

# What Teachers Think About Ofsted's New Inspection Framework

So... how do teachers feel about the new Ofsted plans?

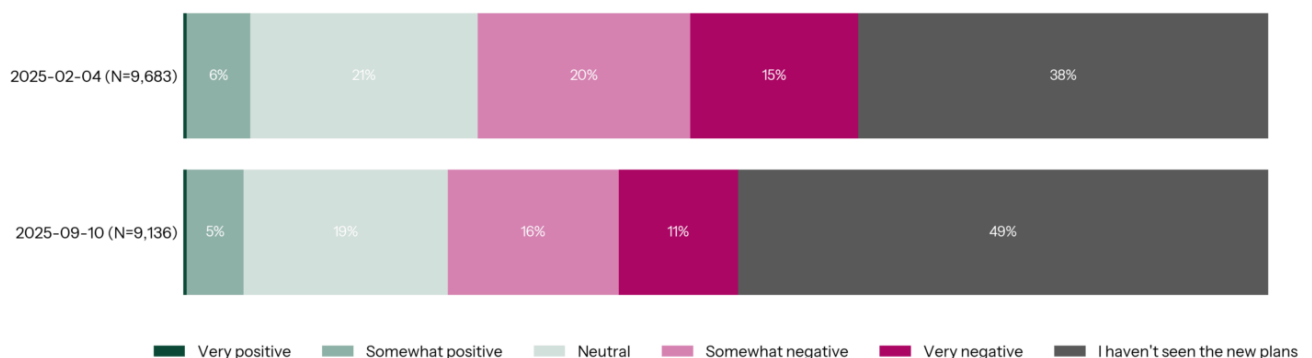
When Ofsted launched the Big Listen in March 2024, many in the profession hoped it might mark a turning point. After the tragic death of Ruth Perry, and widespread criticism of the existing model, there was cautious optimism that Ofsted would address concerns around workload, stress, and fairness.

So, how do teachers feel about the new plans announced last week?

- 5% reported feeling positive, with just 1% 'very positive'.
- 27% feel negative, with 11% choosing 'very negative'.
- 19% feel neutral.

These results are almost identical to those right after the consultation framework was released. Which suggests the months Ofsted spent tinkering around before this final version arrived were somewhat wasted on teachers.

## How do you feel about the plans?

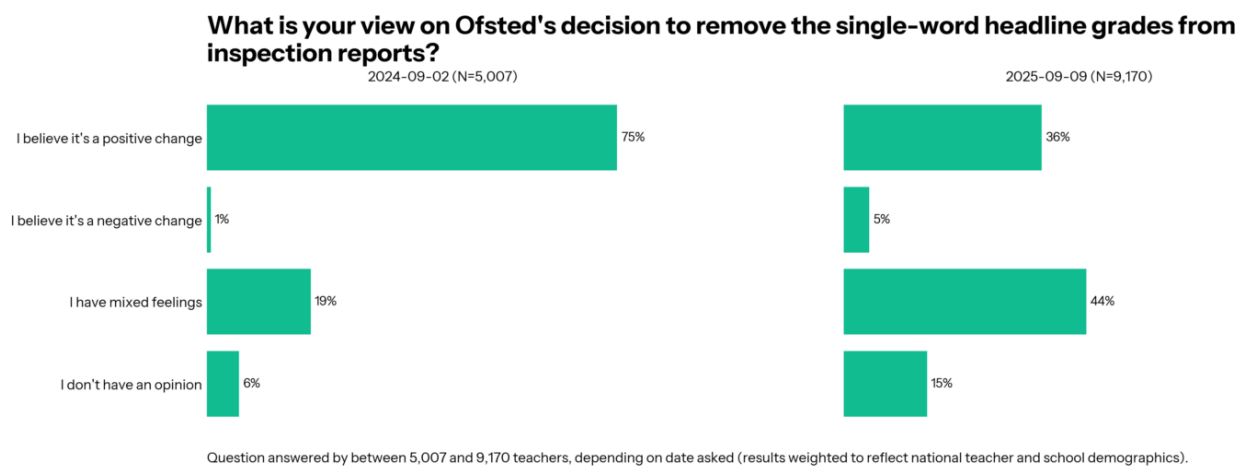


Question answered by between 9,136 and 9,683 teachers, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics).

Growing scepticism...

This time last year, Teacher Tappers felt more positive about the decision to remove single-

word headline grades. However, after 12 months of the change being implemented, and a new plan on the table, that support has dropped from 75% to 36%, and the number of teachers who now have mixed feelings has increased from 19% to 44%.

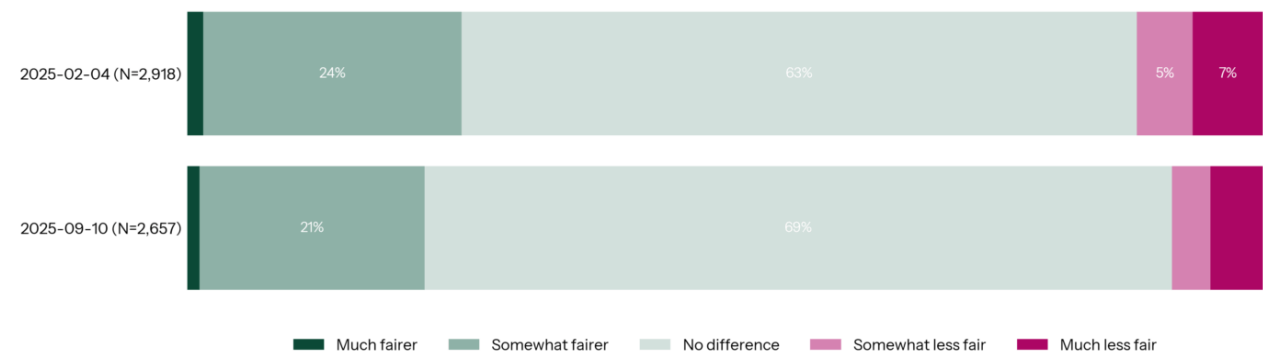


Do teachers feel the new inspections will be more fair, clear or accurate than what we had before?

Most teachers don't think so. The majority said the new five-tier system will make "no difference" to the accuracy of inspections. And not only that, but confidence in the reforms bringing change seems to have been chipped away since we asked earlier this year.

The number of teachers thinking the change would make "no difference" to providing a fairer picture of schools grew from 63% to 69%. The number who believe the change will make "no difference" to portraying a clearer picture of schools increased from 60% to 66%, and finally, the number who think the change will make "no difference" when providing an accurate picture of schools inched up from 65% to 71%.

**Do you think the five-tier rating system (from 'causing concern' to 'exemplary') will provide a fairer picture of schools than the current system?**



Question answered by between 2,657 and 2,918 teachers, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics).

## Teacher Tappers share their thoughts...

We also asked teachers to share their thoughts about the plans (and a huge 1,468 wrote in!) – the verdict from teachers is resoundingly clear: most believe this is a missed opportunity.

### “Rebranding, Nothing More”

The most common reaction was that the new framework feels like little more than a cosmetic makeover. Teachers described it as:

- “Rebranding, no real change.”
- “Window dressing and totally unsupportive of schools.”
- “Lipstick on a pig.”
- “Same old, same old.”

Or, as one teacher put it more bluntly: “It is just rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.”

As for workload...

Instead of reducing pressure, many teachers worry the changes will pile on extra work:

- “It’s going to add hugely to workload and stress.”
- “It has actually made it even more onerous.”
- “It does nothing to address the stress and burdens caused by Ofsted. If anything, it makes it worse.”

Some admitted they felt close to breaking point: “I can’t stay around for the next inspection – the last one broke me.” Another added: “The toll an inspection takes on my physical and mental wellbeing is enormous – I’m terrified I’ll be the one who lets the team down.”

### New grading system, old problems

The shift from single-word judgements to multiple categories hasn’t convinced most teachers:

- “They have replaced one word judgements with... more one word judgements.”
- “It’s a rebrand of one word outcomes, but now schools will have multiple ‘outcomes’ still judged on a snapshot in time.”
- “Exemplary will just become the new Outstanding.”

A few found some silver linings: “At least it’s not just one word to describe a whole school.” Another added: “It allows for strengths in different areas and not a generic judgement.”

A few positive notes

Although rare, some welcomed elements of the new framework:

- "The handbook is clearer than it has ever been before."
- "I like the renewed focus on SEND and inclusion."
- "I think the five levels of grading are so much better – there's a far smaller gap between them than between Good and Outstanding."

Even so, these comments were usually followed by scepticism about whether the changes would work in practice.

What next?

For most teachers, the new framework is being eyed nervously; however, the real test will be in the inspections! For now, it's a matter of waiting to see if the changes will bring a new era to Ofsted inspections...