

# Evaluation schedule for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools

Guidance and grade descriptors for inspecting boarding and residential provision in schools in England

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The evaluation schedule provides outline guidance and grade descriptors for the judgements that inspectors will report on when inspecting boarding and residential provision in schools.

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## Introduction

1. This document contains the evaluation schedule for use in Ofsted's inspections of the welfare of boarders and residential pupils in all maintained, non-maintained and independent boarding and residential special schools from September 2012. It describes the evidence inspectors should consider and sets out the grade descriptors inspectors should use in reaching their principal judgements about the school.
2. Throughout this document the word 'boarders' is used to refer to pupils who are resident in either a boarding school or a residential special school. Similarly, 'boarding provision' is used to cover 'residential provision' also. However, in the published report of a residential special school we will refer to the effectiveness of the residential experience and the quality of the residential provision, and references to boarders will be replaced by 'residential pupils' throughout.

## The purpose of inspection

3. The purpose of inspection is two-fold: inspectors report on the extent to which **a school meets the national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools**, and **make qualitative judgements** about the quality of the school's provision and outcomes in the principal areas set out in the evaluation schedule.<sup>1</sup>
4. Schools are expected to meet statutory requirements and **national minimum standards**, having regard to any associated guidance issued by the Department for Education. All of the national minimum standards for boarding and residential special schools are covered by the evaluation schedule. Each principal judgement covers those national minimum standards which are relevant to it. Most standards are common to each type of school, but where there are standards which refer only to boarding schools or only to residential special schools, this is clearly stated. Inspectors check the extent to which the school meets the national minimum standards. The relevant standards are referenced in bold at the end of each principal aspect section in the evaluation schedule.
5. Inspectors use the **grade descriptors** set out in the boxes in each of the principal areas to guide their judgements about the quality of the school's provision and outcomes. They reach a summative judgement of the overall effectiveness of the boarding experience.

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<sup>1</sup> The national minimum standards for boarding schools and residential special schools are both available on the Department for Education's website:  
[www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/a00192112/boarding-schools).

## Equality and diversity

6. Inspectors do not make a separate judgement on equality and diversity, but they must ensure that issues of equality and diversity are fully considered in reaching a judgement **on each aspect** of the school's provision and outcomes. Where particular boarders or groups of boarders are unhappy, feel unsafe or are failing to thrive, and the school is unaware of this and/or ineffective in addressing the issues, this is likely to be inadequate in one or all of the principal judgement areas. Inspectors should look at the experience of boarders or groups of boarders of a particular heritage, culture, faith, ethnicity, economic background, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation and consider particularly how well each aspect of the school's provision meets their needs and its impact on their development, happiness and well-being. Evidence of the school's practice with regard to matters of equality and diversity should be threaded through the report.

## The principal judgements and overall effectiveness

7. The principal judgements to be made in all inspections of boarders' welfare in maintained, non-maintained and independent boarding and residential special schools are:
  - overall effectiveness
  - outcomes for boarders (residential pupils)
  - quality of boarding (residential) provision and care
  - boarders' (residential pupils') safety
  - leadership and management of boarding (the residential provision).

## Using the grade descriptors

8. The following grade descriptors are common to the inspection of boarders' welfare in all maintained, non-maintained and independent boarding schools and residential special schools. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for inspectors and schools so that consistent judgements in all types of schools with residential provision may be achieved. Accordingly, examples to illustrate practice are drawn from both boarding and residential special schools, but clearly not all examples will be relevant for each inspection.
9. Inspectors are required to consider and weigh up the inspection evidence, its provenance, robustness and reliability and the extent to which it is corroborated by other evidence. They must use their professional judgement to determine what the evidence collected indicates about the experience of children in the residential context and its impact on them. Inspectors must then consider which of the four grade descriptors best matches their evaluation of each aspect of the school's work. **Judgements must not be made using a rigid formulaic approach.**

10. Failure to meet all the requirements and national minimum standards does not necessarily result in a judgement of inadequate in any or all aspects. In reaching a judgement, inspectors should consider carefully the seriousness of the failure and its potential impact on the boarders and residential pupils at the school.
11. The descriptors are hierarchical. For example, for a 'good' judgement the descriptors for 'adequate' should also be fully met. If and only if all the descriptors for 'adequate' are met, inspectors may consider those for 'good', but in reaching their final judgement, they should select the category where the descriptor best fits the inspection findings. 'Adequate' is defined as 'meeting the requirements of the minimum standards but requiring improvement to meet the criteria for 'good'.

## Overall effectiveness

12. In reaching an overall judgement about **the effectiveness** inspectors consider evidence and judgements from the four principal judgements in the evaluation schedule and consider the impact this has on the young people in residence, taking into account:
  - the impact of the boarding experience and the quality of care on the personal development and well-being of all young people in the care of the school
  - the effectiveness with which the school safeguards its boarders and residential pupils and promotes their welfare
  - the effectiveness with which boarding is organised and managed in the school, ensuring that there is a continual focus on improvement and on the progress made since the last inspection
  - what boarders feel about their school, and what parents and carers, staff and placing authorities say about it
  - the extent to which the national minimum standards are met.<sup>2</sup>

## Overall effectiveness: grade descriptors

<b>Outstanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The overall effectiveness is likely to be outstanding where boarding is an area of excellence in the school and where all aspects have been judged outstanding. There should be examples of excellent practice that are worthy of wider dissemination. For the school to be outstanding overall, the quality of its boarding provision and care should stand out from that of other schools, and outcomes for boarders should be</li> </ul>
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<sup>2</sup> The national minimum standards are defined as each numbered paragraph in the national minimum standards, for example 3.1 is a standard, 3.2 is a standard.

	<p>exceptional.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are substantial strengths in the quality of provision and care for boarders which have made an exceptional impact on the quality of their lives and opportunities in life. The experience of boarding clearly enables boarders to make excellent progress in their educational, personal, social and cultural development. Most of them grow in confidence and independence and all are very well equipped to make a success of their future lives. There are excellent relationships between the young people themselves and with the staff who look after them. Residential special schools which cater for children whose needs and disabilities are so severe that they can not attain the 'outstanding' outcomes in the grade descriptors must provide clear evidence of the extensive work undertaken to help young people achieve their full potential.</li> <li>■ There is a consistently high quality of care which shows a constant commitment to promoting equality and diversity, ensuring that all aspects of planning and practice are highly personalised to meet the individual needs of each young person. The school offers an extensive choice of high quality activities and events that meets the needs of all boarders, extending through the weekends for full boarders, which enables them to acquire and/or develop their knowledge, skills and interests. There are very good facilities and high quality boarding accommodation that is very well furnished and maintained.</li> <li>■ The safety and well-being of boarders is of paramount importance. Young people feel extremely safe and well supported. Bullying, including homophobia and other prejudice-based bullying, and other instances of poor behaviour are very well managed. Safeguarding practices are outstanding and there is excellent work with key agencies.</li> <li>■ The residential facility is very well led and managed and is organised to meet boarders' needs first and foremost. Senior staff routinely monitor practice and use the information to drive forward continuous improvement. Boarders' needs and views are central to all aspects of how the school operates and develops its practice.</li> <li>■ There are consistently very positive views from boarders/parents/carers/placing authorities about the quality of the boarding experience. Communication between staff and with the parents/carers and placing authorities is excellent.</li> <li>■ All national minimum standards are met.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Good</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The overall effectiveness is likely to be good where the quality of provision and care for boarders is good and has made a positive impact on the quality of their lives and opportunities in life. The experience of boarding clearly enhances boarders' personal, social, cultural and educational development. Relationships at all levels are good. Boarders are well prepared</li> </ul>

	<p>for adult life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The consistently good quality of care meets the needs of each young person. The varied programme of activities and events reflects the needs and interests of all boarders, including those who board full time, and promotes strong development. Boarders receive effective support which is suited to individual needs. There are good facilities and comfortable boarding accommodation that is well furnished and well maintained.</li> <li>■ The safety of boarders is given high priority and there are effective procedures for safeguarding their welfare and promoting their good health. Staff are proactive in working with key agencies to reduce the risk of harm to boarders. The links between care and teaching staff support well boarders' enjoyment and achievement. Behaviour is well managed. Any reported bullying, including homophobia and other prejudice-based bullying, is dealt with effectively and boarders say they feel safe.</li> <li>■ The boarding facilities are well organised and run for the benefit of the boarders. The provision of care is always managed in the best interest of the child. Communication with the parents/carers/placing authorities is clear and regular.</li> <li>■ The views of boarders and other interested parties are positive. There is a clear process by which boarders can contribute their views and see that they have made a difference in improving the boarding experience.</li> <li>■ All national minimum standards are met. There are a number of strengths in the provision and there are no significant weaknesses which have a direct impact on outcomes for boarders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adequate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The overall effectiveness is likely to be adequate where the quality of provision and care for boarders meets all or most of the national minimum standards, but requires improvement to fit the descriptors for 'good'. The boarding provision has made a positive impact on the quality of boarders' lives and encouraged their educational, personal, social and cultural development. Relationships are positive. Boarders are suitably prepared for adult life.</li> <li>■ The quality of care is inadequate in no major respect and may well be good in some respects. Where necessary, there are appropriate care plans for each child, which focus on helping them make progress in their personal and social development. There is adequate provision for recreational activities, including at evenings and weekends. The facilities and accommodation for boarders do not compromise their health and safety.</li> <li>■ The school meets its duty to safeguard boarders. Child protection procedures are clear and effective. Bullying, including homophobia and other prejudice-based bullying, is dealt with effectively and boarders are supervised appropriately so that they feel safe.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The boarding facilities are organised appropriately for the boarders. Care is managed in the best interests of the child. There is appropriate communication with the parents/carers/placing authorities.</li> <li>■ Most boarders and other interested parties have positive views about the quality of care and relationships in the school and feel the school will take account of their suggestions for improvement.</li> <li>■ The national minimum standards may all be met but the quality of provision is no better than 'adequate'; or there may be inconsistencies in the quality of provision which mean that most but not all national minimum standards are met, but these do not significantly affect the safety and well-being of boarders.</li> </ul>
<b>Inadequate</b>	<p>The overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following criteria are met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The boarding experience does not help young people to make progress in their personal, social or educational development.</li> <li>■ The provision and care for some or all boarders is weak. There is not enough for them to do that meets their needs and interests.</li> <li>■ The school fails in its duty to adequately safeguard the welfare, health or safety of young people in its care, so that they feel or are unsafe and/or unhappy. Behaviour is poor; homophobia and/or other types of prejudice-based bullying are too common and this is not tackled effectively.</li> <li>■ Boarders and other interested parties express concerns which are justified and about which the school has not taken effective action.</li> <li>■ There are significant weaknesses and failures against national minimum standards which have a detrimental impact on welfare provision and the outcomes and experience for boarders.</li> </ul>

## Outcomes for boarders (residential pupils)

13. This section is about the boarders and residential pupils themselves as a result of their experience of boarding at the school. **Inspectors must spend time talking to the boarders and the staff who care for them**, look at records, case studies or other evidence the school may offer and consider the progress boarders make in their personal and social development, taking into account the starting points of the young people when they joined the school. No national minimum standards are referenced to this section of the evaluation schedule, but the impact of meeting or not meeting the standards will be evident in boarders' outcomes. Residential special schools which cater for children whose needs and disabilities are so severe that they can not match the outstanding outcomes in the grade descriptors should nonetheless be capable of being judged 'outstanding' if there is clear evidence of the extensive work undertaken by the school to help these young people to achieve their full potential in working towards these outcomes. Inspectors should consider:

- boarders' social development, including the extent to which they enjoy positive and constructive relationships with staff and with each other and are tolerant of people from different races, religion and sexuality
- boarders' personal development, including their self-esteem, independence and confidence
- the behaviour of boarders and how well they respect the rights of others in the boarding community to be treated with care, respect and understanding
- boarders' happiness and enjoyment of the residential experience, including the extent to which they take advantage of what is on offer by developing new or specific talents, skills and interests
- their contribution to the boarding community and how their views have made a difference to it
- boarders' health (including physical, emotional, and psychological health) and fitness as a result of the residential experience at the school
- how well prepared boarders are for a successful transition to independence and adult life or for the next stage of education.

### Outcomes for boarders: grade descriptors

<b>Outstanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Outcomes for boarders are likely to be outstanding in a highly inclusive boarding community where there are exceptionally good quality relationships. Boarders establish excellent quality relationships, encourage and support one another, and feel safe and relaxed in the boarding environment. They have a strong affiliation to their residential environment and some may refer to it as being 'part of a family'.</li> <li>■ Boarders behave very well and/or have made outstanding progress socially through their boarding experience, including, where appropriate, by overcoming or learning to manage difficulties. For example, residential pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties have made outstanding improvements to their behaviour. All boarders, irrespective of their differences, feel valued and respect one another.</li> <li>■ Boarders develop a strong sense of their own value and self-worth and a humane and tolerant approach to others. Through their boarding experience they have grown substantially in independence and confidence and have a clear sense of responsibility.</li> <li>■ Boarders thoroughly enjoy their boarding experience and take every opportunity to participate in the new and/or stimulating opportunities and activities it offers. They have well-rounded interests and feel able to achieve their full potential.</li> <li>■ Boarders readily take on roles and responsibilities within the boarding community and make a significant contribution to its operation and development. They can readily demonstrate how their views have made a difference. Where appropriate, they</li> </ul>
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	<p>are actively and positively involved in a wide range of activities which reach out into the wider community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Boarders are active participants in keeping themselves as fit and healthy as possible. They report that the school's healthcare arrangements are highly effective in promoting and maintaining their physical, emotional and psychological health. Boarders have a strong sense of their own safety and well-being.</li> <li>■ Boarders are extremely well prepared for the next stage of life after school. Most young people who have moved on have made a successful transition, are as independent as possible, and have sustained engagement in education, employment or training.</li> </ul>
<b>Good</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Outcomes for boarders/residential pupils are likely to be good in an inclusive boarding community where there are harmonious and positive relationships among residential pupils and with boarding staff. Boarders establish positive relationships, encourage one another and feel relaxed, safe and included in the boarding environment. They may have a strong affiliation to their residential environment.</li> <li>■ Boarders behave well and/or make good progress with overcoming any difficulties such as managing anger. They demonstrate consideration and respect for others' views, whatever difference in their circumstances. They develop good social skills through their boarding experience and learn to compromise and get on well with others from different backgrounds and people of different sexuality.</li> <li>■ Through their boarding experience boarders have made good progress in developing self-esteem and emotional resilience and, where appropriate, in overcoming any past difficulties they may have experienced.</li> <li>■ The young people enjoy boarding at the school. They acquire strong interests and practical and life skills as a result of boarding that add significantly to their enjoyment of life.</li> <li>■ Boarders make a very positive contribution to their boarding community, know how they can influence its direction and accept responsibility for their part in its function. They are involved actively and positively in activities in the wider community.</li> <li>■ Boarders are active participants in keeping themselves fit and healthy. They report that the school's healthcare arrangements promote their physical, emotional and psychological health, and they feel well cared for at school when they are injured or fall ill.</li> <li>■ They are well-prepared for further education and/or adult life as a result of their boarding experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Adequate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Outcomes for boarders are likely to be adequate if relationships are generally productive and harmonious. Boarders have friends and feel relaxed and safe in the boarding environment. Young</li> </ul>

	<p>people generally get on well together and feel included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Boarders know the difference between right and wrong. They are generally able to interact with other boarders and adults appropriately, considering and respecting their views. During their time in school residential pupils make adequate progress in overcoming difficulties such as managing their behaviour.</li> <li>■ Boarders make adequate progress in developing self-esteem, emotional resilience and independence through their boarding experience.</li> <li>■ They understand how to keep themselves fit and healthy. They acknowledge that the school cares for and promotes their physical, emotional and psychological health.</li> <li>■ Boarders mostly enjoy their boarding time and acquire practical, social and life skills to prepare them for adult life. They can make informed choices about their future and feel they are equipped to cope appropriately when they leave the school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inadequate</b></p>	<p>Outcomes for boarders are likely to be inadequate where one or more of the following criteria are met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is an atmosphere of tension and relationships are poor. Individuals or groups of pupils feel excluded from participating in boarding life.</li> <li>■ Behaviour during 'boarding time' is poor and young people feel afraid, unsafe or suspicious of one another or of the staff who care for them.</li> <li>■ They actively dislike being in the residential environment, are afraid of putting forward their views and feel that to do so is pointless.</li> <li>■ As a result of their residential experience, boarders have low self-esteem.</li> <li>■ Healthcare needs have not been met and this has had a detrimental impact on boarders' health.</li> <li>■ Boarders make insufficient progress with their personal or social development over time in the residential environment, acquire few social skills and are ill prepared to make informed choices or cope adequately in the world after school.</li> </ul>

## Quality of boarding (residential) provision and care

14. This section is about the quality of the school's provision for residential pupils, including the physical environment for boarders, the quality of care for their health and physical, mental and emotional well-being, and the guidance and support provided to boarders. In order to evaluate the quality of the boarding provision and care for young people, inspectors will consider the following matters and their impact on boarders' development and support:

- the quality of pastoral support for boarders, including the impact of induction for new boarders, the effectiveness of links between pastoral and academic staff in supporting the boarders' personal and academic

development, and the impact of experienced staff on duty in providing young people with care and support at all times

- the quality and appropriateness of care plans for individuals, where relevant, and their effective implementation
- the range and appropriateness of purposeful and enjoyable activities available to boarders
- the quality and effectiveness of the school's arrangements for promoting and caring for boarders' health and well-being, including their mental and emotional health and their emerging sexuality
- the quality of the school's catering arrangements
- the quality of the residential accommodation, premises and facilities, including the arrangements for making boarders comfortable and keeping their possessions safe
- the appropriateness of arrangements for boarders to keep in touch with families and friends
- the extent to which the national minimum standards **2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10** for **boarding and residential special schools** and **21** for **residential special schools** are met.

## Quality of boarding provision and care: grade descriptors

<b>Outstanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The quality of the boarding provision and care is likely to be outstanding if there are excellent pastoral arrangements and resources to support all boarders' academic and personal progress. There is an extremely sensitive and well-designed induction process which is tailored to the needs of new boarders. Boarding and academic staff work very effectively together to coordinate provision and have consistently high aspirations for all boarders.</li> <li>■ There is a range of excellent quality extra-curricular and leisure opportunities, which boarders enjoy and are appropriate to their ages, interests and needs. These provide excellent opportunities for personal development and fulfilment.</li> <li>■ There are excellent opportunities for boarders to develop leadership and/or team working skills through taking on roles and responsibilities which will aid their personal growth. Where appropriate, they are actively involved in the running of their boarding houses.</li> <li>■ Staff place the well-being of individual boarders at the centre of their practice within the school and ensure that boarders' achievements are celebrated. They are proactive and imaginative in finding ways to support new and existing boarders to make excellent progress in every aspect of their lives.</li> <li>■ Placement and care plans, where appropriate, are well-focused,</li> </ul>
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	<p>detailed and rigorously implemented and they have a highly beneficial impact on outcomes. Young people are consistently and centrally involved in the planning and review of their care (wherever possible).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are excellent facilities to care for boarders who are sick or injured and to promote and maintain good health. The arrangements for the administration of medication are an example of good practice.</li> <li>■ Boarding accommodation and facilities are of a high standard and are safe and very well-maintained. Boarders can relax and feel warm and comfortable. The accommodation and facilities support strongly boarders' learning and personal development.</li> <li>■ Boarders are always provided with a good choice of nourishing meals which they say they enjoy. The food is plentiful and of high quality. The school caters unobtrusively and very well for special diets.</li> <li>■ All national minimum standards are met. Boarding is an area of excellence in the school and there are no weaknesses which have a direct impact on outcomes for boarders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Good</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The quality of the boarding provision and care is likely to be good if the boarding staff provide for boarders' individual needs and offer them good support and pastoral care. There are good resources to support boarders' academic and personal progress. Academic and boarding staff work closely and cooperatively to ensure good support for boarders. Boarders have access to the help and resources they need. There are effective induction procedures.</li> <li>■ There are good facilities for boarders to enjoy outside of the school day, and the school actively encourages boarders to participate in a broad range of interesting extra-curricular or leisure activities, suitable for the ages and interests of the young people and leading to good personal development.</li> <li>■ There are good opportunities for boarders to express their views, and to take responsibility for the operation of their house.</li> <li>■ Where applicable, care plans are detailed and thorough. They meet the needs of placements, are implemented carefully and reviewed regularly. Equality and diversity issues are positively addressed in both daily living and planning for care.</li> <li>■ There are good arrangements for healthcare, including access to outside services and support, and there is active encouragement for boarders to take responsibility for their own health and fitness. Arrangements for dealing with medication are safe and effective.</li> <li>■ Boarding accommodation is of a generally good standard, safe and well-maintained, so that boarders can feel warm and comfortable. It supports their learning and relaxation well.</li> <li>■ Food is of good quality and plentiful and there is a good amount of choice. Special diets are well catered for.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are a number of strengths in the provision and all national minimum standards are met.</li> </ul>
<b>Adequate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The quality of the boarding provision and care is likely to be adequate where all national minimum standards are met but the quality of the provision does not fit the descriptors for 'good', or where most of the national minimum standards are met and the failures are do not compromise boarders' health, safety or well-being. The school must be able to rectify any failures swiftly.</li> <li>■ Staff provide boarders with appropriate pastoral care and support for personal and academic development. There are satisfactory induction procedures. There are suitable communications between academic and boarding staff, so that concerns about boarders are passed on appropriately.</li> <li>■ There is a reasonable range of leisure activities which are suitable for the ages and interests of the young people and which they get enjoyment and benefit from.</li> <li>■ The views, wishes and feelings of boarders are taken into account in the running of the house or residential facility and they are able to make a complaint if necessary. Boarders can contact friends and family and access independent counselling services if required.</li> <li>■ Care plans meet the needs of placements, and are implemented appropriately.</li> <li>■ The arrangements for healthcare are appropriate and do not pose a risk to boarders so that they are enabled to stay safe, fit and well.</li> <li>■ All boarders have accommodation which is safe and suitably maintained.</li> <li>■ Food is of appropriate quality and quantity. Special diets are catered for as required. There are appropriate arrangements for keeping boarders' clothes and bedding clean.</li> </ul>
<b>Inadequate</b>	<p>The quality of the provision and care are likely to be inadequate if one or more of the following criteria are met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are significant failures to meet the national minimum standards so that the health, safety or welfare of residential pupils is not adequately safeguarded.</li> <li>■ Accommodation and/or premises are of an unsatisfactory standard.</li> <li>■ Boarders do not get enough food to eat, or the food is constantly unhealthy or of poor quality. This has a detrimental impact on their health and well-being.</li> </ul>

## Boarders' (residential pupils') safety

15. This section is about the school's arrangements for ensuring that boarders in their care are safe and protected from harm. It includes the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for child protection, countering bullying and poor

behaviour, and promoting good behaviour. In order to reach a judgement, inspectors will consider:

- the procedures for safe recruitment and monitoring of staff and volunteers working with children at the school in order to help prevent unsuitable people from having the opportunity to harm young people
- the effectiveness of policies and procedures for child protection; countering bullying, including racism, homophobic and cyber-bullying; promoting good behaviour, health and safety; and for children missing from school
- the impact of these arrangements on whether boarders feel safe and protected from harm, abuse, exploitation and accident
- whether boarders go absent without authority and, if they do, whether they return quickly and are responded to positively on return
- how well positive behaviour is promoted, and whether restraint is only used, if at all, in strict accordance with the legislative framework, and whether there is accurate and clear recording of restraint and the reasons for its use
- whether investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly, quickly and consistently in a way that provides effective protection for children, and for the person making the allegation, and at the same time supports the person who is the subject of the allegation
- whether the environment is physically safe and appropriately secure, taking account of the needs and characteristics of the boarders
- the extent to which the national minimum standards **6, 7, 11, 12, 14** for **boarding and residential special schools** are met.

## Boarders' safety: grade descriptors

<b>Outstanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The judgement is likely to be outstanding if boarders' safety is at the very heart of the school and the school is proactive in implementing and sustaining excellent practice. Policies and procedures are robust and implemented consistently and to a high standard. These include thorough vetting procedures for recruiting staff and ensuring that only suitable people have contact with boarders. There is excellent practice in safeguarding and child protection that makes this school stand out from others, and is worthy of wider dissemination.</li> <li>■ All staff are fully trained in child protection at the appropriate level, are proactive and alert to possible concerns, and champion boarders' welfare and safety.</li> <li>■ There are positive and proactive behaviour management strategies which are consistently applied. The school has a clear policy for the use of physical restraint which meets guidance from the Department for Education and is consistently implemented. Restraint is used only in exceptional circumstances where absolutely necessary and according to this</li> </ul>
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	<p>policy. Any incident of restraint is sensitively and appropriately followed up in discussion and reflection with the child or young person concerned; and all incidents of restraint are accurately recorded and monitored to bring about sustained improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is a clear and robust policy for countering bullying which includes racism, homophobic and cyber bullying. This is consistently implemented by all boarding staff. Boarders feel safe. They are comfortable about reporting any concern, and have confidence that it will be tackled promptly and effectively. As a result, bullying is rare, but the school is nonetheless vigilant and proactive in its prevention. There is a very clear and robust culture of anti-bullying, and all staff are fully alert to all the forms bullying might take.</li> <li>■ The school assesses and manages risks to protect boarders while enabling them, as appropriate to their age, to take reasonable risks as part of their growth and development. Care plans, where appropriate, identify very clearly the risks and protective factors for individual boarders and are comprehensive in planning to address them. Regular monitoring and review feeds into constant improvement. The frequency with which boarders are absent without authority is minimised.</li> <li>■ The school provides a secure and very safe environment for young people. Managers have considered all potential hazards and run regular and exhaustive checks, for example on electrical, gas and fire safety equipment. There is an exceptional record of prompt and effective maintenance. All pupils are aware of escape routes, risks and how to manage them.</li> <li>■ All national minimum standards covering safety and safeguarding are met.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Good</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The judgement is likely to be good if there are robust procedures for child protection and the recruitment and vetting of staff. All staff have received appropriate training and all know how to refer or deal with problems, so that young people are not at risk.</li> <li>■ The school gives a high priority to the safety of its boarders and teaches them how to look after their own and others' safety. Boarders report that they feel safe at school and that there are a range of adults with whom they would be comfortable to talk if they felt unsafe.</li> <li>■ Staff consistently implement the positive behaviour strategies to support residential pupils developing skills in managing conflict and developing positive relationships irrespective of any barriers they might experience.</li> <li>■ There is a clear policy for countering bullying, which includes racism, homophobic and cyber bullying. This is consistently implemented by all boarding staff. Boarders feel safe to report any concerns about bullying, and have confidence in the school to tackle it promptly and effectively. As a result, the incidence</li> </ul>

	<p>of bullying is minimised and boarders generally feel they can learn and play in safety and without fear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are positive behaviour management strategies which are consistently applied, and physical restraint is used only where absolutely necessary and in accordance with a policy which meets guidance from the Department for Education and is consistently implemented. Any incident of restraint is sensitively and appropriately followed up in discussion and reflection with the child or young person concerned; and all incidents of restraint are accurately recorded and monitored.</li> <li>■ Care plans, where appropriate, clearly identify risks and protective factors for individual boarders; there are clear plans to address them, and these are regularly monitored and reviewed. The frequency with which boarders are absent without authority is minimised.</li> <li>■ The school provides a secure and safe residential environment for young people. Managers have considered the potential hazards and run checks, for example on electrical, gas and fire safety equipment. There is a good record of maintenance being undertaken to ensure that the school premises and accommodation remain safe for children. Pupils are aware of escape routes, risks and how to manage them.</li> <li>■ All national minimum standards covering safety and safeguarding are met.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adequate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The judgement is likely to be adequate where the policies, procedures and practice meet the requirements of the national minimum standards but do not fit the descriptor for 'good', or where almost all of the national minimum standards are met, and any weaknesses do not have a significant impact on boarders' safety and can be rectified in the course of the inspection. An example of this might be a health and safety hazard identified under 6.2 which can be quickly rectified.</li> <li>■ Boarders report that they generally feel safe in the school and outside it, and can identify an adult they would talk to if they felt unsafe.</li> <li>■ The school operates safe recruitment procedures for staff and all investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are handled fairly and quickly.</li> <li>■ Staff are consistent in managing instances of poor behaviour and encouraging boarders to behave well and develop positive relationships irrespective of any barriers they might experience.</li> <li>■ There is a clear policy for countering bullying, which includes racism, homophobic and cyber bullying. Staff operate the policy consistently. Boarders report that staff tackle bullying effectively so that boarders do not regard it as a serious issue in the school.</li> <li>■ There is a policy to promote good behaviour, with suitable sanctions, and this works. There is a clear policy for the use of restraint, which meets guidance from the Department for</li> </ul>

	<p>Education and is consistently implemented; any incident of restraint is sensitively and appropriately followed up in discussion and reflection with the child or young person concerned; and all incidents of restraint are accurately recorded and monitored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Staff are aware of the factors that may trigger children absconding and take action to minimise the risk; the incidences of children absent without authority from the school are minimised, and there are clear practices, and agreed arrangements with the local police, which support effective action when children go missing and ensure that they are protected as far as possible and responded to positively on their return.</li> <li>■ There is a clear policy for child protection which is understood by all staff so that boarders are protected from harm. The school generally provides a safe residential environment for young people. Managers have considered potential safety hazards and run checks, for example on electrical, gas and fire safety equipment. Regular maintenance is undertaken to ensure that the safety hazards in the school premises and boarders' accommodation are rectified. Pupils are aware of escape routes, risks and how to manage them.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inadequate</b></p>	<p>The judgement of boarders' safety is likely to be inadequate if either of the following criteria apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The boarders are unsafe, or feel unsafe. They report being bullied but the school has not dealt with it.</li> <li>■ The school fails to meet the national minimum standards covering safety and as a result the welfare and safety of boarders is not adequately safeguarded so that boarders could be harmed or put at risk.</li> </ul>

## Leadership and management of boarding (the residential provision)

16. This section is about how effectively the residential or boarding environment is organised and managed for the benefit of the young people in the school's care. In order to make their judgement, inspectors will evaluate the extent to which:

- there are clear aims for boarding which are translated into practice
- the boarding facility is effectively and efficiently managed as an integral part of the school; routines and procedures are clear, well-established and operate consistently to provide an orderly and safe community
- managers have ensured that there is a sufficient number of staff on duty at all times to supervise boarders, and that the staff (and where appropriate prefects also) are deployed and supervised effectively and have received high-quality training, development and support for their roles

- the school assesses the quality of its boarding provision and its impact on young people, and can demonstrate capacity for continuing improvement in boarding practice, based on its track record, performance since its previous inspection and evidence of the impact of improvements on boarders' experience; and in **residential special schools**, there is effective monitoring by independent visitors and their reports are used effectively to drive improvement
- all required policies, documents and records are in place and meet requirements; senior care staff actively and regularly monitor the quality of care provided
- the school manages complaints and takes account of boarders' views to improve the quality of their boarding experience and care
- diversity and individual needs are recognised in planning and caring for boarders, and they are accorded equality of opportunity
- there is good communication with parents and carers and placing authorities (where relevant)
- in **boarding schools**, where relevant, the school ensures that any lodgings it provides for boarders are appropriate
- in **residential special schools**, records are comprehensive and securely stored
- the national minimum standards **1, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20** for **boarding and residential special schools** and **22** for **residential special schools** are met.

## Leadership and management of boarding: grade descriptors

<b>Outstanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The leadership and management of boarding are likely to be outstanding if the boarding community is at the heart of the school and all staff are fully committed to and enthusiastic about the value of boarding and its contribution to boarders' personal and social development. There are consistently high expectations to provide the very best for the boarders. All routines run smoothly, so that boarders are extremely well cared for and fully supported in all respects.</li> <li>■ The school has an accurate and insightful evaluation of its performance and uses the findings to constantly drive forward improvement in pursuit of excellence for its boarders. Forward planning is detailed and thorough: it includes challenging targets which are achievable and sustained over a period of time.</li> <li>■ Senior staff ensure that there are always enough well trained, experienced and suitable staff on duty. Boarding staff at all levels are fully trained and experienced and well supervised to meet the needs of the young people in their care. There is an excellent and proactive programme of professional development</li> </ul>
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	<p>for staff and they are up to date with all developments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All required policies are in place and are implemented fully and effectively. Records are comprehensive, detailed and helpful to the support of boarders. They are stored securely.</li> <li>■ The school is fully aware of the diverse nature and needs of its boarders and ensures that they all have the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential while boarding at the school.</li> <li>■ There is excellent communication with parents, carers and placing authorities, if appropriate, who all work together to ensure the best for the child. Parents report that contact with the school is easy and welcome.</li> <li>■ Boarders' views and ideas are actively sought, and changes have been made to the boarding routines and/or environment as a result, so that boarders have a strong ownership of their community and feel that they can make a difference to it. The school consults boarders fully before making changes that affect their experience.</li> <li>■ All recommendations from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and there is substantial improvement since the last inspection, or outstanding practice has been sustained. In residential special schools, excellent use is made of independent visitors' reports to drive forward improvement.</li> <li>■ All national minimum standards are met.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Good</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is good leadership and management of the boarding facility, so that aims are well understood, routines run smoothly, boarders are well supported and cared for, and any weaknesses are identified and action is taken to improve.</li> <li>■ The school has a clear and accurate evaluation of its performance. Improvements are well planned and implemented and benefit the boarders.</li> <li>■ Senior staff ensure that there are enough well trained, experienced and suitable staff on duty at all times to offer good support and care to individual pupils whenever they need it.</li> <li>■ Boarding staff receive good support, are well supervised and their individual training needs are proactively identified and met. Senior staff keep up to date with new legislation and developments and share good practice with staff to improve the quality of service.</li> <li>■ All required policies are in place and are implemented effectively. Records are detailed and helpful to the support of boarders. They are stored securely.</li> <li>■ Boarding is an important part of the school, and boarding/care staff are committed to it. They recognise the diverse needs of boarders and plan for them, so that each child is enabled to develop and achieve well.</li> <li>■ The school can demonstrate strong self-evaluation procedures and capacity for continuing improvement in the boarding experience offered to young people, based on its track record,</li> </ul>

	<p>performance since its previous inspection, and can provide evidence of the impact of improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are good relationships with parents, carers, placing authorities and the local community. It is easy for them to contact the school.</li> <li>■ Boarders' views are regularly sought, and young people feel that their ideas are given due consideration and they can contribute to the running and improvement of their boarding community.</li> <li>■ There has been good improvement since the last inspection, and good practice has been sustained. The school has made good use of independent visitors' reports, where appropriate, to improve provision and outcomes.</li> <li>■ There are a number of strengths in the management of boarding provision and all national minimum standards are met.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Adequate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The leadership and management of boarding are likely to be adequate where provision meets all of the national minimum standards, but does not fit the descriptor for 'good', or where almost all of the national minimum standards are met and any unmet national minimum standard does not have a significantly detrimental impact on boarders' safety and well-being. Managers are able to rectify the weaknesses promptly.</li> <li>■ The school knows most of its strengths and weaknesses and makes improvements which benefit the boarders.</li> <li>■ Children, staff and the placing authority understand the aims of the school and what services and facilities it provides.</li> <li>■ Senior staff ensure that there are a sufficient number of boarding/care staff on duty to care for boarders safely. Staff receive appropriate training and support to fulfil their roles. They are supervised appropriately, so that routines run smoothly and health and safety requirements are met.</li> <li>■ All required policies are in place and are implemented effectively. There are positive relationships with other agencies, including the police, health services, and placing local authorities. All significant events relating to the protection of children accommodated in the school are notified by the registered person of the school to the appropriate authorities and appropriate action is taken following the incident.</li> <li>■ There are mechanisms whereby boarders can contribute their views and bring about improvements to the boarding community.</li> <li>■ The school has acted on the requirements from the previous inspection and on those of independent visitor's reports, where appropriate.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inadequate</b></p>	<p>The leadership and management are likely to be inadequate where one or more of the following criteria are met.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school fails to comply with national minimum standards so that boarders' welfare is at risk and they get a poor boarding</li> </ul>

	<p>experience. Boarders or significant groups of boarders are not thriving or are unhappy. They do not feel they have a voice in the running of the boarding community; the school ignores their views and wishes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The boarding facility does not receive appropriate prominence in the school, so that there is not enough well-trained and experienced staff on duty, or they are poorly supervised, so that the boarding community does not run smoothly. Policies are unknown to staff, or not implemented, and morale is low.</li> <li>■ The school has insufficient knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses, so consequently does not address the latter.</li> <li>■ The school has not made sufficient improvement since the last inspection. Residential special schools have not acted effectively on the recommendations from independent visitors.</li> </ul>
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