



**Dear Parent/Carer,**

We are writing to share some important updates about changes to the Ofsted inspection framework, which came into effect in November 2025.

Ofsted will no longer give schools one overall grade like “outstanding”, “good”, “requires improvement” or “inadequate”. Instead, schools will receive a new report card with grades across several different areas. These new grades are:

- Exceptional
- Strong Standard
- Expected Standard
- Needs Attention
- Urgent Improvement

**Ofsted have explained that these new grades cannot be directly compared with the old ones.** For example, “requires improvement” does not mean the same as “needs attention”, and “outstanding” is not the same as “exceptional”.

The grade “needs attention” is designed to be helpful and advisory. It means that a school needs to make improvements in that area to reach the expected standard. **It is not a failure.** Instead, it identifies an area of focus for the school where they will need to make changes to secure the expected standard in the future.

Ofsted inspects the following areas in schools:

- Safeguarding (schools either meet these standards or not)  
inclusion
- curriculum and teaching  
achievement
- attendance and behaviour
- personal development and well-being
- early years in schools (where applicable)
- leadership and governance

Ofsted’s expectations remain high, and the bar has been raised again. Under the new framework, most schools are expected to be graded at the “expected standard”. This means the school is providing a good, effective education and doing everything it should be doing in that area.

Some schools may receive “strong standard” in certain areas. Very few schools nationally are expected to receive an “exceptional” grade.

This does not mean the school’s quality of provision has declined. In many cases, schools will have improved what they offer children, but Ofsted’s criteria are now more demanding. The new grades reflect these higher expectations, not a drop in quality.

As with all new systems there are some emerging concerns and these are reflected in the first report cards published. In the past Behaviour and Attitudes were graded separately from Attendance. These have now been combined into one grade. Attendance is vitally important and we are seeing evidence that grading is being weighted towards attendance rather than behaviour overall. This means that a school can have very good behaviour and attitudes but if attendance falls below the national average the school may still be graded as Needs Attention. Our schools work hard to ensure children attend school every day and we have robust procedures to track and improve absences. There is clearly a limit to what they can achieve and this is where all parents can contribute to successful outcomes not only for their children but also for their school community.

You can find more information for parents and carers about the new Ofsted framework here: [Understanding Ofsted report cards and grades - GOV.UK](#).

We are very proud of the achievements of our schools and the way they support our children and young people. We are confident that our schools will be well prepared for their next inspection under the new framework and we appreciate the support you give to us.

Yours sincerely,



Lee Mason Ellis

CEO



Tim Rome

Director of Education