

## Summary of changes: Early Years Inspections 2025

The new toolkit and operational guides will apply to inspections from **10th November 2025**

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| <b>Three publications:</b><br>Early years inspection toolkit<br>Early years inspection operating guide<br>Early years inspection information   |
| <b>Reporting:</b><br>An inspection report card<br>No single headline judgements<br>Context data about the setting and SEND and deprivation figures<br>Designed to make it more accessible, particularly on mobile devices  |
| <b>Grading:</b><br>5-point grading scale<br>Embedded in the toolkit with detailed descriptors for each area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urgent improvement</li> <li>• Needs attention</li> <li>• Expected standard</li> <li>• Strong standard</li> <li>• Exceptional – new grade to identify best provision in the country</li> </ul> |
| <b>Safeguarding:</b><br>Reported as a separate category on the Ofsted report card<br>Safeguarding will be graded as “met” or “not met”, with a clear narrative to explain the decision   |
| <b>Evaluation:</b><br>A wider range of evaluation areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safeguarding</li> <li>Inclusion</li> <li>Curriculum and teaching</li> <li>Achievement</li> <li>Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines</li> <li>Children’s welfare and well-being</li> <li>Leadership and governance</li> </ul>             |
| <b>Inclusion:</b><br>New ‘inclusion’ evaluation area to help break down barriers to learning and well-being  |
| <b>Inspection methodology:</b><br>How do children ‘achieve, belong, thrive’?<br>Stronger focus on leadership, inclusion, and an open and transparent safeguarding culture<br>Evaluation of providers’ work to support and promote leader and staff well-being  |



National Day Nurseries Association

### **Inspectors:**

Will have a background in early years

Possibly an additional inspector – guidelines for this will be given in Autumn 2025

Increased resource and training for inspection teams to drive quality and consistency

### **Notification and calls:**

**First call** – made by 10am the day before inspection

Agree a second, longer planning call

**Planning call** – approx. 30 mins (usually a video call and on the day)

Can take breaks if needed

More emphasis on well-being with inspectors expected to '*consider the well-being of both staff and leaders throughout*'

**Nominee** - leaders encouraged to have someone present to assist and support them in all calls

### **Inspection days capped:**

Length of inspection to be a maximum of 6 hours for a nursery operating full days

New operating guides set out the times at which inspectors can arrive on site and the suggested latest times they should be departing, to cap the length of inspection days

### **Inspection frequency:**

First inspections of newly registered settings with 12-18 months (from April 2026)

Every 4 years from April 2026, if the setting has all areas at expected standard or higher

Every 12 months if needs attention

Every 6 months if any urgent improvement required