



The Association of Directors of Children's Services is pleased to submit this consultation response. ADCS is the national leadership organisation in England for directors of children's services appointed under the provisions of the *Children Act 2004* and for other children's services professional in leadership roles. The Association provides a national voice as a champion for children, with local and central government, and with the public.

### **Responding to parents' complaints about schools**

1. Local Authorities have existing procedures for parental complaints. It would be appropriate for these to continue as the first point of reference for parents. We would recommend Ofsted direct the complaint to the LA in the first instance. If a parent complaint could not be resolved then Ofsted procedures could be used.
2. It would be unrealistic for Ofsted to deal with the many trivial complaints that LAs receive from parents on a regular basis. It would be better for LAs to filter these complaints.

If two systems were to be in existence this could be problematic. If a parent had complained to both Ofsted and the LA independently confusion could arise from the variety of actions that might take place.

3. Should a parent complain to Ofsted how will this complaint be recorded and reported. It is vital that both the school and the LA are aware of the complaint and Ofsted's response as currently happens with Inspections.
4. LAs have clear guidance within their complaints procedures which parents can access and follow through in a systematic way. These procedures have timescales clearly identified. What is the timescale for closure on any complaints given to Ofsted?
5. How will Ofsted ensure they have sufficient local knowledge to give a parent immediate support? Generally in localities complaints are dealt with swiftly due to local knowledge of supporting agencies.

The above comments are offered to support Ofsted in clarifying and refining their powers.