

## CASE STUDY

# When Ofsted Came Knocking

Our honest take on the new inspection framework

Tech Educators is an instructor-led tech bootcamp provider running intensive, digital skills training throughout the UK. In January 2026, with 158 adult learners on programme, we became one of the first providers inspected under Ofsted's renewed framework. The result: Strong Standard across every single area, with safeguarding "Met". Here is what it was actually like, good bits and gulps included.

## So, the new framework

Ofsted retired the single-word judgements and brought in **report cards** with a five-point scale: **Exceptional, Strong Standard, Expected Standard, Needs Attention and Urgent Improvement**. The headline thing to know is that even "Expected Standard" is a genuinely higher bar than it sounds. The whole visit is now about evidencing real, consistent quality, not simply avoiding a bad grade.

## The good, the bad and the ugly

It started with two formal meetings, a mountain of documents and a self-grading exercise. We like being organised, so that part felt fine. Then four inspectors arrived, with morning and afternoon catch-ups and a steady run of what are effectively deep dives, even if they are no longer called that. The biggest surprise: **you get so much more time**, which is both amazing and quietly the worst.

**The good:** it felt more open, and context was king. We had a real chance to show inspectors what we do and explain why, and the deep dives were a fair, curious look at our teaching rather than a hunt for gotchas.

**The bad:** so many inspectors, over so long. There is nowhere to hide, they want a lot of detail, and we do not entirely buy the "just do what you normally would" line. When four inspectors are in the building, no day is quite a normal day.

**The ugly:** on one day, with our grade tracking well, we had five inspectors in the room and a senior team of three. And the data, *all* of it, needs to be findable, current and telling a clear story. If you take one lesson from us: get your data house in order long before the call comes.

## Safeguarding and context



Safeguarding is a non-negotiable.

Get it right every time, because it never stops and it is a culture, not a pre-inspection box-tick. Ours held up, and inspectors confirmed standards were **Met**.

The other mindset shift was realising that what “good” looks like is yours to define and defend. We are bootcamps, not a school or college, and the framework gave us room to explain our approach, including English and maths, in our own context. If you are a smaller or specialist provider, do not apologise for being different, explain why your model works for your learners.

## The result

Inspection report dated 27 January 2026: **Strong Standard across the board**. That is the second-highest grade available, with Exceptional rarely awarded, so in practice it is about as high as most providers can realistically reach.

| Inspection area           | Grade           |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Inclusion                 | Strong Standard |
| Leadership and Governance | Strong Standard |
| Achievement               | Strong Standard |
| Curriculum and teaching   | Strong Standard |
| Participation             | Strong Standard |
| Safeguarding              | Met             |

## What inspectors said about us:

*“Learners make extensive progress from their starting points, rapidly developing valuable digital, mathematical, and English skills.”*

*“100% of learners would recommend Tech Educators.”*

[Read the full Ofsted report](#) (URN 2748179)

## What we would tell another provider

- **Get your data sorted early** — all of it, current and easy to find.
- **Own your context** — decide what “good” means for your learners, then evidence it confidently.
- **Treat safeguarding as a culture, not a checklist** — it never stops.
- **Use the extra time as a gift** — more time is more chance to show your best work, if you are ready for it.

