

Independent schools inspection outcomes

This release contains:

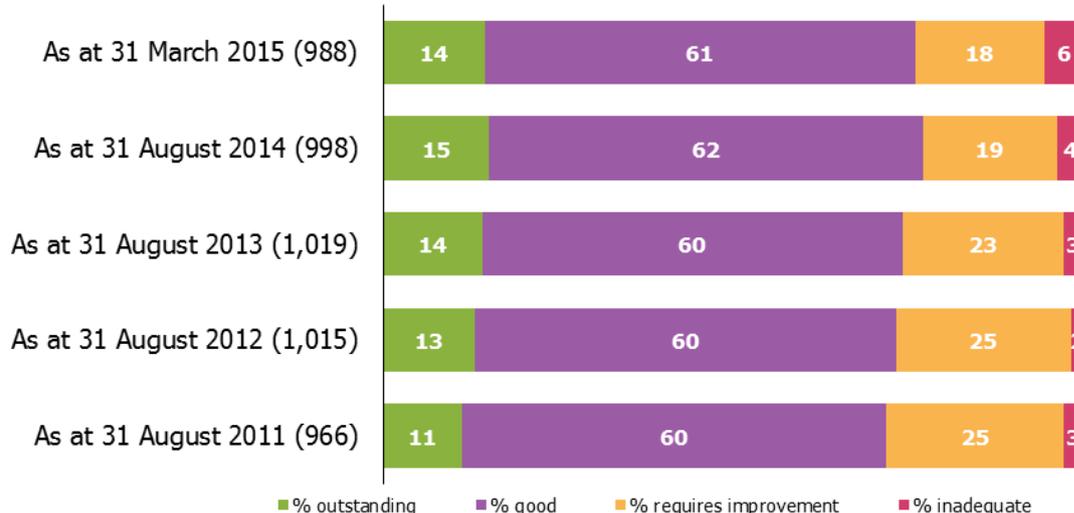
- most recent inspection outcomes completed as at 31 March 2015
- provisional data for inspections completed between 1 September 2014 and 31 March 2015

Independent schools' inspection outcomes have declined slightly for the first time since 2011

At the end of March 2015, 76% of independent schools inspected by Ofsted were judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. This is one percentage point lower than the proportion judged good or outstanding as at 31 August 2014.

Chart 1: Overall effectiveness judgement from the most recent inspection of non-association independent schools

(Number of providers in brackets)



1. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

Yorkshire and Humber is the highest performing region. West Midlands is the lowest.

Yorkshire and Humber has 84% of schools judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. The West Midlands has the lowest proportion of schools judged good or outstanding, with 67%.

Contents

Key findings.....	3
Background information	5

Acknowledgements

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Key findings

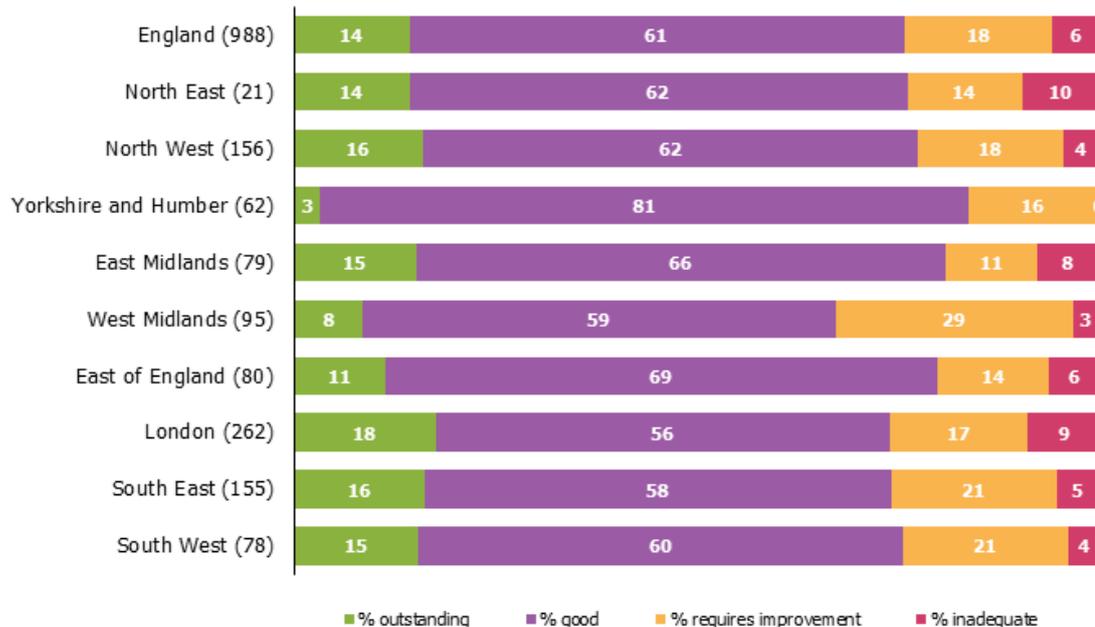
As at 31 March 2015 there were 1,044 open non-association independent schools; 988 of which had been subject to a standard inspection. Of those, 76% were judged good or outstanding, 18% required improvement and 6% were judged inadequate at their most recent inspection. The proportion judged good or outstanding is one percentage point lower than the position as at 31 August 2014. This is a change to a trend which had seen the proportion judged good or outstanding increase each year since 2011.

The proportion of schools judged inadequate at their most recent inspection has increased over time and was 6% at the end of March 2015 compared with 4% at the end of August 2014. This reflects higher expectations demanded by the new independent schools standards, introduced by the Department for Education in September 2014 and supplemented in January 2015.

Chart 2 below shows that while London has the highest proportion of independent schools judged outstanding (18%) it also has a high proportion judged inadequate (9%). Yorkshire and Humber has the highest proportion of schools judged good or better with 81% judged good, but only 3% judged outstanding.

Chart 2: Most recent overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools as at 31 March 2015, by region

(number of providers in brackets)

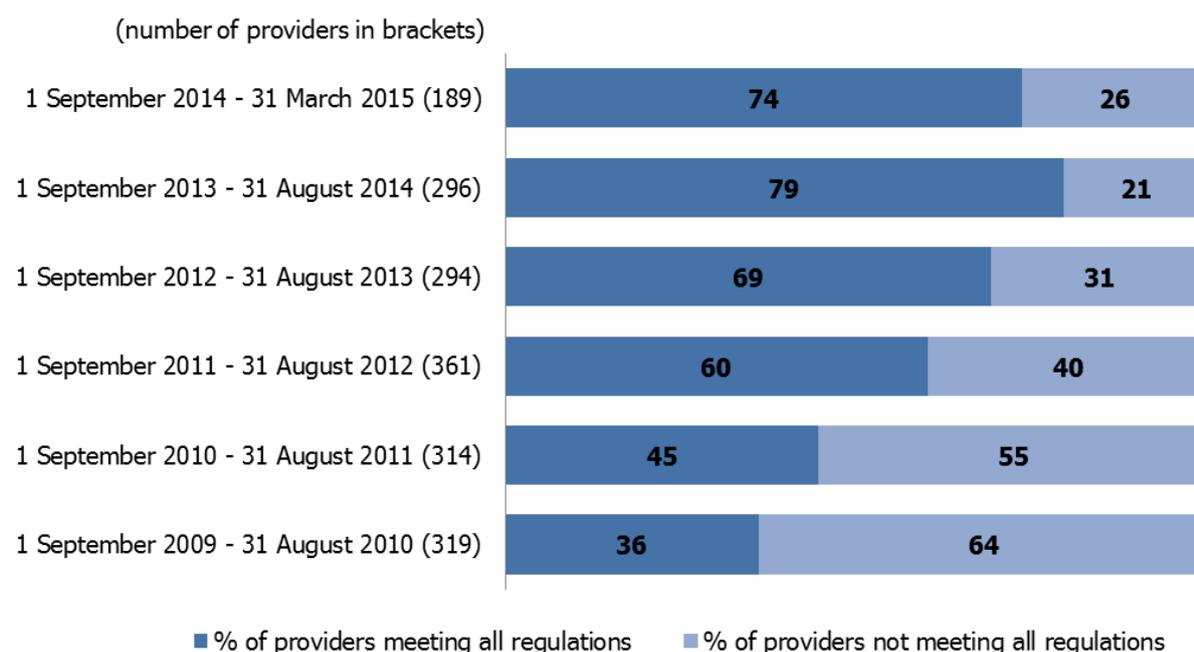


1. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

Between 1 September 2014 and 31 March 2015, Ofsted carried out 189 standard inspections. A new judgement on early years provision was introduced in September 2014 and outcomes for this new judgement were the least positive, with over a quarter of the 46 schools for which an early years judgement was made, judged as inadequate.

Ofsted also reports on the extent to which schools meet the independent school standards. The percentage of schools meeting all requirements in the period from 1 September 2014 to 31 March 2015 has decreased to 74%, compared with 79% in the period from 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014. This is a change to a trend, which had seen the percentage of schools meeting all standards increasing in each period since 2009.

Chart 3: Compliance with the independent school standards for non-association independent schools inspected in each year since 1 September 2009



1. Selection of schools for inspection is targeted, so inspections in a particular period may not be reflective of the sector as a whole.
2. Percentages are rounded and may not add to 100.

Fifty progress monitoring inspections of independent schools previously judged inadequate took place between 1 September 2014 and 31 March 2015. Over a third of schools inspected were judged to meet the independent school standards that they had not met at their previous inspection, while nearly two thirds were judged to continue to not meet all of the standards.

Background information

Independent school standards regulations

Section 94 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 specifies that the Secretary of State must set out in regulations the standards that independent schools must meet. The standards must be about: quality of education; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; welfare, health and safety of pupils; suitability of staff and proprietors; premises and accommodation at the school; provision of information; the manner in which complaints are to be handled; and the quality of leadership and management.

The standards are set out in The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which specify the provision a school should make. Schools must meet these standards in order to register, and to continue to be registered, as independent schools.

Independent schools

Independent schools are defined by section 463 of the Education Act 1996, as amended. They provide full-time education for:

- five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or
- at least one pupil of that age for whom a statement is maintained under section 324, or who is looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989).

It is immaterial if full-time education is also provided at the school for pupils under or over compulsory school age.¹

The DfE's policy position with respect to full time education is contained within Part A of the departmental advice *Registration of independent schools*.²

There are nearly 2,400 independent schools in England. Ofsted only inspects the educational provision in independent schools which are not members of independent schools associations (referred to as non-association independent schools). Schools which are members of independent schools associations are inspected by independent inspectorates approved by the Secretary of State for this purpose: the Independent Schools Inspectorate, the School Inspection Service, and the Bridge Schools Inspectorate. All inspections are carried out at the request of the Secretary of State, which is the registering authority for all independent schools.

¹ This definition of 'independent school' forms part of the definition of 'an independent educational institution' for the purpose of the 2008 Act.

² www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-school-registration.

Inspection types

Emergency inspections

Emergency inspections of independent schools are conducted under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. They are carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for a variety of reasons, for example as a result of a complaint or concern made to the DfE. The issue that triggered the inspection will be used as the main line of enquiry for the inspection, and Ofsted will report to the DfE whether the school meets the independent school standards relevant to the issue. Emergency inspections are conducted at no notice and reports of these inspections are only published at the request of the Secretary of State.

Standard inspections

Standard inspections of independent schools are conducted under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. Ofsted will report to the DfE on the extent to which the school complies with the independent school standards, and will also make evaluative judgements about the quality of the school. Ofsted will normally contact the school by telephone to announce the inspection around lunchtime on the day before the inspection is due to start.

Integrated inspections

When the inspection of educational provision in non-association independent boarding or residential special schools is due at the same time as the welfare inspection, they are combined into an integrated inspection of the whole school. Inspections of welfare provision are carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 regarding the national minimum standards for boarding schools or residential special schools, as appropriate.

Material change inspections

Ofsted carries out material change inspections of registered independent schools at the request of the Secretary of State, out of the normal inspection cycle, when the school wishes to make a material change to their premises, intake or age range, or to the provision they make for pupils with special educational needs and / or disabilities. These inspections are conducted under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

Inspectors will consider the implications of the material change and report to the Secretary of State whether the school is likely to meet the relevant independent school standards, if the material change is implemented. The school cannot implement the proposed change until the Secretary of State grants permission.

Pre-registration inspections

The Secretary of State is the registration authority for independent schools in England, and maintains a register of independent schools. When a proprietor has made an application for registration of an independent school the Secretary of State will commission HMCI to inspect the school. The purpose of the inspection is to report to the registration authority on the extent to which the independent school standards are likely to be met if the school were to be registered. Such inspections are conducted under section 99 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

When a proprietor makes an application for a new boarding or residential special school, an integrated pre-registration inspection is made by both an education and a social care inspector.

Progress monitoring inspections

Ofsted conducts monitoring inspections at the request of the Secretary of State to check the progress made by schools to address weaknesses identified at their last inspection. These inspections are conducted under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

The Secretary of State issues schools identified as having weaknesses with a notice. Schools must submit an action plan to the Secretary of State setting out the steps they will take to address their weaknesses and meet the relevant independent school standards regulations or national minimum standards. Action plans must specify the timescale within which the steps will be taken.

In progress monitoring inspections, inspectors assess and report on the amount of progress schools have made with implementing their action plan. They will check whether the previously unmet independent school standards or national minimum standards are now met.

If you have any comments or feedback on this publication, please contact Selina Gibb on 03000 130 407 or Selina.Gibb@ofsted.gov.uk

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