

# Guidance on the use of evidence forms

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This guidance is in two parts:

1. general guidance
2. evidence form codes to be used

**Age group:** All

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# Contents

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General guidance on recording inspection evidence	4
Completing an evidence form	5
Evidence form codes	8
Subject codes for use on evidence forms	10

## General guidance on recording inspection evidence

1. The evidence form (EF) remains the document for recording **all first-hand evidence**. The guidance in this document applies to all inspection remits but the term 'EF' is used throughout this form to refer to any generic means of recording inspection evidence.
2. **Lesson evidence forms** will generally contain personal data (and, by implication, other information concerning the performance of an individual being observed). As such, they may be accessible under the Data Protection Act to the individual teacher who has been observed (via a 'subject access request') and should be completed with this in mind. They should be clearly written in a way that another person will be able to understand. However, teachers should have no need to ask for session EFs to be disclosed if feedback is informative and helpful.
3. Since lesson EFs contain personal data, inspectors should take care how they report back on lesson observations, including dual observations, to headteachers and others. Although it would be appropriate to discuss strengths and weaknesses in teaching generally, inspectors should be cautious about sharing grade data from individual lessons. In particular, inspectors should not share information for the purposes of performance management and should make clear that inspection evidence must not be used in this way.
4. Evidence forms relating to 'learning walks' or other forms of inspection trail should not contain any graded evaluations of the performance of individuals. However, they may still contain the personal data of those individuals and therefore should be treated as such.
5. When completing lesson evidence forms, including those that cover a number of short sessions, inspectors are asked to:
  - record the session time/s and date; this will assist in positive identification if a subject access request is made
  - make clear in the context box if the session is not being led by the teacher/trainer
  - make clear in the context box if the lesson is being taught by a newly qualified teacher
  - ensure that the writing is legible and that any underlining is marked in pen (felt highlighters will not show up if the EF is photocopied)
  - avoid the use of colloquial language; write in a professional manner with the assumption that the EF might be seen by the teacher concerned
  - as far as possible, do not write anything that could identify individual learners

- provide a clear, evidenced analysis for the grades awarded; this will form a useful basis for feedback to the teacher.
- 6. The information contained within evidence forms may be open to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, especially where they do not comprise personal data.
- 7. Discussions with staff, governors, learners or other persons connected with the school may include information that is considered to be provided in confidence to the inspection team for the purposes of inspection. Inspectors are asked at the start of a discussion to make clear that the interviewee must clearly signal when any of the information they impart during the discussion is being given **in confidence**. There should then be agreement between the inspector and the interviewee(s) about what is to be deemed confidential – Ofsted would expect such information not to be trivial or widely-known and that it also covers matters that may harm the confider if disclosed.
- 8. **Where information is given in confidence, inspectors should underline the relevant parts of the EF and put a note in the margin to that effect.** This will make it very clear, if release is requested, which elements will be considered for non-disclosure.
- 9. However, it should be pointed out that it will not always be possible for the inspector to prevent others guessing where the information originated. There are also further circumstances where Ofsted is unable to maintain confidentiality. The most likely scenario would be where inspectors have a duty to pass on disclosures which raise child protection or safeguarding issues, or circumstances where serious misconduct or potential criminal activity are involved. In such circumstances, inspectors should make clear that it may not be possible to guarantee anonymity.

## Completing an evidence form

- 10. The '**header information**' on the EF should be completed fully, using the attached coding, where relevant. This is important information for the analysis of lesson observations, for instance. Please note the following sets of codes should **only be used for lesson EFs**:
  - grouping
  - present/number on roll
  - observation times.
- 11. All EFs should contain a statement of the main **focus** of the evidence-gathering activity which relates to one or more of the inspection issues.
- 12. When recording a session observation, the **context** should indicate what the session is about, for example its objectives.

13. The **evidence** section is for brief evaluative comment which makes clear the evidence on which judgements are based. Where teaching is evaluated, a connection should be made to the **impact** it has on learners' behaviour, progress, and the quality of learning, making specific reference to different groups of learners wherever possible. Inspectors should use the outline guidance and grade descriptors to guide their observations and to support their judgements on the quality of what they see in lessons. There will always be a particular focus on learning and progress, behaviour, and the quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning. Where possible, inspectors should seek to confirm judgements about attainment.
14. Inspectors are asked to record any further evidence of particular significance relating to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development under the heading **evidence of SMSC**.
15. The section headed **evaluation** for session observations should identify clearly (perhaps by using bullet points) the main strengths and weaknesses that can be fed back to teachers and used for an analysis of whole school issues. **All** EFs, including those used for non-session evidence, should contain an evaluation. After a discussion with a senior manager, for example, there might be an evaluation of how well the provision is led and managed on the basis of that conversation. **The accurate completion of this section is a most important contribution to the overall view of the provider and what it needs to do to improve.**
16. For school inspections, there are **boxes which correspond to the main headings of the inspection framework** in which grades can be put where possible. The lead inspector will steer the team to complete those grades that are the most pertinent for the inspection.
17. All grades awarded should be consistent with the text, and justified by it. Where there is insufficient information to grade, a box should be left blank.
18. When **EFs are used to record non-session evidence**, such as discussions with staff and learners or analysis of work, complete only the relevant grade boxes. For example, a discussion with a manager should result in an evaluative summary that supports a grade relating to leadership and management, and possibly other grades that relate to the main Framework headings that were covered in the discussion. If a quality assurance mentor (QAM) completes a non-session EF (for example, a summary of a discussion), the top of the EF should be marked **QAM**.
19. The EF can be used flexibly as a '**running EF**'. This might consist of repeated visits to a given activity to see, for example, the progress of work in a long session without remaining present the whole time. Alternatively, the pursuit of an inspection issue might give rise to a series of recorded notes that lead to a conclusion on the issue concerned. This might involve a succession of interviews, short visits to a number of lessons, and the scrutiny of

documentation and records, and be recorded on a 'single' EF. In practice this would mean fixing together several EF sheets to form a single evidence trail. The lead inspector will guide the team on the way s/he would like EFs to be used. Where an EF is used to record two or more observations of the same class or activity, the total observation time should be entered in the cumulative time box.

20. The EF should also be used for **logging the main points raised at meetings** with the school's senior management team **and** for **synthesising evidence** that underpins important judgements, especially those that might be disputed by the provider or when teams arrive at a judgement.

## Evidence form codes

<p><b>Inspection number</b> <i>Required in all EFs</i> This is the reference number allocated to a particular school inspection</p>	<p><b>Inspectors OIN</b> <i>Required in all EFs</i> Enter own Ofsted Inspector Number</p>	<p><b>Inspector's EF Number</b> <i>Required in all EFs</i> Enter in this box a code which uniquely identifies the EF to an inspector and the observation, analysis, discussion or other event recorded. For example, Jane Smith's twelfth EF might be numbered JS12.</p>
<p><b>Observation type</b> <i>Required in all EFs</i> Please tick the relevant box</p>	<p><b>Grouping</b> <i>Required only in EFs coded Lesson observation</i></p> <p>For the class (not the task) circle</p> <p>MC For a <b>Mixed</b> ability class</p> <p>SU For a class <b>Setted</b> or streamed or banded by ability where the pupils are the <b>Upper</b> ability range within the school</p> <p>SA For a class <b>Setted</b> or streamed or banded by ability where pupils are in the <b>Average</b> ability range within the school</p> <p>SL For a class <b>Setted</b> or streamed or banded by ability where pupils are in the <b>Lower</b> ability range within the school</p> <p>O For Other forms of organisation</p>	<p><b>Gender</b> <i>Required only in EFs coded Lesson observation</i></p> <p>For the class (not the task) circle:</p> <p>B for a <b>boys</b> only class</p> <p>G for a <b>girls</b> only class</p> <p><b>MI for a mixed gender class</b></p>
<p><b>Year group(s)</b> <i>Required in all EFs for Lesson observation and Work analysis</i></p> <p>For single year groups use:</p> <p>N For <b>Nursery</b> classes</p> <p>R For <b>Reception</b> classes</p>		<p><b>Present/Number on roll</b> <i>Required only in EFs coded Lesson observation</i></p> <p>Enter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ in the first box, the number of pupils present during the observation</li> <li>■ in the second box, the total number on the roll of the class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>E</b> For 0-3 EYFS provision as part of a single inspection (SI)</p> <p>1-13 For classes in <b>Year 1 – Year 13</b></p> <p>Where more than one year group is present, include the relevant codes for all the years and <b>circle the one year group which provides the main focus for the observation</b></p>		<p>If there is a significant <b>gender imbalance</b> in the pupils on roll (or in those absent), this should be commented on in the context box.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Subject codes</b></p> <p><i>At least one code is required in EFs coded Lesson observation or Work analysis</i></p> <p>In the <b>first box</b> record:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the main subject (or, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the main area of learning) to which the grades written at the bottom of the evidence form apply.</li> </ul> <p>Use <b>the second box</b> to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ highlight that elements of another subject are included in the lesson (for example write GG CZ if you inspect a geography lesson which contains elements of citizenship)</li> <li>■ highlight a focus of the lesson (for example numeracy, EAL)</li> <li>■ indicate that an observation for one subject took place within a lesson in another subject (for example write IT MA if you inspect ICT in a maths lesson)</li> <li>■ indicate, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, another area of learning which also featured in the lesson observed.</li> </ul> <p>The second box may be left blank. See annex for a full list of subject codes.</p>		<p><b>Observation time</b> <i>Required only in EFs coded Lesson observation</i></p> <p>Enter an estimate of the time, in minutes, spent observing a particular class or activity.</p> <p>One EF may be used to record two or more observations of the same class or activity (a running EF). In these cases circle the Y box and include the number of lessons included in the box provided. Enter the total observation time, the time of each session and the date of the sessions in the final box</p>

**Area of learning codes for use in evidence forms coded Lesson observation in the Early Years Foundation Stage only**

Personal, social and emotional development	SF	Knowledge and understanding of the world	KF
Communication, language and literacy	LF	Physical development	PF
Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy	MF	Creative development	CF

**Codes for use only in the second code box, to indicate a particular aspect of the lesson**

Focus on English as an additional language	EA	Focus on numeracy	NY
Focus on literacy	LY	Focus on special educational needs	SN

**Code for evidence forms coded A for the Early Years Foundation Stage**

Early Years Foundation Stage      FD

**Activity codes for use in evidence forms coded O (other) only**

Assembly/collective worship	AS	Extra-curricular activities	EX
Form/class/registration time	FT		

## Subject codes for use on evidence forms

Accounting	AC	French	FR
Arabic	AB	General studies	GS
Art and design/art	AR	Geography	GG
Bengali	BL	Geology	GE
Biology	BI	German	GM
Business studies/business education	BE	Government and politics	GP
Business/business studies and economics	BE	Graphics	GR
Careers education	CA	Greek (modern)	GK
Chemistry	CH	Gujarati	GU
Child development	CD	Health and social care	HS
Chinese	CN	Hebrew (modern)	HW
Citizenship	CZ	Hindi	HN
Classics/classical studies	CL	History	HI
Communication studies	CO	Hospitality and catering	HC
Computing	IT	Humanities	HU
Construction/construction & built environment	CB	Information science/systems/studies	IT
Dance	DA	Information & communication technology	IT
Danish	DN	Instrumental music tuition	IN
Design and technology	DT	Italian	IL
Distribution/retail & distributive services	DI	Japanese	JA
Drama/theatre studies	DR	Land and environment	LB
Dutch	DU	Latin	LA
Economics/economics & business studies	EC	Law	LW
Electronics/systems and control	EL	Leisure and tourism/recreation	LE
Engineering	EG	Manufacturing	MN
English/English literature	EN	Mathematics	MA
Food subjects	FS	Media/media studies	MS

Media: communication & production	MP	Textiles/fabrics/needlework	TL
Music	MU	Travel and tourism	TT
Panjabi	PJ	Turkish	TU
Performing arts	PA	Urdu	UR
Personal/social/health education	PS		
Philosophy	PL	<i>Symbols for subjects not listed</i>	
Physical education/games	PE		
Physics	PH	Any other:	
Psychology	PY	Aesthetic/practical subject	XA
Religious education	RE	Business/commercial subject	XB
Resistant materials	RM	Classical subject/language	XC
Russian	RU	Humanities/social subject	XH
Science	SC	Modern foreign language	XL
Science (double) GCSE	S2	Mathematical subject	XM
Science (single) GCSE	S1	Physical subject	XP
Social studies/science	SS	Science subject	XS
Sociology	SO	Technological subject	XT
Spanish	SP	Vocational subject	XV
Sports science/studies	SR	Any other subject not listed	XO
Statistics	ST		