

How multi-academy trusts are involved in school inspections

05 May 2023  Katie Michelin

In April, Ofsted published its research and analysis on how multi-academy trusts are involved in inspections. The report aims to reflect how both inspectors and trust leaders view the role of MATs in the **school** inspection system. That emphasis on **school** is important as there is of course related discussion and debate around whether MATs should be formally inspected in their own right.

The findings

At present, the legal framework only permits inspection of the effectiveness of the school, not the MAT. Ofsted's latest research recognises that this can cause ambiguity and frustration during inspection as the role of the trust cannot be sufficiently evaluated and reported on. On the one hand, Ofsted recognises that the school and MAT are "one entity". Yet for inspection, that MAT proprietor is unable to be properly scrutinised and held to account for the school's performance.

The report notes, and we would agree based on reports from our MAT clients, that whilst MAT leaders are now routinely involved in the inspection of their schools, there is still inconsistency in the extent of this involvement and the precise role MAT leaders will play.

Whilst this variation can in part be attributed to different trust models, Ofsted's research indicates that this can also vary depending on the identity of the inspection team.

Away from the debate around powers to inspect MATs, the report highlights the vital role trusts have in simply supporting the school during inspection. We know from our clients that this support for the school's senior leadership team, particularly in the current inspection climate, can be invaluable.

Whilst this report's findings are drawn from a small sample of trusts, its conclusions add some interesting context and insight into the wider and highly topical matter of the future of inspection.

[Read the full research and analysis from Ofsted here](#) →

If you have any questions or require specific advice following a recent Ofsted inspection, please get in touch.

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