may also see the term "Needs Attention", which can be thought of like an MOT advisory. It highlights an area that would benefit from further focus but does not indicate a serious concern. It is expected that most schools will have one or more areas labelled this way as part of normal continuous improvement.

*Nurturing the potential in everyone...*

**Exceptional grades will be rare**

Under the new system, the highest levels of recognition—referred to as exceptional grades—will be awarded only in genuinely transformational and uncommon circumstances. Most schools will not receive these grades, and their rarity should not be interpreted negatively; it simply reflects the framework’s intention to reserve exceptional ratings for exceptional practice.

A short video from OfSTED can be found here: [OfSTED Video](#) and a written explanation here: [OfSTED Written Explanation](#)

I hope this explanation helps provide clarity around the new system. As always, all of our focus remains on providing the best possible educational experience for every child at Wildridings, and once I receive the inspection report from our two day inspection earlier this week I will share it with you in order to celebrate the many successes of the school seen by the inspectors together with the clearly identified areas of improvement.

Kind regards



**Mr B Ellis**  
Headteacher