

The Growth Company

Education and Skills

Ofsted Inspection March 2026

Guest speakers



Helen Stevenson-Miller
Quality Director
and Nominee



Emma Thorpe
Head of Quality
and Shadow Nominee



Jack Higson
Quality Manager
and Ofsted Support

Who are GC Education and Skills?



Training centres based in
Greater Manchester and
Merseyside



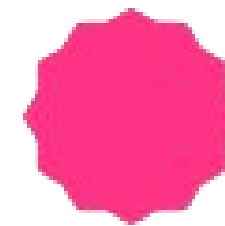
Remote delivery
nationwide
(apprenticeships and
adult)

We are large and complex



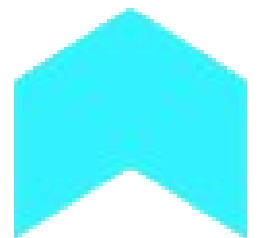
**Education
programmes for
young people (EPYP)**

E3 – L2 programmes



Adult provision

L1 – L3 full and
part-time courses

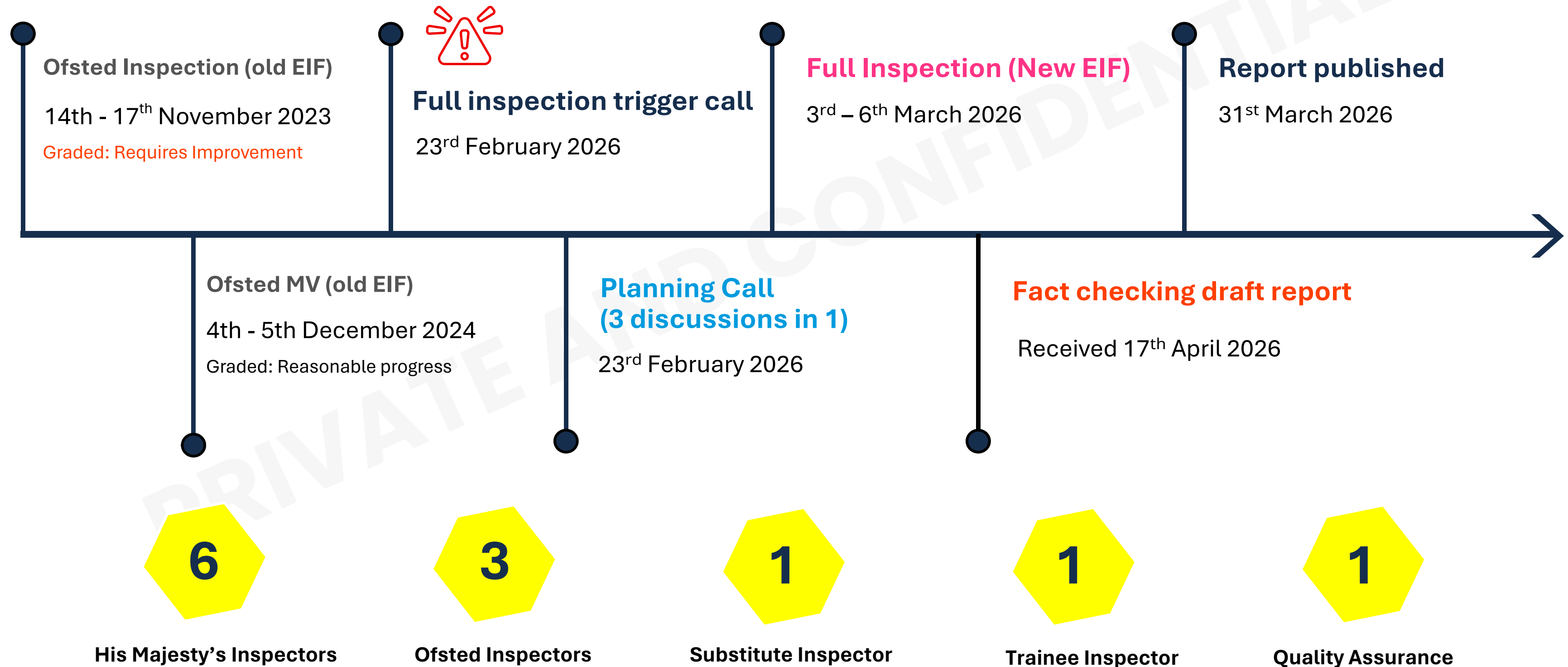


Apprenticeships

L2 – L6
apprenticeships



Inspection timeline



3-hour single call
opted for
3 meetings in 1

Planning Call Day 1

Attendees:
Nominee, Support,
Designated
Safeguarding Lead,
Lead HMI

Opportunity to
showcase and
celebrate GC

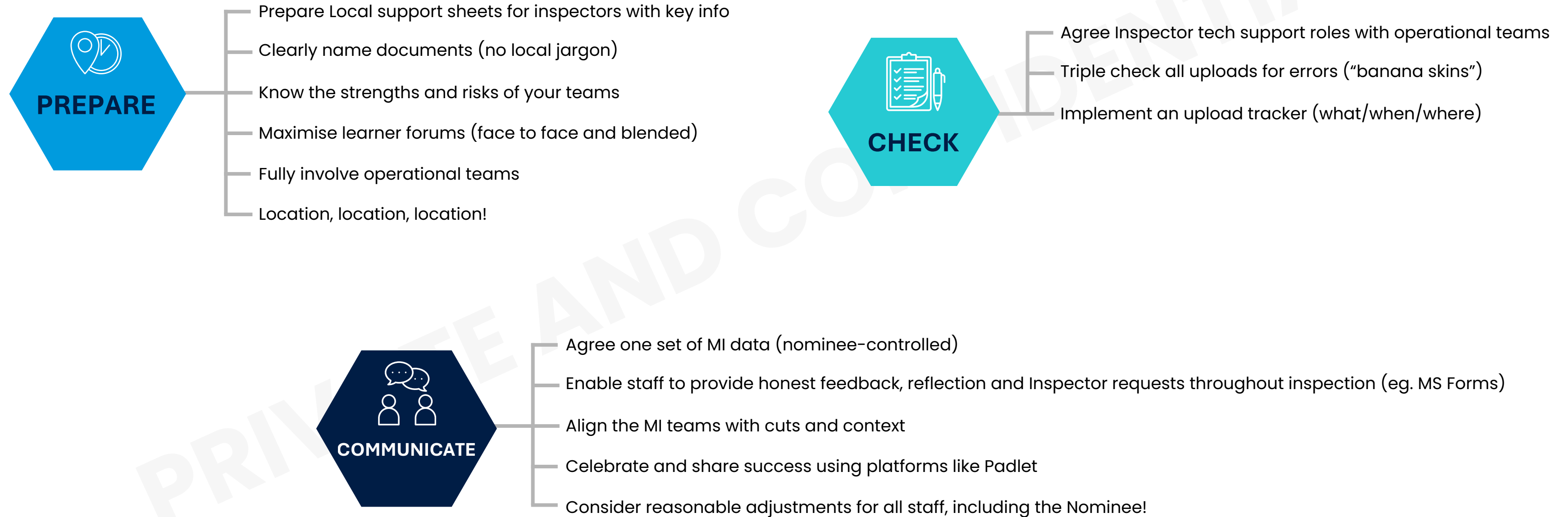
Lessons learnt

- Know the strengths and skill set of your teams
- Know your data or ability to access data
- Be honest and transparent
- Early adoption (February 2025) of the toolkit was key
- Self-assessed against the new toolkit
- Always have a plan B
- Don't rush uploads & preparation

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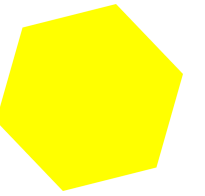
Documents
uploaded to
Ofsted portal
by end of
planning day

Planning stage - top tips



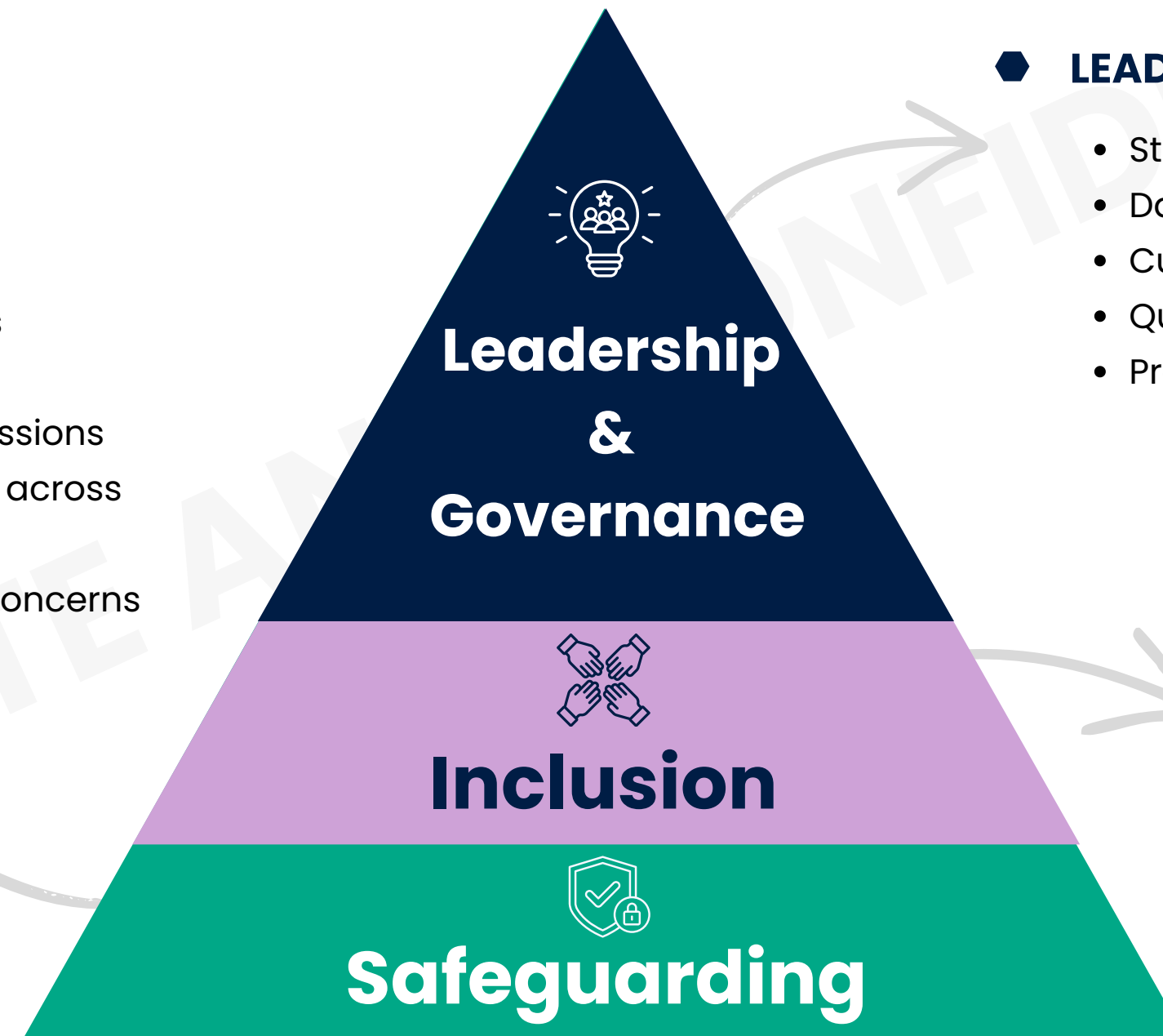
Inspection day one & two

Establishing **your** culture through core focus areas



SAFEGUARDING

- Effective safeguarding arrangements
- Safer recruitment and compliance
- Learner voice through targeted discussions
- Understanding safeguarding themes across learner groups
- Tracking and responding to welfare concerns



LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- Strategic oversight and accountability
- Data-informed decision making
- Curriculum quality and learning walks
- Quality assurance and improvement processes
- Progress since previous inspection

INCLUSION

- Inclusive strategies and leadership oversight
- Removing barriers to learning
- Support for learners with different needs
- Inclusive teaching and learning practices
- Staff capability and awareness

Inclusion focus expectation: *everybody's responsibility*

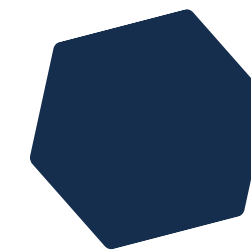
Impact of
Staff CPD - can
staff confidently
talk about CPD?

Learner journey
case studies

The graduated
approach in teaching
practice **and** progress
reviews



Inclusion focus: *expectation vs. actual*



Sustained and significant focus on Inclusion from planning call to final day by all inspectorate

Requested **element 2 funding** breakdown & calculations

Lesson learnt: Continue to challenge LA if EHCP information is out of date



Leadership and Governance top tips!

01

Be prepared

Be prepared to discuss your Quality Improvement Plans focusing on what you have changed since your previous inspection and the impact of those changes on quality, staff workload and wellbeing.

L&G evidence is also tested through “show me” conversations within the provision-type scrutiny.

02

Self-assess honestly

Self-assess honestly against the new EIF.

Ensure your Board knows and owns the agreed grades and can clearly articulate the impact seen to date.

03

Collate meeting minutes

Collate your meeting minutes centrally asap.

Consistent, accurate meeting minutes provide a critical evidence trail for decisions, challenge and improvement.

04

Shout about your context

Always discuss your practical context - **this is essential**: furthest and hardest-to-reach learners, demographics, LLDD, any subcontracted provision, and QAR variation linked to learner and employer need must all be clearly understood and evidenced by the Board.

05

Know your teams strengths

Lead with strong teaching, learning and assessment from the outset.

Use qualified and competent staff, targeted CPD, and robust CEIAG, with impact evident early in practice — **first impressions matter** to avoid the “*we can’t unsee what we have seen*” statement”

Feedback meetings

01

Provisional grading

Provisional grading may be shared as early as day 2 — use this intel and share with teams to help them prepare opportunities to demonstrate further impact over the week.

02

Operational feedback

Feedback is given directly to Operational Leaders and Managers during the week, identifying where practice may meet elements of the 'strong' standard and how it can be strengthened by next Inspection.

03

Listen closely

Inspectors speak quickly – listen out for key words such as *most*, *many* and *some* to identify next-day priorities and Operational Teams' focus.

04

The Toolkit is a checklist!

The inspection toolkit can be used live; inspectors will signpost the sections where 'strong' practice is already evident, or where areas of 'needs attention' may occur.

Shadow nominee top tip: Feedback meeting note taking

- | | |
|---|--|
| + Recorded positive feedback on left side of the page | - Collected areas for further scrutiny/evidence on the right side of the page |
| + Used black pen | - Used blue pen |
| + Feedback is given by provision type and follow the toolkit order (CTT, achievement, PD) | - Used highlighters for any actions to complete before the next day or requests for portal uploads |

Key takeaways



It is a **collaborative and cooperative** approach



Planning and **working closely** with the LI is **everything**



Listen to **understand and respond** not simply to hear!



Relax – even now. It takes a **few moments** to get into the web and flow of Q&A's

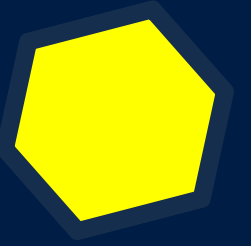


Keep it simple – we have Padlets to collect evidence for everything!



Wellbeing leads every meeting and discussion *'how are you, how are the team, how is everybody?'*

Remember...



It's a whole team approach and process, not just the Nominee's role



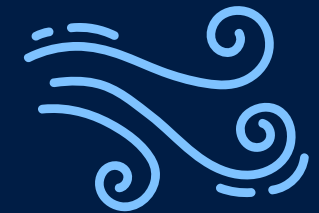
Stay hydrated



Have plenty food and snacks



Ensure you have plenty of rooms, including a permanent base room for Nominee and support



Take plenty of fresh air breaks

One last thing...

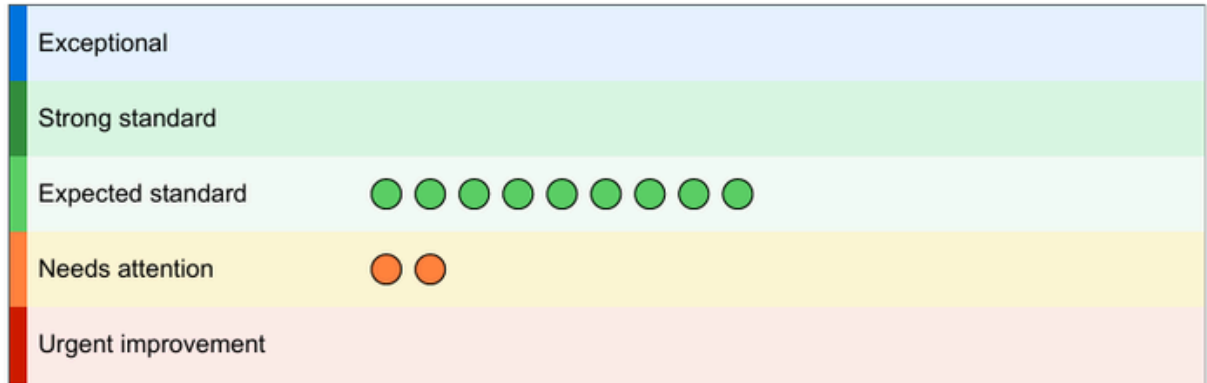
We self assessed EPYP achievement as **Needs Attention** and made significant changes in the 25.26 curriculum, managerial oversight and removed the roll on/roll off model. This **proved** assurance in findings.

Don't shy away from your SWOT areas!



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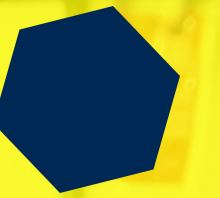
Inspection report: 3 March 2026



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Documents
uploaded to
Ofsted portal
by end of
inspection





Thank you