



10 Common Myths About Ofsted Inspections

10 common myths

If you're a registered childminder or childcare provider, you can expect to receive an inspection from Ofsted. All providers on the Early Years Register are inspected at least once during a 4-year cycle, the current of which runs until 31st July 2020.

Ofsted's purpose is to evaluate the quality of education and care provided by a setting. Its inspectors highlight good practice and make suggestions as to where improvements could be made for the future. However, the thought of an impending Ofsted inspection can be incredibly anxiety-provoking for any childcare provider, even the most well-established ones!

Here, we dispel some of the common myths that you may have heard and reveal the all-important truth about these visits.

Myth 1

Ofsted must first give notice before carrying out an inspection.

The truth is: Inspections can take place without the inspector giving notice. This happens most often when someone has raised concerns about the setting.

Myth 2

Ofsted prefers settings to use paper assessments rather than electronically-recorded assessments.

The truth is: Ofsted is not prescriptive as to how settings record assessments, what's important is whether they are effective and help children's learning, development and progress.



Myth 3

The inspector will want to see as much paperwork as possible and this should be stored in a file marked 'Ofsted'.

The truth is: The documents noted on pages 9-10 of the [Early Years Inspection Handbook](#) are the ones most likely to be requested by the inspector. However, it's unlikely that they'll want to see all of these every time they visit. Inspectors will ask to see evidence which is considered appropriate to the individual setting they're visiting - this is normally determined by the observations they carry out.

Myth 4

Although the SEF (self-evaluation form) was withdrawn in April, Ofsted still expects leaders to make a written self-evaluation record.

The truth is: Settings do not need to produce any self-evaluation documents. However, managers and staff should be able to discuss how they're meeting the needs of the children, and the quality of the care and activities they provide, with the inspector.

Myth 5

Being offered a cup of tea/coffee and biscuits will be viewed as a bribery tool by the inspector. Or, that the inspector will expect a hot drink even if there's a 'no hot drinks' policy in place at the setting.

The truth is: Inspectors must carry out their work without bias, regardless of whether refreshments are offered to them. If there's a 'no hot drinks' policy in place at the setting, they wouldn't expect staff to break this protocol on their account.



Myth 6

Ofsted expects the setting manager to make themselves available to speak to the inspector at all times.

The truth is: Inspectors expect to see the normal day-to-day running of the setting and will work around the usual activities that the manager has to organise. Any meetings with managers will take place at a time which is mutually convenient.



Myth 7

Inspectors take into account previous complaints lodged by a setting.

The truth is: Inspectors don't take into account any past complaints made by settings when they make their judgements. Inspectors must act without bias at all times and their judgements are based solely on evidence. Their reports are also cross-checked by other inspectors before they're finalised, to ensure that this is the case.



Myth 8

At the end of an inspection, only managers can attend the feedback session.

The truth is: Whilst any feedback is confidential until the final report is published, other staff can attend this session where feasible.

Myth 9

A setting cannot receive an 'Outstanding' grade in their very first inspection, nor can a setting jump more than one grade higher than its previous inspection.

The truth is: Settings can achieve 'Outstanding' in their first inspection if the provider meets the descriptors for this (these can be found in the [Early Years Inspection Handbook](#)). Similarly, if Ofsted finds that the setting has improved by more than one grade, the inspector will judge it as such.



Myth 10

Ofsted has a list of specific things settings must do to assess and manage risk, such as using gloves when changing nappies and covering plug sockets.

The truth is: Although the [statutory framework for the early years foundation stage \(EYFS\)](#) says settings must take steps to assess and manage risk, Ofsted doesn't have a preferred way as to how to do this – it's left up to the childcare provider to decide.

Reference source: Inspecting registered early years providers, April 2018 - link here: gov.uk

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