

Conducting inspections of independent schools

Section 162A independent school inspection guidance

This guidance sets out the timelines, procedures and tariffs for conducting inspections of non-association independent schools. It indicates the main activities that need to be undertaken from the time the school is notified that it is to be inspected until the publication of the report. Schools can use the guidance to see how inspections will be conducted and may find it helpful when carrying out their self-evaluation.

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361

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Contents

Introduction	4
The inspection process	4
Joint inspection in a boarding or residential special school	11
Assessing a material change application as part of a routine section 162A inspection	16
Inspection reports	17
Identifying an inadequate independent day or boarding school after a section 162A or standalone welfare inspection	19
Annex A. Timeline for inspection process	22
Standard inspection (two days on site)	22
Annex B. Inspection tariff for section 162A independent school inspections from September 2010	24
Note for schedulers	25

Introduction

1. From September 2011 the frequency of inspection is changing for some independent schools.¹ In accordance with the wishes of the Minister of State for Schools, the principle of universal inspection for independent schools will be retained, but a proportionate approach will be taken to the frequency of school inspection. All independent schools will receive a standard inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002.
2. A standard inspection under s162A involves one planning day and usually two days on site. If the school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the tariff is increased by an additional inspector day, which will usually be on day 1 of the inspection. There is some flexibility in how lead inspectors may use the planning day allocated to them. This enables the lead inspector to work at the school for part of the planning day, reviewing documentation and discussing the school's self-evaluation information with the headteacher. For boarding and residential special schools which are receiving an integrated inspection education and residential provision, this model enables inspectors to meet and work together and for the inspector leading on boarding to begin their inspection on the afternoon of the lead inspector's planning day.
3. Additional one-day inspections will be carried out which relate to initial registration of new schools, material change, emergency inspections and monitoring schools' progress. Separate guidance is given on conducting these inspections in *Conducting additional inspections of independent schools*. This along with the inspection forms to be used are available in the *Independent, boarding and residential special schools inspection handbook* – 'the inspection handbook'. The monitoring inspections will result in a published report. Reports resulting from emergency inspections will only be published at the request of the Department for Education (DfE).

The inspection process

4. The schedule of schools for inspection is drawn up by Ofsted in consultation with the DfE. All monitoring or registration inspections also occur at the request of the DfE and are scheduled by Ofsted in consultation with the inspection service providers.
5. The type and duration of the inspection and size and composition of the team will have been determined by taking account of the risk, date and outcome of the previous inspection, size of school, number of class groups, and whether there are on roll pupils aged under five, pupils with special educational needs or residential pupils. The numbers of pupils on roll, their age range, and whether the school is boarding or residential and/or a newly registered school will also

¹ See the *Framework for inspecting education in non-association independent schools* (090036), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090036.

be taken into consideration by Ofsted (please refer to annex B for the inspection tariff for standard inspections).

6. Where there are under-five-year-olds on roll, a trained inspector with expertise in the Early Years Foundation Stage will be assigned as part of the team, so that both the welfare and learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage may be part of an integrated inspection. Where the school also contains registered provision for children aged under three (see further guidance in *Inspecting the Early Years Foundation Stage* in the inspection handbook) there must be an experienced inspector assigned to the team who has received training in inspecting children in this age group.²
7. An inspector with training and experience in inspecting residential provision is assigned to the inspection of a boarding or residential special school, so that the total school provision may be inspected as an integrated event, where this is appropriate. Please refer to *Conducting inspections of residential provision in schools* in the inspection handbook.
8. All aspects of the administration will be carried out by the inspection service providers.
9. Independent schools are given two clear days' notice of the start of the education inspection. The boarding/residential inspection begins on the afternoon of the lead inspector's planning day, but the two clear days' notice takes effect from the start of the education inspection.
10. Schools are expected to make an evaluation of their own performance and to keep it up to date. They may present this evaluation in whatever form is most convenient to them: there is no set format. When notifying the school of the inspection, the administrator will remind the school to send any information they wish inspectors to see by email in advance of the inspection, so that the lead inspector may assess it.
11. The inspection service provider will notify the school of its inspection by telephone, giving the school two clear days' notice (please refer to annex A for a timeline of the inspection process). A formal notification of inspection **letter** will be sent by email the same day. It will confirm the team details, dates and documents needed, and will have inspection questionnaires for placing authorities, pupils, and parents and carers attached.
12. A copy of the inspection notification letter will go to the lead inspector and, on integrated inspections, also to the social care inspector together with a letter to the lead inspector and team inspector confirming team and school details. If the inspection service provider experiences difficulty in contacting the school by

² *Inspecting the Early Years Foundation Stage* (090056), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090056. This is also available in the 'Guidance for inspectors' section of the inspection handbook.

telephone they will still send the letter to the school by email on the due day and a hard copy by recorded delivery. In these circumstances the inspection service provider will telephone the lead inspector and let them know about the difficulties experienced. The inspection service provider will continue trying to contact the school by telephone the following day and will keep the lead inspector informed by telephone and email. The lead inspector will subsequently liaise with the social care inspector in the case of integrated inspections of boarding and residential special schools.

13. After the initial telephone call has been made by the inspection service provider, the lead inspector will make brief contact with the school by telephone and make arrangements for a longer discussion. The initial telephone call should take place within 24 hours of the announcement of the inspection, providing that the school is in a position to receive a telephone call. In cases where the school is using a telephone answering machine, the lead inspector should leave a message and state the time at which this message was left. Where the telephone remains unanswered, the lead inspector should persevere, keeping a note of the times at which they tried to make contact with the school. In the meantime the lead inspector, social care inspector and team inspector will review the school's last report and inspection history, and scrutinise the information on its website, if available.
14. The inspection service provider will provide the appropriate **inspection forms** in advance of the inspection. These will include a pre-populated *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* and a report template for section 162A inspections. These forms must include both Early Years Foundation Stage and a section for the leadership and management of boarding for completion where appropriate. Inspectors will use the *Independent school standard inspection report template*.
15. The social care inspector will additionally need to access their copy of the Regulatory Support Application (RSA) toolkit through Ofsted. The inspection service provider will also provide previous reports to both the lead inspector and social care inspector, including the most recent report on inspecting outcomes for children and for social care. The previously completed *Pre-registration regulatory check sheet* will be provided for the first inspection of all newly registered schools.
16. The following are suggested activities which the lead inspector and, where appropriate, the social care inspector, may undertake on the **planning day**.
 - Analyse the self-evaluation information from the school, taking account of any previous reports.
 - Check whether any safeguarding issues, notifications, referrals or other serious incidents have arisen at the school since the last inspection, using Ofsted's provider information portal (PIP). The information can be accessed through Ofsted's intranet site or via the inspection service provider's inspection portal. The PIP provides only high-level information about any

matters that have arisen, which can be triangulated with other pre-inspection information in order to inform inspection trails.³ Where inspectors are leading an inspection of a boarding or residential special school or a children's home providing education, they should ensure that they have also checked the linked social care site on the PIP. Where a serious incident has occurred at the school since the previous education inspection, inspectors should not attempt to investigate it. They should judge provision as it is at the time of the inspection and refer to the incident using the form of words provided in the guidance document *Writing inspection reports*.⁴

- Contact the inspection service provider if there are any concerns about the complexity of the school's provision, for example if the provision is found to be on a split site.
- Contact the headteacher to discuss the inspection process and to begin to plan the inspection.
- Agree the meetings to be arranged, for example with staff and pupils.
- Discuss the arrangements for observation of lessons and for feedback to teachers.
- Agree the times for feedback to the headteacher and proprietor.
- Obtain information regarding the times of the school day, any potential events taking place during the inspection and any staff issues which the team needs to be aware of.
- Request class timetables to help with planning the inspection.
- Draw the headteacher's attention to the documents that must be made available to inspectors during the inspection (as listed in the guidance for schools). It is important that the headteacher is alerted to the need to have the staff single central register available for checking on the planning day in school.
- Ask the headteacher to arrange to provide sample case studies of individual pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs, to show provision made for them and their progress since coming to the school.
- Agree how pupils' work will be made available for inspectors to look at.
- Agree the arrangements for speaking to parents or carers and pupils.
- Draw up the inspection team briefing identifying team responsibilities and issues to pursue and send this electronically to the team inspector and, where appropriate, the social care inspector, following discussion. This is optional for inspectors. Where there is only a lead inspector on an

³ Guidance for inspectors on using the provider information portal is available on the Ofsted intranet site.

⁴ *Writing inspection reports* (090052), Ofsted, 2012; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090052.

inspection, they may wish to use aspects of the template to support planning of the inspection.

- If the school is a charity inspectors can confirm its status on the Charity Commission website.⁵ This website contains details of all registered charities and inspectors can confirm its charitable aims, the names of the trustees and also view its financial history.
- Study the information the school supplied on its most recent census return to the DfE.⁶

17. The **use of the planning day is flexible**. The lead inspector may find it helpful to spend some time in the school on pre-inspection activity. If this is the case, then they will need to agree this arrangement with the headteacher during the first telephone call prior to the planning day. It will also be necessary for the lead inspector to provide a hard copy of the inspection team briefing for the social care inspector and/or the team inspector when they arrive at the school on the first main inspection day (note that the use of this team briefing is optional on independent school inspections).⁷ It is also important to note that the planning day is for pre-inspection activity only and **must** not be used for observing lessons. However, it could include: looking at documentation; checking staff files and the single central register; looking at pupils' work and completed questionnaires; undertaking a tour of the school and having a discussion with the headteacher.
18. Special schools and registered children's homes where pupils have been placed by local authorities will be asked to ensure that **placing authority questionnaires** are sent to the local authorities. These questionnaires will be completed electronically and returned to the inspection service provider, who will provide them to the lead inspector and the social care inspector. Where schools have not sent questionnaires out to local authorities that place pupils at the school the lead inspector should discuss with the headteacher how their views have been sought in the past and how their current views can be ascertained. If these completed questionnaires have not been received by the lead inspector before they travel to the school, then they should contact the inspection service provider and ask to be kept informed by telephone about the content of any completed questionnaires that come in while the inspection is in progress. The purpose of these questionnaires is to give local authorities an opportunity to express their views about the quality of provision in the same way that parents and carers do. The lead inspector is expected to take account

⁵ www.charitycommission.gov.uk/index.aspx.

⁶ In advance of inspections, the inspection service provider will ensure that information from the relevant school's most recent census return is available on their inspection portal.

⁷ An *Inspection Team Briefing template* is available in the 'Forms for inspectors' section of the inspection handbook: www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Forms-and-guidance/Browse-all-by/Education-and-skills/Independent-schools/Information-for-inspectors/Forms-for-inspectors.

of the local authority's views during the inspection, but is not expected to use the information on the questionnaires for any other purpose.

19. The inspection **questionnaire for parents and carers** will be issued by the school, on Ofsted's behalf, on all standard inspections. As instructed on the letter sent out to parents and carers, completed parent/carer questionnaires will have been sent in to the school in sealed envelopes and the school is requested to hand them unopened to the lead inspector. These will need to be opened and the responses evaluated early on in the inspection. A brief summary should be recorded on an evidence form or in the *Record of inspection evidence and judgements*. The parent/carer questionnaires also invite parents to write directly to the lead inspector if they prefer. Parents and carers may request to speak with the lead inspector during the inspection and are invited to contact the headteacher or the inspection service provider, who will make the necessary arrangements. In an integrated inspection, the social care inspector will already have an analysis of the point in time survey response which they should enter onto the Regulatory Support Application toolkit.
20. **Pupils' questionnaires** will have been issued, on Ofsted's behalf, to pupils by the school. They will be completed by pupils and obtained by the lead inspector in the usual way. Normally these questionnaires will be completed by secondary pupils, although some schools may offer the opportunity for some of their older primary pupils to complete them. Inspectors can expect that schools, knowing their pupils' needs and abilities very well, may have adapted the questionnaire to enable their pupils to express their views. Such adjustments may include providing individual support for pupils with learning difficulties or low literacy skills, or they may have translated the questionnaire into Braille or symbols. Inspectors should note that this questionnaire no longer includes a boarding section as this has been replaced by the point in time survey.
21. In day schools **primary pupils' views** are usually sought through discussion between the inspector and the pupils. The pupils' questionnaire may be used by inspectors to provide prompts to support this discussion.
22. All questionnaires form part of the evidence base and should be forwarded to the inspection service provider at the end of the inspection. If any questionnaires arrive after the inspection has finished, the inspection service provider must check whether they raise any safeguarding issues. Late questionnaires cannot be used to inform the inspection trails.
23. During the **inspection day(s) on site**, the inspectors will need to observe the school's compliance with The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, Early Years Foundation Stage requirements and, if relevant, the national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools, as well as judging the quality of provision using the *Criteria for making*

judgements.⁸ From January 2012, there are no separate judgements made about the outcomes and provision for children aged three to five years. However, where the school has registered provision for children aged from birth to three years in the Early Years Foundation Stage, judgements are made in accordance with the agreed criteria for that stage. Provision for boarders' welfare is judged according to the *Evaluation schedule for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools*.⁹

24. If a child protection concern arises during an inspection the lead inspector must follow Ofsted's safeguarding procedures. They should initially telephone the Compliance, Investigation and Enforcement team at Ofsted using the National Business Unit general helpline: 0300 123 1231. Depending on their advice, it may be necessary to insert a sentence into the draft report regarding an ongoing investigation (see *Writing inspection reports* in the inspection handbook).¹⁰
25. At all times during inspection, inspectors should carry their official identification card. Both the inspection service provider and Ofsted should be able to verify inspectors' legitimate presence in the school, if this is needed. It is unnecessary to carry evidence of the CRB check.
26. All evidence that is recorded on **evidence forms** should be forwarded to the inspection service provider at the end of the inspection and will be destroyed by them after six months in accordance with Ofsted's retention policy. Where inspectors choose to use electronic evidence forms, a hard copy must be printed out and form part of the evidence base which is sent to the inspection service provider. The evidence recorded in the electronic *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* template forms part of the evidence base which is scrutinised by the quality assurance reader. In boarding/residential special schools the social care inspector records their inspection evidence in the RSA toolkit. On the last day of the inspection the social care inspector will provide, to the lead inspector using a 'safestick' an extract from the RSA toolkit in which they have recorded their key evidence and judgements.¹¹ The lead inspector will 'paste' this into the section of the record of inspection evidence and judgements allocated to this purpose.
27. During the inspection, the lead inspector and team inspector(s) will complete a combined record of inspection evidence and judgements. This will make clear

⁸ *Criteria for making judgements* (090049), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090049. This document is also available in the 'Guidance for inspectors' section of the inspection handbook.

⁹ *Evaluation schedule for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools* (110096), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/110096.

¹⁰ *Writing inspection reports* (090052), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090052. This is also available in the 'Guidance for inspectors' section of the inspection handbook.

¹¹ At the same time, the social care inspector will provide the lead inspector with a second word document extracted from the toolkit, containing their findings from inspecting the boarding provision, for the lead inspector to weave into the integrated report.

any non-compliance with the independent schools regulations and the relevant national minimum standards in boarding or residential special schools, and will also include all evidence relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Inspectors should judge each school's compliance with regulations as it is found during the inspection.

28. In the case of the Early Years Foundation Stage, when the number of children on roll aged from birth to three years is very small, inspection is mainly of the provision and the progress of different groups of pupils over time. The report needs to make the circumstances clear, but it should normally still be possible to make the four required Early Years Foundation Stage judgements. Further guidance on what to do in these circumstances is given in the *Guidance on inspecting the Early Years Foundation Stage*. Where the school's provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage covers children aged three to five years only, inspectors will make no separate judgements, but the evidence they collect from this stage will inform all relevant judgements about the school's provision and be threaded through sections of the school report.
29. The evidence to support judgements should be captured concisely in the *Record of inspection evidence and judgements*, which is completed electronically and is forwarded to the quality assurance reader with the inspection report. At the time of publication Ofsted sends both the *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* and the report to the DfE, and the DfE retains them in accordance with their retention policy.
30. On the **first inspection of a newly registered school**, the *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* will be completed in the normal way. The regulations that were met at the time of the registration inspection will already be on the regulatory check sheet, enabling the lead inspector to note and focus attention on those regulations which were not previously met and to judge the quality of provision now that the school has admitted pupils. The focus of these inspections is on implementation of policies and work in the classroom.

Joint inspection in a boarding or residential special school

31. In boarding or residential special schools, when the school inspection is due, inspectors will conduct an integrated inspection of the education and residential provision.
32. In The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, some regulations ask whether the school complies with specific standards in the national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools. These are:
 - the vetting of staff (part 4, paragraphs 19(2)(b), 19(2)(c), 19(2)(e) and 20(2)(e))
 - the accommodation (part 5, paragraph 23(t))
 - the procedures for handling complaints (part 7, paragraph 25(l)).

33. The new national minimum standards, introduced from September 2011, are in line with the school standards, so that most aspects do not need to be inspected separately. Inspectors should work closely together to check that all requirements for the relevant type of school have been covered by the inspection, but they should share and not duplicate work.
34. Inspectors will make arrangements to talk to pupils about their school and boarding experience and make a judgement about how well the residential and school elements of the provision work together to support each pupil's educational progress and personal development. Inspectors need to examine how much the provision supports or hinders pupils' learning, for example through:
- the provision of information and communication technology
 - guidance for homework
 - the provision of, or access to, books
 - curriculum-related visits in out of school hours.
35. The social care inspector spends some time between the end of school and early evening, or early morning, in the boarding or residential provision talking with and observing pupils. Discussion with care workers provides information on how much they know about each pupil's educational provision and progress. Please refer to *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools* in the inspection handbook for further information.¹² Inspectors are encouraged to work together as closely as possible and to plan sufficient time to discuss their findings throughout the inspection. The lead inspector should make some time to join the social care expert during boarding time so that they may gain a full picture of a boarding school.
36. A **standard inspection (usually two days on site)** could be organised as follows, depending on what activities have already taken place on the planning day. The timings will need to be flexible to ensure that inspectors see a sufficient number of lessons to make a secure judgement on all the teaching regulations.

Day 1

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|--------|---|
| 8.30am | Team meeting at school to confirm the inspection focus and discuss planning. |
| 9.00am | The team meets with the headteacher to discuss self-evaluation and any inspection issues to be aware of, for example staff who are absent, and to confirm the meetings that have been |

¹² *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools* (100180), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/100180.

arranged. The lead inspector may also request a tour of the school if this has not already taken place on the planning day.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 10.30am | Observe lessons, review documents, meet staff, observe breaks and analyse questionnaires. |
| 12.30pm | Lunch (and observation of lunchtime arrangements for pupils) and possibly meet with a small group of pupils. |
| 1.30pm | Observe lessons, review documents and meet staff. Observe the end of the school day including the arrangements for transporting pupils home. |
| 4.30pm | Team meeting to discuss the emerging findings and plan the activities for Day 2. Feedback of interim findings to the headteacher and/or proprietor. |

In boarding schools: inspectors observe the evening arrangements and holds discussions with the pupils and with care staff.

Day 2

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|---------|--|
| 8.30am | The lead inspector and, where appropriate, social care regulatory inspector, meet the headteacher to highlight any reshaping of the inspection. |
| 8.45am | Team meeting to confirm the arrangements for the day. |
| 9.00am | Observe lessons, review documents, interview staff. |
| 12.15pm | Lunch |
| 1.00pm | Complete the inspection activity and finalise the evidence. Team meeting to agree the key findings and final judgements. Prepare for feedback and write draft paragraphs for the report. |
| 4.00pm | Feed back to the school proprietors and headteacher. |

Suggested activities while in the school.

- Meet with the headteacher, pupils (formally or informally) and key staff, including the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator if appropriate.
- Review documents, including case studies and pupils' work.
- Analyse pupil, parent/carer and placing authority questionnaires.
- Meet with and talk to parents and carers if requested.
- Meet with and talk to proprietors if requested.
- Talk to placing authorities if requested (possibly by telephone).

- Observe lessons and give brief feedback to teachers.
 - Observe break and lunchtimes and the start/end of the day.
 - If residential or boarding, the social care inspector will observe the residential setting in the evening and/or morning. The lead inspector may find it helpful to join them in this activity.
37. The number and range of **lessons observed** will vary according to the type of inspection, the number of pupils on roll, the number of class groups, the number of teachers in the school and the number of inspectors on the team. Inspectors should make clear to the school during the initial telephone call to the headteacher that in larger schools it is unlikely that all teachers will be observed, and that, depending on the way the timetable is organised, the inspectors may only observe parts of lessons. While it is important that inspectors ensure they see sufficient teaching in the core subjects to be able to make a secure judgement against the regulations, they should also aim to observe a range of subjects taught, and include those which the school has a particular focus on, for example dance or physical education. It is impossible to specify the precise number of lesson observations required to obtain sufficient evidence to support their judgements, but inspectors are advised that they should devote a significant majority of their inspection time to teaching and learning.
38. When judging the quality of the teaching, inspectors must ensure that they judge the effectiveness of the teaching and its impact on pupils' achievements. They must guard against allowing a preference for any particular methodology or style of teaching and/or curriculum to influence their judgement on its quality. Independent schools are free to choose the way they teach their pupils, and inspectors must take account of pupils' achievements as a key factor in judging the success of the teaching. For example, inspectors should consider the success of the teaching and curriculum at the school in enabling pupils to obtain places at, or scholarships to, the next stage of their education. An independent special school may be judged by its success in returning its pupils to mainstream education, where this is possible.
39. Inspectors should offer to provide brief **feedback to teachers** at the end of each lesson or arrange a mutually convenient time to do so. The feedback should be short and should focus on the strengths and areas for improvement. Inspectors should make absolutely clear to teachers why the grade has been awarded and, if applicable, why it is not the grade above. Social care inspectors on integrated inspections should take every opportunity to enable boarding staff to participate fully in the inspection and give brief feedback to them on the quality of their work as the inspection develops. There should be no surprises at the final feedback session. Inspectors may involve the school's senior managers in team meetings and are encouraged to do so where this is appropriate.

40. Before any team inspectors leave the school, or following the feedback to the school where the team inspector(s) is/are present on both days, they will leave the lead inspector with evidence forms, completed sections of the *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* and paragraphs for the report. The paragraphs can be in bullet points but this should be agreed with the lead inspector at the beginning of the inspection. All sections and paragraphs should be in electronic form.
41. In schools with residential provision, the social care inspector will record their findings from inspecting the boarding provision in the RSA toolkit. When complete, the text will be automatically extracted into a word document, known as the integrated inspection report document, which the social care inspector will provide to the lead inspector by safestick at the **end** of the inspection, or as soon as possible thereafter by uploading it to the inspection service provider's portal.¹³ This document will also list any national minimum standards not met by the school, and the judgements for the boarding/residential provision. The lead inspector must paste the contents of the integrated inspection report document into the *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* and weave the findings into the integrated report. The *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* will provide the lead inspector with a record of the main judgements for social care.
42. Note that in children's homes that offer education, the social care inspector will write a separate report, published by Ofsted in a redacted form that does not identify the address of the school. The guidance *Writing inspection reports* provides further details on how to write up the report of a children's home providing education.¹⁴
43. The lead inspector, at the end of the inspection and before leaving, will give feedback to the school. The social care inspector will give feedback on the judgements on the boarding provision. The headteacher may wish to invite the proprietor, governors and/or one or two members of senior staff to attend this meeting. This feedback must contain the main judgements as recorded in the inspection judgements form, the regulations not met and, in boarding and residential special schools, the national minimum standards that are not met, and the identified areas for improvement. The lead inspector may also agree with the school the content in the paragraph headed 'Information about the school'.
44. Inspectors should ask the school at the outset of the inspection what terminology they prefer, for example boarders/residential pupils/care

¹³ If the lead education inspector was one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, the social care inspector can send the document to them by email.

¹⁴ *Writing inspection reports* (090052), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090052. This is also available in the 'Guidance for inspectors' section of the inspection handbook.

staff/residential staff/boarding staff/house staff, so that this can be used in the inspection report.

45. On **newly registered school** inspections, the lead inspector will follow the same format as that for a standard inspection. In new school inspections the emphasis is on checking the actual implementation of policies and procedures which were deemed to be meeting minimum requirements at the registration inspection, as well as on checking compliance with any regulations which were not met at the time. The focus will therefore be on judging the quality of education and ensuring that procedures for safeguarding pupils are being implemented with rigour. The report will be written to the same headings as used on a standard section 162A inspection.

Assessing a material change application as part of a routine section 162A inspection

46. Occasionally, a school makes an application for a material change around the same time as the routine section 162A and/or the routine boarding inspection is due. When this occurs, and at the request of the DfE, it is sensible and desirable that the material change is assessed as part of the inspection. The lead inspector should be alerted by the Managing Inspector, Independent Schools, the Managing Inspector, Operational Lead for the Welfare Inspection of Boarding Schools or an administrator in Delivery, so that they are clear that the material change is part of the inspection. The managing inspector will consider the tariff alongside the circumstances of the material change requested. This may be varied to include an additional inspector day where the request is complex. The managing inspector will recommend this to the divisional manager, whose final decision it is to agree to any increase in tariff.
47. Where this occurs, the inspection team should assess the request for a material change in exactly the same way as they would if it were a focused visit. Evidence and judgements should be recorded in detail in the record of inspection evidence and judgements under the appropriate aspect sections (for example accommodation, curriculum), and feature in appropriate sections of the report. The 'Information about the school' section should contain a line about the nature of the material change sought by the school. The 'Overall evaluation of the school' section should have an additional sentence which summarises the team's judgement about whether the material change is recommended or not. Inspectors should note that there is no need to complete a separate advice note under these circumstances. If the school needs to do further work before the material change could be recommended, inspectors should record these points in the compliance section.

48. Further information on material change inspections is available in *Conducting additional inspections of independent schools*.¹⁵

Inspection reports

49. The lead inspector will use the **writing** day to finalise the report, ensuring it complies with the requirements set out in the template and *Writing inspection reports*.¹⁶ Where the inspection covers registered provision for children aged from birth to three, the team inspector in a school with Early Years Foundation Stage must submit their part of the report and any relevant evidence for inclusion in the *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* prior to the end of the on-site day, but no later than the lead inspector's writing day. Where the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises children aged three to five years only, the team inspector must ensure that any key evidence about provision for these children is submitted for inclusion in the *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* by the end of the on-site inspection day. The lead inspector will also ensure that the *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* is fully completed and consistent with the judgements in the report and will compile the evidence forms to ensure that these fully support judgements. If the evidence forms are completed electronically they should be printed out and sent as hard copy, along with other handwritten evidence and questionnaires, to the inspection service provider at the end of the inspection. The report and *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* should be sent to the inspection service providers by the end of the writing day (please refer to *Writing inspection reports*).
50. There is new guidance for writing an integrated report on a boarding or residential special school, for which inspectors should also refer to *Conducting inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools*. At the end of the inspection, the social care inspector will provide key evidence and judgements, including compliance with NMS, to the lead inspector in hard copy or electronically via a 'safestick' as agreed between the two inspectors (please refer to paragraph 41). The information should generally be supplied in bullet point form.
51. The lead inspector is responsible for writing the whole of the integrated report. They will weave the judgements about residential provision throughout the sections of the standard report template using their professional discretion. The lead inspector must check for consistency across the full report and ensure that if national minimum standards are not met, or the quality judgements are different from those of the school's self-evaluation, that this is explained in the text. Any queries should be discussed with the social care inspector on the

¹⁵ *Conducting additional inspections of independent schools* (090060), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090060.

¹⁶ *Writing inspection reports* (090052), Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/090052. This is also available in the 'Guidance for inspectors' section of the inspection handbook.

writing day. Where the lead inspector is one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, the draft report may be shared between the lead and social care inspectors using the Office Communication System, if they so wish, in order to check that all key points are covered and the right emphasis has been given. The lead inspector will send the complete report to the inspection service provider by the end of the writing day. It is the responsibility of the inspection service provider to assure the quality of the whole report. Please refer to *Writing inspection reports* for more detailed guidance.

52. In the case of a children's home, a separate report will be written by the social care inspector which is subject to Ofsted's own quality assurance procedures. The inspection service provider is responsible only for the quality assurance of the education report.
53. The school report of a children's home will be published on the Ofsted website in a redacted form that does not identify the location or address of the home. The report will acknowledge that this is the report of a children's home and remind the reader that there is a separately published report of its welfare provision for children and young people. The *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* should contain a note that an inspection of welfare provision was conducted concurrently.

Action following quality assurance

54. Following quality assurance by the inspection service provider, the full edited independent (day or integrated) school report will be returned to the lead inspector with a quality assurance reader evaluation form by the end of the reading day. The lead inspector has two days to make any amendments that are required, liaising with the social care inspector if necessary, and then returns the report to the inspection service provider by the end of the second day.
55. The inspection service provider will forward the draft report to the school. The school will have three working days in which to read the report and comment. This will then be returned electronically to the inspection service provider by 4pm on the third day.
56. The inspection service provider is responsible for considering the school's response to the draft report and where simple factual or grammatical corrections are needed will make these changes to the report and then forward it for HMI sign-off. Where the school's comments are more complex, the inspection service provider will contact the lead inspector by telephone to agree any changes to be made (more detailed guidance on writing the report and quality assurance arrangements is given in the inspection handbook). Where comments refer to inspection of the residential provision, the lead inspector may need to consult the social care inspector and so should ensure that they have a contact telephone number for this eventuality.

57. The final draft report will be sent to Ofsted's national quality assurance team for sign-off and returned to the inspection service provider by 6pm the same day.
58. The inspection service provider will write to the school acknowledging receipt of the headteacher's comments and confirming that they have been considered. The school will not normally receive any further drafts of the report.
59. Following sign-off by the national quality assurance team, the final published report will be sent by the inspection service provider to the school. This will be accompanied by a report cover letter in which there will be an invitation for the school to complete a post-inspection questionnaire. Please refer to Annex A for a timeline of the inspection process.
60. The DfE will receive the report and *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* from Ofsted. Where the school does not meet all regulations a letter will be sent by the DfE requesting that the school draws up an action plan within a specified timescale. Once the action plan has been received from the school, if the DfE requires advice on its suitability, the inspection service provider will arrange for advice to be provided, involving the lead inspector and social care inspector if necessary and feasible. The *Advice note for evaluating a school's action plan* and *Advice note for evaluating a school's action plan – welfare only* are used for this purpose, and can be found in 'Forms for inspectors' section of the inspection handbook.
61. Early Years Foundation Stage provision which is judged to be inadequate is followed up by Ofsted. Further details are given in the guidance *Inspecting the Early Years Foundation Stage*.
62. Reports will be published on the Ofsted website according to the timeline below.

Identifying an inadequate independent day or boarding school after a section 162A or standalone welfare inspection

63. If, at the end of the inspection, the inspectors, including the social care inspector in a residential or boarding school, have reached the conclusion that the school is inadequate in any of the judgements on the *Inspection judgement form*, including those for boarding and the Early Years Foundation Stage, a 'tick' in the grade 4 (inadequate box) must be recorded.
64. In all schools where there is a grade 4 recorded in any *Inspection judgement form* box, inspectors are asked to consider whether the school is a cause for concern. Inspectors should also consider whether the school is causing concern on the grounds of inadequate premises or accommodation, including poor security which may put children at risk. Inspectors are expected to use their professional judgement on this matter, but it is likely that in most cases a school with an 'inadequate' judgement will give cause for concern and should be referred for consideration by the Managing Inspector, Independent Schools.

To do so, inspectors are asked to complete, **for independent day schools and integrated inspections**, *Form A – confirmation that an independent school is causing concern* and send it to the inspection service provider together with the draft report and *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* at the end of the inspection.¹⁷

65. The Managing Inspector, Independent Schools will consider the information provided on the form and may, at that stage, hold a discussion with the lead inspector, before placing the report in one of the risk categories.
66. It is the responsibility of the inspection service provider to send the *Form A – confirmation that an independent school is causing concern* to the Managing Inspector, Independent Schools together with the final copy of the report and *Record of inspection evidence and judgements* which should also be sent to Ofsted via the datafeed in the normal way.
67. For **stand-alone welfare inspections of boarding and residential schools only**, the lead inspector should complete *Form A – Confirmation that an independent boarding or residential special school is causing concern following a welfare inspection* and send it directly to the Managing Inspector, Operational Lead for the Welfare Inspection of Boarding Schools, together with the draft report.¹⁸
68. The Managing Inspector, Operational Lead for the Welfare Inspection of Boarding Schools will consider the information provided on the form and may, at that stage, hold a discussion with the social care inspector, before placing the report in one of the risk categories.
69. The main purpose of **both types of Form A** is to alert the registration authority to the need for action and to prioritise those schools which require most urgent attention. The Form A will be sent to the DfE by the relevant managing inspector.
70. Children’s homes are registered, inspected and regulated by Ofsted. If any national minimum standards for children’s homes are not met or any aspect is found to be inadequate Ofsted, as the registration authority, will take steps to follow up on this.
71. In the event that the registered provision for children aged from birth to three is judged inadequate, the lead inspector should complete a school Form A, making clear that the inadequacies relate to the registered provision. The

¹⁷ *Form A – confirmation that an independent school is causing concern* (20090044), Ofsted, 2010; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/20090044. This is available in the ‘Forms for inspectors’ section of the inspection handbook.

¹⁸ *Form A – Confirmation that an independent boarding or residential special school is causing concern following a welfare inspection* (20090054) Ofsted, 2011; www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/20090054. This is available in the ‘Forms for inspectors’ section of the inspection handbook.

Managing Inspector, Independent Schools will alert Ofsted's Compliance, Investigation and Enforcement (CIE) team.

Annex A. Timeline for inspection process

Standard inspection (two days on site)

Example inspection commencing Tuesday (with planning day on Monday)

Day 1	Inspection service provider notifies school of inspection (two days' notice).	Thursday
Day 3	Lead inspector and, where appropriate, social care inspector planning day.	Monday
Day 4	On-site inspection.	Tuesday
Day 5	On-site inspection.	Wednesday
Day 6	Lead inspector writing day. For day schools: lead inspector sends report and ROIEJ to inspection service provider by the end of the day. Integrated reports: social care inspector sends contribution to lead inspector by 2pm on writing day. Lead inspector sends whole report to Ofsted quality assurance team by 5pm the same day.	Thursday
Day 7	Quality assurance reading: inspection service provider ensures quality of the report. Inspection service provider sends draft report back to lead inspector to check.	Friday
Day 8	Lead inspector checks report.	Monday
Day 9	Lead inspector sends final draft report to inspection service provider by end of day and sends the evidence base to inspection service provider.	Tuesday
Day 10	Inspection service provider sends draft report to the school for factual accuracy check.	Wednesday
Day 11	Report is with the school.	Thursday
Day 12	Draft report sent back to inspection service provider with school comments form by 4pm.	Friday
Day 13	Inspection service provider considers the comments made by the school and where appropriate agrees changes with lead inspector telephone contact with lead inspector where needed).	Monday
Day 14	Inspection service provider ensures the quality of the report and sends to the Ofsted team by 5pm.	Tuesday
Day 15	Sign-off by Ofsted quality assurance team.	Wednesday

Day 16	Signed-off report is sent back to inspection service provider by 6pm.	Thursday
Day 17	Final draft sent to the school with post-inspection questionnaire form. Published report sent to Ofsted datafeed.	Friday
Day 20	Report published on Ofsted website.	

Annex B. Inspection tariff for section 162A independent school inspections from September 2010

Inspection type	Number on roll	Days on site (total +)	Days on site	Days on site	Days on site
		Education lead inspector	Team inspector (inspection service provider)	Social care inspector	Team inspector (Early Years)
Standard section 162A inspection					
standard inspection	1–199	2 (4)			
	200+	2 (4)	2*		
with boarding	1–199	2 (4)		2**	
	200+	2 (4)	2*	2**	
with early years	1–199	2 (4)			1*
	200+	2 (4)	2*		1*
with early years/boarding	1–199	2 (4)		2**	1*
	200+	2 (4)	2*	2**	1*
Additional inspections					
These will normally be allocated two lead inspector days to include preparation, inspection and writing. Where there is residential provision a social care inspector will also be allocated to the inspection. (Please refer to annex A and B of <i>Conducting additional inspections of independent schools</i> for additional inspection timelines.)	all				

Note that the days shown are full days on site. It is usual for the lead inspector to also spend part of the planning day on site. In addition, a writing day is allocated immediately following the last day of the inspection. The number in brackets shows the total days allocated including planning and writing days.

**Social care inspector days are those spent on site. The inspectors will also have planning and writing time allocated.

*Additional team inspector days may be allocated for particular circumstances, for example where the school has split-site accommodation, a wide age range, a large number of pupils on roll, or if it has been deemed to be high risk.

Note that all schools which cater wholly or mainly for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including children's homes which offer education, will not be eligible for a light-touch inspection and will have the standard tariff.

Note for schedulers

In the case of boarding schools a day for a social care inspector normally begins the evening before. This usually implies the evening of the planning day. Accordingly, such inspections should not be scheduled to begin on a Monday.

Inspectors must be scheduled to facilitate working together on the planning day and they must feed back together at the end of the inspection.

Where schedulers have been advised that the boarding provision is complex, additional social care inspector(s) should be attached to the team, rather than extend the length of the inspection.

One-day inspections on a Friday should be avoided because of the likelihood of late feedback on integrated inspections, and subsequent travel.