

Timing of S48 Inspections

Some schools are under the false impression that an Ofsted inspection automatically triggers a Pikuach inspection. This is not the case, and it needs to be communicated to the head teachers. Schools also need to be aware that a Section 48 inspection is required every 5 years, even if the school has received an 'Outstanding' grade from Ofsted.

All schools that were judged 'good' or 'outstanding' at their last Section 48 inspection must be scheduled for their next Section 48 inspection within 5 school years from end of the school year within which they were last inspected. For example, if a school was inspected at any time between September 2012 and July 2013, the next inspection would be scheduled during the school year September 2017 and July 2018. This means that an inspection should not normally take place at an interval of less than 5 years from the date of the previous inspection.

Any school with a Section 48 inspection judgement that was less than 'good' can be scheduled for its next Section 48 inspection at any point after 3 years from the date of the last Section 48 inspection, but no later than 5 school years from the end of the school year within which the last inspection took place. For example, if a school was inspected in September 2012 the earliest it should be inspected again is September 2015. The latest date that the inspection could take place would be July 2018.

If, in exceptional circumstances, particular concerns arise which might warrant consideration of earlier inspection, this will need to be agreed with the Department in advance.