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Five reasons why Ofsted (or any inspectorate) makes schools WORSE, not better.

1. The assumption is that all inspectors know what makes for a good school.

Some do.

Some don't.

Inspections are wildly different.

An inspector with a bee in his bonnet about x, fails you 1/12

Imagine in your own fields how differently ppl do their jobs.

Same in teaching.

Except more so as there is no agreed one way of teaching or running a school well.

It is subjective

Indeed, in the 2000s, Ofsted was the stick to bludgeon schools into being progressive. 2/12

Before Amanda Spielman and Michael Wilshaw (Chief inspectors)

Ofsted was a clear force for making schools BAD.

We all knew there was a tension between pleasing Ofsted and teaching well.

Nowadays that is more blurred.

Spielman is now stepping down.

God help us all 3/12

2. Heads and senior teams are distracted from doing what will improve their school by Ofsted.

All you hear in schools is 'We are aiming for good or outstanding' (Ofsted ratings).

It is human nature to care how things LOOK, often trumping how things actually ARE 4/12

My advice to Heads is always 'Ignore Ofsted'.

I seem bonkers

As long as Ofsted exists, heads will not be free to do what is right for their schools, even with a decent Chief Inspector

All you have is Ofsted's general guidance which can be interpreted in 100 diff ways 5/12

So schools do things Ofsted officially doesn't even want!

It is maddening.

Had they been free of the worry that their jobs and reps are on the line over one word (good/outstanding), they would be able to THINK.

Some do of course, but they have to be v brave 6/12

3. Do parents need Ofsted report to know which schl is good?

No

We all know which schls are good or bad! And some reports are 15 yrs old! Schls change in 2 yrs

Do you read the food inspector's report before going to a restaurant?

No

Why?

Because you are allowed inside!

7/12

Ofsted reports create a parental culture of not wanting to visit the schls.
It amazes me the number of families who send their kids to schools they have never visited
We create a culture where we just do what the state says instead of taking responsibility for our own kids 8/12

As a result, families either don't want to or cannot see inside schls during the day.
Open evenings yes, but how many open days?
Some schls have none.
Michaela is open to visitors daily. Few schls do this. Should be required for all
Sunlight is the best disinfectant 9/12

4. Ofsted requires paperwork.
Bureaucrats think that something works if it is written down.
They tick a box.
It focuses inspectors and school leaders on the measures rather than on what is REAL.
Truth becomes irrelevant.
Much like the rest of society in 2023 10/12

5. Schools aim for Good, and when some get it, they stop thinking about improvement.
Some feel they have the official stamp of approval: that's all that matters.
Ofsted removes agency, innovation and drive.
Clearly some schools see beyond this but it is hard. 11/12

Removal of agency & responsibility from both parents and school leaders is bad
This isn't Ofsted's fault or any one Chief Inspector's
It is nature of the beast
It is a PRETENCE of accountability, making us FEEL good
When in reality schools are made worse because of it 12/12