

## Themed Area Inspection 2025 – ‘Children who are not in school’

Under the Local Area SEND and Alternative Provision Inspection Framework released in January 2023, Themed Inspections were announced as a way of enabling Inspection Teams to take a more in-depth look at and gather insight into local area arrangements in high priority themed areas away from the longer full area inspection.

In 2024 this covered the theme of ‘Preparation for Adulthood.’

**In 2025 the theme is ‘Children who are not in school’**

This is a brief guide (5 minute read) to understand the ask of this themed inspection and what will be covered.

## **‘Children who are not in school’ – what does this mean?**

Under this themed inspection, ‘children who are not in school’ means:

Children with SEND who are of compulsory school age (5 years old and over) who are not registered at an independent or any type of state funded school. This also includes children who are:

- On a school roll and flexi-schooled
- Accessing education on a part time basis – reduced timetable
- Receiving education through Education Other than at Setting (EOTAS)
- Electively Home Educated (EHE)
- Severely absent from school
- Children Missing Education (CME)
- Accessing unregistered Alternative Provision

In addition, this themed inspection will also look into the experiences of children who have returned to school in the last 6 months.



## What will the inspection team need to know?

The inspection team conducting the themed inspections will be looking into:

1. How the local area partnership of education, health and care work together to meet the needs of children not in school, this includes the local areas understanding of why children and their families choose to leave / not access their educational placement and what schools are doing to support children remaining in school.
2. What Local Authorities are doing to support children in accessing a suitable education.
3. The role and impact of social care supporting children with SEND who are not in school who require help and protection.
4. The role and impact of health providers in meeting the health needs of children who are not in school.
5. A deeper look into how the Local Area reaches into families who we find 'harder to reach' including families where there are safeguarding concerns.
6. The views of children, practitioners and leaders on why children aren't in school and how needs are being met.
7. How many of our children are waiting for a diagnostic assessment.
8. How we share information and work together when children are not in school and / or are at risk of exclusion.



## How long will the themed inspection last and who will visit?

The inspection team will most likely be a team of 3 inspectors:

1. His Majesty's Inspector (HMI) for education
2. HMI for social care
3. Care Quality Commission Inspector for health

For areas taking part in this themed inspection, there will be 4 days of activity off site and 4 days of activity on site.

There are 3 weeks of preparation activity that take place, this includes, and is not limited to:

- Sharing of local area arrangements covering all the above
- Case tracking activity (multi-agency case sampling / audit)
- Annex A information submission
- Local Area surveys – children, families, practitioners
- Providers visit lists
- A full timetable of activity and documentation.

The Director for Children's Services (DCS) and Chef Executive of the Integrated Care Board (ICB) will receive the notification.

The Local Area Nominated Officer (LANO) is the main point of contact to make arrangements for the themed inspection.



## Who's involved?

The inspection teams will want to talk to and hear from a range of children, families and practitioners in this themed inspection, this will include, but is not limited to:

- Education, health and care partnership leaders
- Parent Carer Forum and other parent groups in the local area
- Children and their families
- Social Workers and their managers
- Early help practitioners, including family support and inclusion
- Health therapy providers
- Diagnostic assessment providers
- Education providers
- Commissioned services (including alternative provision)
- Commissioning teams, including joint commissioning

**Full guidance can be found here:** [Thematic reviews of children not in school in local areas - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thematic-reviews-of-children-not-in-school-in-local-areas)

