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Guidance

Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools

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Introduction

1. All independent schools are inspected at the direction of the Department for Education (DfE), which is the registration authority for independent schools. Therefore, Ofsted may be commissioned to carry out an inspection of an independent school at any time.

2. The handbook sets out the main activities for carrying out additional inspections of independent schools, including pre-registration inspections of proposed new independent schools. It sets out the purpose of each type of additional inspection and the legal basis for carrying them out. It explains the judgements that inspectors will make and how they will report.

3. The handbook also applies in the event that the DfE commissions Ofsted to carry out an additional inspection of an independent school that is normally inspected by one of the approved independent inspectorates ("IIPs").

4. Each part of the handbook covers one type of additional inspection.

5. The handbook is primarily for inspectors who are tasked to carry out additional inspections of independent schools ("schools"). However, it is made available to independent school proprietors, so they can understand the purpose, scope and conduct and procedures of inspection. It seeks to ensure that inspections are carried out in accordance with the flexibility required to respond to the individual circumstances of each school. It also sets out how Ofsted will ensure that inspections are fair, proportionate and focused on minimising parent impact. Inspections will exercise their professional judgement in accordance with the principles of inspection set out in the Ofsted inspection manual from September 2021. The handbook does not cover normal pre-inspections ("standard inspections"), which are carried out in accordance with the relevant part of the DfE's independent school inspection handbook. Guidance on inspecting and providing independent schools is in the "Unregulated school inspection handbook".

6. Paragraph 120 (2)(a) of the independent school standards sets out the requirements for proprietors to provide information "any information reasonably requested in connection with the exercise of the functions of the Secretary of State, Ofsted or persons for the purposes of the inspection is provided to the body conducting the inspection and that body is given access to the school's admission and attendance registers".

It is the vast majority of schools, we will gather evidence electronically, using a range of devices, including laptops, mobile telephones and tablets. Accordance to carrying out inspections in a way that is fair, proportionate and focused on minimising parent impact. These will be stored as evidence but not retained by the inspector personally.

Inspectors' right of entry to inspect the school

10. The DfE has commissioned Ofsted to carry out an additional inspection as part of a standard inspection.[footnote 1] It may commission Ofsted to consider a school's compliance with the independent school standards, or to inspect the school's safeguarding in its active role in meeting or not independent school standards, or issues raised by a complaint or other issue about a school, as part of a standard inspection. The DfE will inform the IIP of an inspection commissioned by the DfE.

11. Similarly, the DfE can commission Ofsted to carry out an additional inspection only a standard inspection. The DfE may commission Ofsted to carry out an additional inspection, if it is concerned that the IIP has not carried out its inspection in accordance with its inspection remit.

12. In both cases, the additional matters will normally be considered as part of the standard inspection. Ofsted will typically report on the outcome of the additional matters' to the DfE in the report to the standard inspection and complete pre-inspection preparation, and inform the school of the additional matters, and the legislation (and, for both cases, the standards) and the reason for the additional inspection. The report will be published on our reports website. However, there may be occasions – for example, if the DfE requests Ofsted to inspect a school's safeguarding in its active role in inspection – when it inspects and reports on additional matters, and it may be necessary to ensure that the progress against previously unmet standards is reported clearly in the DfE.

Carrying out 2 concurrent additional inspections

16. When the DfE commissions Ofsted to carry out 2 types of additional inspection at the same time, Ofsted will normally carry out a single inspection from the 2 types of one inspection report and one independent school standards compliance record that covers the 2 types of inspection. The DfE will inform the IIP of the 2 types of inspection to inspect, and the reason the inspections are being carried out. The inspection report will be published on our reports website.

- A statutory emergency inspection may be carried out as part of a progress monitoring inspection.
- A statutory change inspection may be carried out as part of an emergency inspection.
- A statutory change inspection may be carried out as part of an emergency inspection.

17. In 2 cases, the DfE commissions Ofsted to carry out an additional inspection and another additional inspection is already scheduled, Ofsted will normally recommend to the DfE that the 2 inspections be combined, subject to the relevant legislation and the legislation (and, for both cases, the standards) and the reason for the additional inspection. The report will be published on our reports website. However, there may be occasions – for example, if the DfE requests Ofsted to inspect a school's safeguarding in its active role in inspection – when it inspects and reports on additional matters, and it may be necessary to ensure that the progress against previously unmet standards is reported clearly in the DfE.

Carrying out 2 concurrent additional inspections

18. Unless other circumstances mean (Ofsted's education inspection framework), independent schools are not able to request a change of inspection date. Independent schools are required to provide information in schools it set out in the Independent school inspection handbook.

Inspection fees

20. Schools are charged a fee for standard, pre-registration and progress monitoring inspections. The DfE sets the fees for these inspections and progress monitoring inspections and sets out in The Independent Educational Provision (Inspection Fees) (England) Regulations Provisions Regulations 2018.

21. For standard inspections, 2 of fees regulations are currently in force. Depending on the timing of their most recent standard inspection, schools:

- will be charged the lower 'Independent Educational Provision in England (Inspection Fees and Exemption Regulations) 2018' if their last inspection was before 2018, which came into force on 1 April 2018
- will be charged under the 'Independent Educational Provision in England (Inspection Fees and Exemption Regulations) 2018, which came into force on 1 July 2018

Using evidence from additional inspections

22. We may collect evidence on other aspects of provision through additional inspections and use it for national reporting.

The role of an interpreter during inspection

23. An interpreter, an interpreter may be present during an additional inspection. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the relevant regional Senior Her Majesty's Inspector ("SHMI") and the lead inspector, taking into account the DfE's guidance on the interpreter.

24. Interpreters support inspections of schools that teach some or all their pupils through a language other than English. Their role is to assist the inspection team to consider the school's arrangements for curriculum and assessment and how they meet the requirements of the independent school standards. Note that this does not apply to inspections of schools that teach English as a second language. The DfE will inform the IIP and interpreters to support inspections of schools that teach pupils through a language other than English.

25. Interpreters support inspections by interpreting what is said or written, but they will not contribute to the inspection decisions about whether the school complies with the independent school standards.

26. Interpreters may be present for the entire duration of the inspection, or for part of it, depending on how the school's provision is arranged. This will normally be confirmed during the lead inspector's initial telephone call to the school or separately.

27. Interpreters may accompany an inspector during any inspection activity. This could include lesson observations, meetings with pupils, meetings with parents, meetings with governors and leaders, tours of the school premises and meetings with staff members, including a tribunal of each. The interpreter will take notes, which the lead inspector will retain and use to inform their judgements.

Pre-registration inspections to proposed new schools

Purpose of inspection and legal basis

28. The Secretary of State is the registration authority for independent schools in England, and maintains a register of independent schools.

29. Proprietors who want to open a new school must apply to the DfE for registration. They are required to supply certain information as part of their application. This includes:

- a statement that the school is an independent school
- a plan showing the layout of the premises and any accommodation provided
- detailed curriculum plans and schemes of work for all subjects and year groups
- student assessment procedures
- the written behaviour policy setting out, among other matters, the sanctions to be imposed on pupils for misbehaviour
- particulars of the school's arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school and how these arrangements have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State
- particulars of the school's admission arrangements
- the complaints procedure

30. When the DfE has checked that the application from a proposed new school to enter on the register is complete, it will commission Ofsted to carry out a pre-registration inspection of the proposed school. An inspection will take place at a date agreed.

31. Ofsted will carry out the pre-registration inspection under section 97 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 ("the 2008 Act"). The inspection is conducted to check whether the school is likely to meet the Independent school standards (Standards) (2014). If the DfE decides to register it, The DfE must be satisfied that the school is likely to meet the Independent school standards (Standards) (2014) by the beginning of the school's first academic year, or, independent school must comply with the standards to continue to be registered.

32. The inspection will also consider whether the proposed school is likely to meet other requirements that registered independent schools must comply with or have regard to.

Unregistered provision

34. Section 96 of the Act makes it a criminal offence to carry out an independent educational institution unless it is registered.[footnote 2] Any existing providers should be aware of the requirements to register independent schools.

35. For more pupils of compulsory school age.
1 pupil of compulsory school age who is looked after, has an education, health and care plan, or has a statement of special educational needs

36. The handbook for inspecting unregistered schools, with not Ofsted's activities and powers, including the DfE's commissioning Ofsted to carry out a pre-registration inspection of a proposed school and prosecuting offences under section 96(1) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The handbook also provides guidance on how to identify an unregistered provision.

38. Inspectors should refer any questions regarding suspected unregistered provision to their regional Senior Her Majesty's Inspector ("SHMI"). Inspectors should not be expected to gather evidence for prosecution cases. Where there is reasonable suspicion of unregistered provision, it will determine if further action needs to be taken because of the risk to pupils and the ability to operate lawfully and independently of schools.

Boarding or residential provision

37. When an application is made to open a new boarding or residential special school, the DfE will commission Ofsted to carry out an 'integrated' pre-registration inspection of the proposed school. The inspection will be carried out by a team of inspectors with proposed boarding/residential provision with check whether the proposed school meets the standards for boarding or residential special schools are likely to be met, if the DfE decides to register the school.

Proposed or existing children's homes seeking registration as a school

39. Children's homes are required to register with Ofsted under section 12 of the Act. If the DfE for registration as a school, it needs the information in paragraph 29 of this handbook.

40. If a proprietor intends to have two separate registrations, one for a children's home and one for a school, the proprietor will normally be aligned with a pre-registration visit to the proposed children's home. The inspector of the proposed children's home will be carried out in a way that is proportionate for children's services and schools.

Before the inspection

Clarification for schools

41. Paragraph 67 to 72 of the non-compulsory independent school inspection handbook, the DfE's independent school inspection handbook, the DfE's independent school inspection that can result in unnecessary workload in schools. It is intended to highlight specific practices that we do not require.

Inspectors' planning and preparation

42. The lead inspector, and in the case of integrated inspections, the lead social care inspector, will contact the school by telephone to arrange the date of the DfE's IIP inspection. The form may specify a particular focus that the DfE, the IIP or the school wishes to have. The lead inspector should review the CIF for compliance. If they think it appropriate, they should discuss this with the Regional Senior Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), who can agree a change.

43. The form also contains the policies and other information that the proposed school has supplied to support its application. The lead inspector should check that the school has any particular information (so that they can start to assess the breadth and balance of the school's curriculum, and, if it does, whether that curriculum is consistent with the expectation of life in modern Britain.

44. Inspectors' planning will also be informed by any other available information, for example:

- if the proposed school has a website, inspectors will check whether it contains the information required by the independent school standards, and whether it meets other statutory requirements
- the report from any previous pre-registration inspections carried out at the proposed school
- if the proposed school has formerly been subject to a section 97 Education and Skills Act 2008 inspection, the advice note from the inspection. Inspectors must carefully note if the school has met the requirements of the independent school standards
- information from any other accredited providers. This may include information from a parent provision or, if the proposed school is part of a chain of independent schools, information from other schools in the chain. Where a chain of schools is involved, it would include any reported strengths and weaknesses of the school's leadership and management
- any other information publicly available or available from relevant stakeholders, such as local authorities and the police

45. On integrated pre-registration inspections of proposed boarding or residential special schools, contact between the education and social care inspectors/inspectors takes place before the start of the inspection.

Notification and introduction

46. We will normally contact the proposed school by telephone to announce the inspection, and to arrange a date for the inspection. The lead inspector will normally also initially announce an education only or integrated inspection. The inspection is a regulatory inspection will announce a welfare-only inspection.

47. If the headteacher is unavailable when the notification call is made, Ofsted will ask to speak to the proprietor or the most senior member of staff available. Once we have established that we are speaking to the proprietor, we will inform the caller that we will send confirmation to the proposed school by email.

48. During the initial notification phone call, the inspection support administrator will check:

- the number of pupils that the proposed school intends to admit
- the number of pupils that the proposed school has
- the nature of the proposed provision. For example:
- any special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) provision
- nursery provision for 2 and 3 year-olds
- additional resource provision

49. We will also make clear that the inspectors will expect the proprietor(s) and the person(s) who will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the proposed school to be available for the inspection. The lead inspector will also make the school's inspectors have to page their ability to questions and responses to the inspection and to the school.

50. The inspection support administrator will then send the proposed schools a letter setting out key information for leaders to be aware of before inspection. This will include:

- Ofsted's privacy notice
- informing the proposed school that inspectors will use a range of technology to support inspection, including laptops, tablets and mobile telephones
- informing the proposed school that inspectors may ask to take photographic evidence, for examples of pupils' work and displays, but that inspectors will not take photographs of pupils

Information that proposed schools must provide by the start of the inspection

51. The inspection support administrator will also request information from the proposed school the receiving due to information to evaluate its implementation of the independent school standards.

- the policies and other documents requested by the independent school standards
- the school's admission register
- a copy of the proposed school's prospectus
- a complete staff list giving qualifications, experience and, for part-time staff, hours worked per week. If relevant provided
- a copy of the proposed school's timetable, including dates of extra-curricular activities
- a brief overview of how the subjects in the proposed school intends to teach
- a plan of the proposed school, including residential accommodation for pupils, if relevant
- maps and other practical information
- access to wifi, if it exists, so that inspectors can connect to the internet

52. In pre-registration inspections of any existing providers, inspectors will request previous or children's homes that are already providing education, inspectors will also request:

- data from showing pupils' names and year groups
- any information about the school's premises and plans to normal school holidays during the inspection
- records and analyses of exclusions, pupils taken off roll, incidents of poor behaviour and bullying, and pupil absence
- records and analyses of annual assessment or annual reviews
- records of bullying, discriminatory and prejudiced behaviour, either directly or indirectly relating to the school's arrangements for safeguarding and promoting bullying, use of derogatory language and racist incidents
- a list of referrals made to the designated person for safeguarding in the school and the nature of the concerns referred to the local authority, social care or other relevant agencies
- a list of all pupils who have open cases with children's services/social care and for whom the school is the lead provider
- an online attendance analysis for all groups of pupils
- documented evidence of the work of the proprietor and/or those responsible for governance, including:
- a summary of any formal evaluation or reviews
- the current school improvement plan or equivalent, including any planning that sets out the longer-term vision for the school, and the school's strategy
- any reports from external evaluations of the school

Requests for deferral or cancellation

53. A proposed school may request a deferral of its inspection. It may make a request to the inspection support administrator when it is notified of the inspection.

54. The inspection support administrator must immediately contact the regional duty HMI, who will decide whether to agree to the request. Inspectors should be given a deferral with no additional costs.

55. The deferral policy makes clear that the absence of the headteacher and/or proprietor is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection.

56. Pre-registration inspections should not be deferred when the proposed school is ready to be inspected. Ofsted will not, in the case of a proposed school, be willing to undertake a pre-registration inspection, since the provision which is being made for boarding/residential special schools, accommodated pupils in the near future.

57. In the case of commissioned inspections, any requests for a deferral must be passed to Ofsted's nearest regional director, who will decide whether the request can be granted.

The lead inspector's inspection planning (inspection call)

58. The lead inspector of an education only or integrated inspection will contact the proprietor or the most senior member of staff available, by phone, to: Ofsted's inspection is subject to the rules of commissioned inspections, which are set out in the Ofsted's inspection manual.

- discuss the nature of any proposed SEMD provision
- discuss any proposed nursery provision, before, during or after school year or holiday
- discuss the school's Ofsted's inspection, particularly if the school is a new school (see 3.10 bullet point)
- establish whether the proposed school will operate from more than one site. For example, if the school is a new school, the lead inspector and the inspection support administrator must establish the full address of each site, record the information (see and report to the relevant Senior HMI). In these cases, regional Senior HMI will need to be informed of the proposed school's plans
- establish the number and if they are not yet, if they are expected, and what arrangements to take part in pupil visits to lessons and to observe the main inspection team's activities
- when relevant, make arrangements for meeting with relevant staff
- confirm the identity of the individual proprietor or proprietor body of the proposed school, and the identity of the person who will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the proposed school. Inspectors should be prepared to attend the final feedback meeting
- establish the proprietor's governance structure of the proposed school, and make arrangements for a meeting with the chair of governors or equivalent (or, if not possible, and/or representatives of those responsible for governance). Inspectors should ask if they are planning to provide and also accessible for the feedback meeting
- establish how the proposed school will give the lead inspector access to its policies and other documents, and how it will make the school's website and other documents the independent school standards. The request all documents in advance of the inspection
- ensure the opportunity for the proposed school to ask any questions or raise any concerns, such as parents and children's views
- tell the proposed school how it will seek inspectors will be present during the inspection

The inspection

Days allocated to inspection and inspection team members

59. Pre-registration inspections do not normally last longer than one day, and will normally be carried out by 2 inspectors. Pre-registration inspections of proposed boarding and residential special schools, there will normally also be one social care regulatory inspector. Two inspors does are allocated to total to pre-registration inspections to the inspection. Investing and will be.

60. There is no requirement to deploy inspectors of a particular faith to inspect a school. The DfE will inform the IIP of any requirements for inspectors of a particular faith to inspect a school.

61. For details of what happens when an interpreter joins the inspection, refer to paragraphs 23 to 27.

Arrival time on the day of inspection

62. On the day of the inspection, inspectors will not arrive before 8am.

The start of the on-site inspection

63. The lead inspector should meet with the headteacher and the proprietor at the beginning of the inspection to:

- introduce themselves and interpreters
- explain the purpose of the inspection
- explain the inspection process
- explain the role of the interpreter
- explain the role of the inspection team
- explain the role of the interpreter
- explain the role of the inspection team
- explain the role of the interpreter
- explain the role of the inspection team

- confirm arrangements for meetings with representatives of those who intend to be interviewed, including those who intend to be interviewed by phone
- confirm arrangements for meetings with parents of those who intend to be interviewed
- request information about staffing absence and other practical issues
- request a copy of the school's self-evaluation, key data, safeguarding and other documents and records, further to those that have been made available to the school's application portal.[Inspection 19]

4.4 If there is more than one inspector, a short team meeting should take place to clarify inspection activities and individual roles and responsibilities.

Gathering and recording evidence

4.5 Inspectors will gather evidence about whether the proposed school is likely to meet the standards, including evidence from lessons, tours, and meetings with staff and pupils. They will record evidence and judgements on the inspection form.[Inspection 20]

4.6 Inspectors will be rigorous in their evidence gathering and will use its own documents, rather than other information sources, including those that have expired.[Inspection 21 and 22] [Inspection 23]

4.7 The team inspection leader will be to discuss the proposed school with the proprietor, and the principal, including any proposed or existing off-site provision, and request information about the school's self-evaluation, key data, safeguarding and other documents and records for the proposed school's facilities, for the school, and for any other provision, including any provision for pupils who are not boarders and headteacher, staff and pupils to visit.

4.8 In a pre-registration inspection where pupils are present, including where the proprietor or children's homes that are already providing education, Inspection may also include a tour of the proposed premises, wherever possible to facilitate the gathering of findings and conclusions.

4.9 During pre-registration inspections, it is important that pupils are able to express their views freely to inspectors. Therefore, inspectors must have the opportunity to speak to pupils with no other adult present. This is particularly important when inspecting a proposed school for vulnerable pupils.

4.10 Inspectors and lead inspectors will need to judge whether the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements of all paragraphs of the independent school standards. Inspectors will need to be able to observe any teaching and learning to judge the implementation of paragraph 5.

11. Inspectors must have secure evidence to support the overall judgement that the school is likely to meet all the independent school standards. When inspectors identify any evidence that suggests that any paragraph of the standards is unlikely to be met, they should gather further evidence to ensure that they can make a judgement on the standards overall.

12. Inspectors will expect to meet with the proprietor(s) and the person(s) who will be responsible for the day to day management of the proposed school. Inspectors will expect to meet the proprietor, the principal and the person responsible for the day to day management in order to judge whether the proposed school is likely to meet paragraph 34(2) of the independent school standards, which concerns the quality of leadership and management.

13. In judging whether a school is likely to meet the standards, inspectors will refer to:

- non-statutory DfE guidance 'The independent school standards: guidance for independent schools'. Although this document is non-statutory, it is aim is to set out the DfE's understanding of the standards
- the relevant statutory legislation, which underpins the standards
- your additional guidance on how the standards are to be interpreted and applied in practice.

14. Inspectors use DfE guidance 'Independent school registration' and the resources to which this document refers.

Inspectors use the independent school inspection handbook.

15. If appropriate, inspectors may also refer to the following DfE guidance:

- Inspecting teachers of the protected characteristics in schools
- Operational pre-opening guidance for the inspections of mixed sex in educational schools.

Boarding or residential provision

16. In integrated pre-registration inspections of proposed new boarding or residential provision, the lead inspector should consider whether the school's proposed policies, procedures and boarding/residential accommodation are likely to meet the relevant national minimum standards.

Early years provision (part of the school's registration)

16. When early years provision for children aged 2 and upwards is proposed as part of the school registration, inspectors will consider whether the early years provision is likely to meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage. The independent school standards require that the school must be registered for early years provision if it is part of a school. Inspectors' judgement on whether the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage will be made by the lead school inspector. A judgement about whether the school is likely to meet the standards overall will be made by the team inspector. The lead inspector and team inspector, as appropriate, will include their judgements for children aged 2 to 5.

17. Early years provision is proposed to be accommodated at a premises other than the main, registered premises, inspectors must be satisfied that the premises is fit for the intended purpose and report this to the relevant regional Senior HMI.

Provision for students aged 16 and over

18. Some proposed schools may intend to admit students aged 16 and over. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that the proposed school is likely to meet the standards for pupils aged 16 and over. Inspectors will need to consider the age of the pupils and their sense of maturity, however, because these students would essentially be adults studying in a school, inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to meet the safeguarding requirements of the independent school standards.[Inspection 24]

Lesson visits

19. In pre-registration inspections of existing providers, including alternative provision, inspectors will need to observe lessons to judge whether the school is likely to meet the standards. Existing unregistered providers must not operate as an independent school before they are registered. Only after registration have they provided full-time education to pupils, and only then can inspections take place.

- the cost of introduction (only when it is the first report of special educational needs and/or care plan, or a statement of special educational needs).

20. Inspectors will not accept evidence from only lessons to inform their judgements about whether the requirements are likely to be met. These include the requirements of paragraph 34(2) of the independent school standards, which concerns quality that promotes good behaviour (including paragraph 34(2)(a) and the standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (paragraph 5). Inspectors will need to consider evidence from other sources, such as documents, and will judge whether the independent school standards are likely to be met, as well as to whether they are met.

21. Before visiting lessons, inspectors will check with the headteacher whether there are any lessons that they should not visit for certain reasons. Its important that lessons are subject to capability procedures. Inspectors will also ensure that the headteacher is aware of the lessons they intend to visit and that the teachers concerned are informed of the process. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to be able to provide evidence, must not be used as evidence in capability/competency procedures. For the purposes of performance management.

22 Further information about who to interview is available in paragraphs 153-159 of the pre-registration independent school inspection handbook.

Proposed special school for children's homes

23. In judging whether proposed special schools are likely to meet the independent school standards, inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to be sustainable. Inspectors will take into account the type of special educational needs of the school's proposed to cater for. They will consider whether the proposed provision is likely to meet the needs of pupils and whether the school proposes to cater.

24. Inspectors will consider whether a children's home's proposed education provision is sustainable, including its ability to meet the needs of its pupils. They will also consider whether there is a prompt and effective system of assessing a pupil's educational needs and of providing for the pupil's educational and emotional support, so that discipline in the young person's education can be maintained. They will consider whether the proposed provision is likely to meet the needs of the groups of pupils for which it is proposed to cater. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that education for the children made ready for the DfE's approval of a proposed school, if it meets the definition in paragraph 24 of the handbook.

Checking standards based on the DfE's commission

25. If inspectors identify matters of concern based the scope of the DfE's commission (see paragraph 4.2 above), they should report on the school's capability to meet the DfE's compliance with the relevant paragraphs of the independent school standards which the concerns relate.[Inspection 25] This is likely to occur only in the rare instance where the DfE's commission is based on information that is not in the public domain or proposed school. In these cases, the commission is likely to only ask inspectors to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet some of the standards. Should inspectors identify that the school is not likely to meet the DfE's commission, the lead inspector should report to the DfE's school capacity team, who will then decide whether to cancel the DfE's commission.

Safeguarding

26. Inspectors will always have regard for how well children and learners are helped and protected from harm and abuse. If inspectors have any concerns about the overall material grade or other judgement for this step aspect of a proposed school as part of registration inspection, they will report any concerns to the DfE about the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding children and learners.

27. The approach that inspectors should take to inspecting safeguarding is at the independent school inspection handbook and the DfE's guidance 'Independent schools'. This should not be used as inspection framework and evidence.

28. In addition to understanding your policies on inspecting safeguarding, inspectors should be familiar with the statutory guidance on safeguarding.

- 'Keeping children safe in education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges'
- 'Working together to safeguard children'
- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales

29. On all inspections, inspectors need to determine whether there has been any safeguarding incidents or allegations since the last inspection, and whether the school has taken appropriate action to safeguard the children affected and/or deal with allegations.

Reporting on evidence or allegations of child abuse

30. The DfE's school capacity team will normally only carry across evidence or allegations of child abuse. Inspectors must not attempt to investigate allegations of child abuse but will safely themselves that concerns about a child's safety are referred to the relevant LA children's social care department. Inspectors should also check that the school has made the safeguarding authority aware. Inspectors should be satisfied that the correct referral has taken place and record this in their evidence base.

31. If a child discloses to a researcher on site that they are suffering or at risk of harm, the inspector will stop all other activity and focus on ensuring that the child receives the help and protection they need. Inspectors should refer to the section on 'Safeguarding concerns' in the independent school inspection handbook.

Providing feedback

32. The on-site inspection ends with a final feedback meeting with the proprietor and headteacher. Those who intend to be connected with the school who may attend include:

- the proprietor or, when there is a proprietorial body, as many members as possible
- the headteacher and other senior leaders, agreed by the lead inspector and headteacher
- if the school has a governing body, the chair and as many representatives as possible that can be assembled
- if an aligned or integrated inspection, outside any regulatory inspectors of the education inspection will also feedback together to both education and residential staff.

33. Due to the diverse nature of school governance, in some schools a single individual may represent the governing body.

34. During this meeting, the lead inspector will ensure that the headteacher, the proprietor and the chair of governors understand the following:

- about the independent school standards and other requirements (including the national minimum standards in the case of welfare and/or integrated inspections) that inspectors have found to be met, and those that are judged to be not met (DfE decides to register)
- about the evidence to support the judgement that any standards or other requirements are not met, including any relevant documents or other evidence (witnesses (Ofsted) have also decided about how to need to be shared)
- that the judgements about whether the standards and other requirements are likely to be met are provisional and are subject to quality assurance and moderation procedures or moderation
- that, when the inspection has gathered evidence that indicates that the proposed school is likely to meet the standards, inspectors will report to the DfE that it is likely that the school that has applied to be registered by the DfE. The proprietor will need to confirm that Ofsted may decide to inspect the school under section 97 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
- that under section 98 of the Education and Skills 2008 it is mandatory for Ofsted to conduct an unregistered educational institution if requested by the DfE.
- that the findings of the inspection and the points provided under the feedback meeting, subject to any changes, will be referred to in the text of the pre-registration report and the inspection report.
- about the process for making a complaint about the inspection
- that the inspection report will be sent to the DfE whether or not a school should be registered
- that the DfE, which is the registration authority for independent schools, will decide whether the school should be registered.

35. The inspection will make clear to the proposed school that it is likely that the school (Ofsted has judged that the school proposes is likely to meet the independent school standards. The DfE will then decide whether to register the school. The DfE will also decide the date of the school's first inspection (can be registered with Ofsted).

When there are concerns about safeguarding or serious weaknesses

36. The lead inspector will complete Form A – initial advice to the registration authority (DfE) if inspectors have identified a concern about safeguarding or serious weaknesses. Inspectors conclude that either:

- there are concerns about safeguarding or serious weaknesses at the proposed school, and the school is not likely to be able to provide evidence that the school inspectors cause for concern about pupils' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development.
- the proposed school appears to be operating without registration

We will then provide the Form A to the DfE as soon as possible. An automated email will also communicate the information to our employment inspectors.

37. The DfE will use the information in the Form A to prioritise those providers and prospective providers that require most urgent attention.

After the inspection

Arrangements for publishing the report

38. The lead inspector is responsible for writing the inspection report, completing the independent school standards compliance record and submitting the evidence to Ofsted's quality assurance and moderation team. The lead inspector will also complete the judgements and reflect the evidence. The findings in the report should be consistent with the feedback given to the school at the end of the inspection.

39 Inspection reports will be published on our website as soon as we can, and in most circumstances, the school will receive the draft report within 30 working days of the last inspection activity. We will aim to publish the report within 5 working days of receipt of the factual accuracy check. If complaint has been submitted, the publication of the report may be delayed.

40. We will send the final version of the report to the DfE before publication. In all cases, the inspection process should not be treated as complete until all inspection reports have been published and the final version of the inspection report has been sent to the proprietor.

Suitability of the proprietor and other managers – reporting concerns to the registration authority

41 If inspectors identify any concerns about the suitability of the proprietor, or any other managers of the proposed school, inspectors should report the concerns to the DfE. Inspectors should report concerns about the suitability of the proprietor or other managers to the DfE, as the appropriate authority. This information is particularly relevant when it may impact on the DfE's decision to register the school, or on the suitability of an existing independent school. This includes when the person's conduct is under investigation by British values or child safety, and the inspectorate has concluded that the person's conduct is likely to be found to be unsuitable to take part in the management of an independent school.

The inspection evidence base

42. The evidence base for the inspection must be retained in line with Ofsted's retention and disposal policy. This is normally for 6 years from when the report is published. They may decide that retaining it for longer is warranted for research purposes.

Quality assurance and complaints

Quality assurance

43. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector must ensure that inspections are carried out in accordance with this guidance and the independent school inspection handbook.

44. We monitor the quality of inspections through a range of formal processes and informally. HMI visit some inspections to observe the inspection process and judgements. We may also evaluate the quality of an inspection evidence base. The lead inspector will be responsible for giving team inspectors feedback about the quality of their work that contact.

Handling concerns and complaints

45 The great majority of our work, the school can smoothly and without incident. If it does take place during the inspection, they should be raised with the lead inspector in the first instance. Ofsted's complaints procedure is available on our website. Ofsted has a duty to investigate complaints against its inspections.

46 It is not possible to revisit concerns during the inspection or through submitting comments in response to the draft report. The school may wish to lodge a formal complaint. Ofsted's complaints procedure and that information about how to complain is available on GOV.UK.

The DfE's decision on next steps

48. The DfE, as registration authority for independent schools, will decide whether to register the school, based on the outcome of the inspection and any other evidence it holds. The DfE will inform Ofsted's Independent schools inspectorate of its decisions.[Inspection 26]

50. Sometimes, a proposed school may have been judged 'likely to meet' most of the independent school standards, but not all. In such cases, the DfE may decide to register some of the requirements, conditionally, but allowing the school to open for pupils. Consequently, it will have been judged 'unlikely to meet' the standards overall.

51. In these cases, after the pre-registration inspection, inspectors will need to review non-meet that the relevant requirements are 'likely to be met' by the proprietor. The DfE will inform the lead inspector of its decisions.

52. When they are significant or numerous enforcement is proposed in Ofsted's documents, the DfE may commission another on-site pre-registration inspection, or report the proposed school's application to register.

Material change inspections to existing schools

Purpose of inspection and legal basis

1 Regulations (independent schools) enabling to make one of the following changes to their registration must seek permission to do so from the DfE because these are material changes to a school's registration.

- change of proprietor
- change of school premises
- change of school's age range
- change to the maximum number of pupils
- if the school proposes to change from single sex to co-educational or vice versa, or change in admitting boarders instead of girls, or girls instead of boys.
- if the school intends to provide learning accommodation, or cease to provide it
- if the school intends to admit pupils who have completed compulsory school age to admit them.

The DfE may grant permission for the material change without reference to Ofsted, if it considers that the change will not affect the school's ability to meet the standards applicable at the relevant date. For example, the DfE does not need to refer to Ofsted to carry out a material change inspection when a school opens a new building on its premises.

The when the DfE has considered a school's application to make a material change, it will inform Ofsted's Independent schools inspectorate of its decisions. Ofsted will do so. An inspection can take place at any time.

Ofsted will carry out the material change inspection under section 102(1) of the Education and Skills 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to determine the implications of the material change and recommend to the Secretary of State whether the school is likely to meet the independent school standards which the material change is implemented.

The commission will specify which of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 the DfE requires Ofsted to check whether the school is likely to meet.[Inspection 27]

19. Depending on the material change that a school has applied for, the DfE may commission Ofsted to inspect and report on whether the school is likely to meet requirements that registered independent schools must comply with or have regard to.

- the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage, if the school is registered for early years provision, or part of the school registration, for children aged 2 and upwards
- paragraph 5 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which requires the school to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils
- section 34 of the Education and Skills Learning Skills Act 2008, under which schools have a duty to make a determination that reasonable adjustments have been made and equitable ability has been diminished or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or to ensure that pupils have access to education, training and information.

20. If a school applies to change its admitting pupils under the age of 5, the school is a material change, and also requires a separate registration of early years provision by Ofsted (see Registering an independent school or college).

21. Schools cannot implement material changes until the Secretary of State gives approval for the change.

Material changes

22. The DfE may also normally commission Ofsted to carry out a material change inspection when a school applies to make a change of proprietor. A change of proprietor is a material change if an individual proprietor changes or if the proprietor body changes. The DfE will inform the lead inspector of its decisions. The lead inspector (Ofsted normally) should consider details during any type of inspection.

23. The DfE will normally commission a material change inspection if a school applies for a change of premises. It is meant to the relocation of premises. The DfE will also additional premises is not a material change. However, it may be the trigger for a material change inspection if the school's premises are in a different local authority, additional premises that is more than one mile from its school premises. The DfE may commission Ofsted to carry out an emergency inspection to check relevant standards.

24. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to be able to provide evidence, must not be used as evidence in capability/competency procedures. For the purposes of performance management.

Material change inspections

25. Material change inspections are not intended to be a full inspection. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to meet the standards. Inspectors will need to be able to observe any teaching and learning to judge the implementation of paragraph 5.

26. Inspectors must have secure evidence to support the overall judgement that the school is likely to meet all the independent school standards. When inspectors identify any evidence that suggests that any paragraph of the standards is unlikely to be met, they should gather further evidence to ensure that they can make a judgement on the standards overall.

27. Inspectors will expect to meet with the proprietor(s) and the person(s) who will be responsible for the day to day management of the proposed school. Inspectors will expect to meet the proprietor, the principal and the person responsible for the day to day management in order to judge whether the proposed school is likely to meet paragraph 34(2) of the independent school standards, which concerns the quality of leadership and management.

28. In judging whether a school is likely to meet the standards, inspectors will refer to:

- non-statutory DfE guidance 'The independent school standards: guidance for independent schools'. Although this document is non-statutory, its aim is to set out the DfE's understanding of the standards
- the relevant statutory legislation, which underpins the standards
- your additional guidance on how the standards are to be interpreted and applied in practice.

29. Inspectors use DfE guidance 'Independent school registration' and the resources to which this document refers.

30. Inspectors will also refer to the following DfE guidance:

- Inspecting teachers of the protected characteristics in schools
- Operational pre-opening guidance for the inspections of mixed sex in educational schools.

Boarding or residential provision

31. In integrated pre-registration inspections of proposed new boarding or residential provision, the lead inspector should consider whether the school's proposed policies, procedures and boarding/residential accommodation are likely to meet the relevant national minimum standards.

Early years provision (part of the school's registration)

16. When early years provision for children aged 2 and upwards is proposed as part of the school registration, inspectors will consider whether the early years provision is likely to meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage. The independent school standards require that the school must be registered for early years provision if it is part of 2 and upwards. Inspectors' judgement on whether the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage will be made by the lead school inspector. A judgement about whether the school is likely to meet the standards overall will be made by the team inspector. The lead inspector and team inspector, as appropriate, will include their judgements for children aged 2 to 5.

17. Early years provision is proposed to be accommodated at a premises other than the main, registered premises, inspectors must be satisfied that the premises is fit for the intended purpose and report this to the relevant regional Senior HMI.

Provision for students aged 16 and over

18. Some proposed schools may intend to admit students aged 16 and over. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that the proposed school is likely to meet the standards for pupils aged 16 and over. Inspectors will need to consider the age of the pupils and their sense of maturity, however, because these students would essentially be adults studying in a school, inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to meet the safeguarding requirements of the independent school standards.[Inspection 24]

Lesson visits

19. In pre-registration inspections of existing providers, including alternative provision, inspectors will need to observe lessons to judge whether the school is likely to meet the standards. Existing unregistered providers must not operate as an independent school before they are registered. Only after registration have they provided full-time education to pupils, and only then can inspections take place.

20. Inspectors will not accept evidence from only lessons to inform their judgements about whether the requirements are likely to be met. These include the requirements of paragraph 34(2) of the independent school standards, which concerns quality that promotes good behaviour (including paragraph 34(2)(a) and the standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (paragraph 5). Inspectors will need to consider evidence from other sources, such as documents, and will judge whether the independent school standards are likely to be met, as well as to whether they are met.

21. Before visiting lessons, inspectors will check with the headteacher whether there are any lessons that they should not visit for certain reasons. Its important that lessons are subject to capability procedures. Inspectors will also ensure that the headteacher is aware of the lessons they intend to visit and that the teachers concerned are informed of the process. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to be able to provide evidence, must not be used as evidence in capability/competency procedures. For the purposes of performance management.

22 Further information about who to interview is available in paragraphs 153-159 of the pre-registration independent school inspection handbook.

Proposed special school for children's homes

23. In judging whether proposed special schools are likely to meet the independent school standards, inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to be sustainable. Inspectors will take into account the type of special educational needs of the school's proposed to cater for. They will consider whether the proposed provision is likely to meet the needs of pupils and whether the school proposes to cater.

24. Inspectors will consider whether a children's home's proposed education provision is sustainable, including its ability to meet the needs of its pupils. They will also consider whether there is a prompt and effective system of assessing a pupil's educational needs and of providing for the pupil's educational and emotional support, so that discipline in the young person's education can be maintained. They will consider whether the proposed provision is likely to meet the needs of the groups of pupils for which it is proposed to cater. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that education for the children made ready for the DfE's approval of a proposed school, if it meets the definition in paragraph 24 of the handbook.

Checking standards based on the DfE's commission

25. If inspectors identify matters of concern based the scope of the DfE's commission (see paragraph 4.2 above), they should report on the school's capability to meet the DfE's compliance with the relevant paragraphs of the independent school standards which the concerns relate.[Inspection 25] This is likely to occur only in the rare instance where the DfE's commission is based on information that is not in the public domain or proposed school. In these cases, the commission is likely to only ask inspectors to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet some of the standards. Should inspectors identify that the school is not likely to meet the DfE's commission, the lead inspector should report to the DfE's school capacity team, who will then decide whether to cancel the DfE's commission.

Safeguarding

26. Inspectors will always have regard for how well children and learners are helped and protected from harm and abuse. If inspectors have any concerns about the overall material grade or other judgement for this step aspect of a proposed school as part of registration inspection, they will report any concerns to the DfE about the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for safeguarding children and learners.

27. The approach that inspectors should take to inspecting safeguarding is at the independent school inspection handbook and the DfE's guidance 'Independent schools'. This should not be used as inspection framework and evidence.

28. In addition to understanding your policies on inspecting safeguarding, inspectors should be familiar with the statutory guidance on safeguarding.

- 'Keeping children safe in education: statutory guidance for schools and colleges'
- 'Working together to safeguard children'
- Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales

29. On all inspections, inspectors need to determine whether there has been any safeguarding incidents or allegations since the last inspection, and whether the school has taken appropriate action to safeguard the children affected and/or deal with allegations.

Reporting on evidence or allegations of child abuse

30. The DfE's school capacity team will normally only carry across evidence or allegations of child abuse. Inspectors must not attempt to investigate allegations of child abuse but will safely themselves that concerns about a child's safety are referred to the relevant LA children's social care department. Inspectors should also check that the school has made the safeguarding authority aware. Inspectors should be satisfied that the correct referral has taken place and record this in their evidence base.

31. If a child discloses to a researcher on site that they are suffering or at risk of harm, the inspector will stop all other activity and focus on ensuring that the child receives the help and protection they need. Inspectors should refer to the section on 'Safeguarding concerns' in the independent school inspection handbook.

Providing feedback

32. The on-site inspection ends with a final feedback meeting with the proprietor and headteacher. Those who intend to be connected with the school who may attend include:

- the proprietor or, when there is a proprietorial body, as many members as possible
- the headteacher and other senior leaders, agreed by the lead inspector and headteacher
- if the school has a governing body, the chair and as many representatives as possible that can be assembled
- if an aligned or integrated inspection, outside any regulatory inspectors of the education inspectors will also feedback together to both education and residential staff.

33. Due to the diverse nature of school governance, in some schools a single individual may represent the governing body.

34. During this meeting, the lead inspector will ensure that the headteacher, the proprietor and the chair of governors understand the following:

- about the independent school standards and other requirements (including the national minimum standards in the case of welfare and/or integrated inspections) that inspectors have found to be met, and those that are judged to be not met (DfE decides to register)
- about the evidence to support the judgement that any standards or other requirements are not met, including any relevant documents or other evidence (witnesses (Ofsted) have also decided about how to need to be shared)
- that the judgements about whether the standards and other requirements are likely to be met are provisional and are subject to quality assurance and moderation procedures or moderation
- that, when the inspection has gathered evidence that indicates that the proposed school is likely to meet the standards, inspectors will report to the DfE that it is likely that the school that has applied to be registered by the DfE. The proprietor will need to confirm that Ofsted may decide to inspect the school under section 97 of the Education and Skills 2008.
- that under section 98 of the Education and Skills 2008 it is mandatory for Ofsted to conduct an unregistered educational institution if requested by the DfE.
- that the findings of the inspection and the points provided under the feedback meeting, subject to any changes, will be referred to in the text of the pre-registration report and the inspection report.
- about the process for making a complaint about the inspection
- that the inspection report will be sent to the DfE whether or not a school should be registered
- that the DfE, which is the registration authority for independent schools, will decide whether the school should be registered.

35. The inspection will make clear to the proposed school that it is likely that the school (Ofsted has judged that the school proposes is likely to meet the independent school standards. The DfE will then decide whether to register the school. The DfE will also decide the date of the school's first inspection (can be registered with Ofsted).

When there are concerns about safeguarding or serious weaknesses

36. The lead inspector will complete Form A – initial advice to the registration authority (DfE) if inspectors have identified a concern about safeguarding or serious weaknesses. Inspectors conclude that either:

- there are concerns about safeguarding or serious weaknesses at the proposed school, and the school is not likely to be able to provide evidence that the school inspectors cause for concern about pupils' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development.
- the proposed appears to be operating without registration

We will then provide the Form A to the DfE as soon as possible. An automated email will also communicate the information to our employment inspectors.

37. The DfE will use the information in the Form A to prioritise those providers and prospective providers that require most urgent attention.

After the inspection

Arrangements for publishing the report

38. The lead inspector is responsible for writing the inspection report, completing the independent school standards compliance record and submitting the evidence to Ofsted's quality assurance and moderation team. The lead inspector will also complete the judgements and reflect the evidence. The findings in the report should be consistent with the feedback given to the school at the end of the inspection.

39 Inspection reports will be published on our website as soon as we can, and in most circumstances, the school will receive the draft report within 30 working days of the last inspection activity. We will aim to publish the report within 5 working days of receipt of the factual accuracy check. If complaint has been submitted, the publication of the report may be delayed.

40. We will send the final version of the report to the DfE before publication. In all cases, the inspection process should not be treated as complete until all inspection reports have been published and the final version of the inspection report has been sent to the proprietor.

Suitability of the proprietor and other managers – reporting concerns to the registration authority

41 If inspectors identify any concerns about the suitability of the proprietor, or any other managers of the proposed school, inspectors should report the concerns to the DfE. Inspectors should report concerns about the suitability of the proprietor or other managers to the DfE, as the appropriate authority. This information is particularly relevant when it may impact on the DfE's decision to register the school, or on the suitability of an existing independent school. This includes when the person's conduct is under investigation by British values or child safety, and the inspectorate has concluded that the person's conduct is likely to be found to be unsuitable to take part in the management of an independent school.

The inspection evidence base

42. The evidence base for the inspection must be retained in line with Ofsted's retention and disposal policy. This is normally for 6 years from when the report is published. They may decide that retaining it for longer is warranted for research purposes.

Quality assurance and complaints

Quality assurance

43. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector must ensure that inspections are carried out in accordance with this guidance and the independent school inspection handbook.

44. We monitor the quality of inspections through a range of formal processes and informally. HMI visit some inspections to observe the inspection process and judgements. We may also evaluate the quality of an inspection evidence base. The lead inspector will be responsible for giving team inspectors feedback about the quality of their work that contact.

Handling concerns and complaints

45 The great majority of our work, the school can smoothly and without incident. If it does take place during the inspection, they should be raised with the lead inspector in the first instance. Ofsted's complaints procedure is available on our website. Ofsted has a duty to investigate complaints against its inspections.

46 It is not possible to revisit concerns during the inspection or through submitting comments in response to the draft report. The school may wish to lodge a formal complaint. Ofsted's complaints procedure and that information about how to complain is available on GOV.UK.

The DfE's decision on next steps

48. The DfE, as registration authority for independent schools, will decide whether to register the school, based on the outcome of the inspection and any other evidence it holds. The DfE will inform Ofsted's Independent schools inspectorate of its decisions.[Inspection 26]

50. Sometimes, a proposed school may have been judged 'likely to meet' most of the independent school standards, but not all. In such cases, the DfE may decide to register some of the requirements, conditionally, but allowing the school to open for pupils. Consequently, it will have been judged 'unlikely to meet' the standards overall.

51. In these cases, after the pre-registration inspection, inspectors will need to review non-meet that the relevant requirements are 'likely to be met' by the proprietor. The DfE will inform the lead inspector of its decisions.

52. When they are significant or numerous enforcement is proposed in Ofsted's documents, the DfE may commission another on-site pre-registration inspection, or report the proposed school's application to register.

Material change inspections to existing schools

Purpose of inspection and legal basis

1 Regulations (independent schools) enabling to make one of the following changes to their registration must seek permission to do so from the DfE because these are material changes to a school's registration.

- change of proprietor
- change of school premises
- change of school's age range
- change to the maximum number of pupils
- if the school proposes to change from single sex to co-educational or vice versa, or change in admitting boarders instead of girls, or girls instead of boys.
- if the school intends to provide learning accommodation, or cease to provide it
- if the school intends to admit pupils who have completed compulsory school age to admit them.

The DfE may grant permission for the material change without reference to Ofsted, if it considers that the change will not affect the school's ability to meet the standards applicable at the relevant date. For example, the DfE does not need to refer to Ofsted to carry out a material change inspection when a school opens a new building on its premises.

When the DfE has considered a school's application to make a material change, it will inform Ofsted's Independent schools inspectorate of its decisions. Ofsted will do so. An inspection can take place at any time.

Ofsted will carry out the material change inspection under section 102(1) of the Education and Skills 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to determine the implications of the material change and recommend to the Secretary of State whether the school is likely to meet the independent school standards which the material change is implemented.

The commission will specify which of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 the DfE requires Ofsted to check whether the school is likely to meet.[Inspection 27]

19. Depending on the material change that a school has applied for, the DfE may commission Ofsted to inspect and report on whether the school is likely to meet requirements that registered independent schools must comply with or have regard to.

- the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage, if the school is registered for early years provision, or part of the school registration, for children aged 2 and upwards
- paragraph 5 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, which requires the school to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils
- section 34 of the Education and Learning Skills Act 2008, under which schools have a duty to make a determination that reasonable adjustments have been made and equitable ability has been diminished or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or to ensure that pupils have access to education, training and information.

20. If a school applies to change its admitting pupils under the age of 5, the school is a material change, and also requires a separate registration of early years provision by Ofsted (see Registering an independent school or college).

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22. The DfE may also normally commission Ofsted to carry out a material change inspection when a school applies to make a change of proprietor. A change of proprietor is a material change if an individual proprietor changes or if the proprietor body changes. The DfE will inform the lead inspector of its decisions. The lead inspector (Ofsted normally) should consider details during any type of inspection.

23. The DfE will normally commission a material change inspection if a school applies for a change of premises. It is meant to the relocation of premises. The DfE will also additional premises is not a material change. However, it may be the trigger for a material change inspection if the school's premises are in a different local authority, additional premises that is more than one mile from its school premises. The DfE may commission Ofsted to carry out an emergency inspection to check relevant standards.

24. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to be able to provide evidence, must not be used as evidence in capability/competency procedures. For the purposes of performance management.

Material change inspections

25. Material change inspections are not intended to be a full inspection. Inspectors will need to be able to observe any teaching and learning to judge the implementation of paragraph 5.

26. Inspectors must have secure evidence to support the overall judgement that the school is likely to meet all the independent school standards. When inspectors identify any evidence that suggests that any paragraph of the standards is unlikely to be met, they should gather further evidence to ensure that they can make a judgement on the standards overall.

27. Inspectors will expect to meet with the proprietor(s) and the person(s) who will be responsible for the day to day management of the proposed school. Inspectors will expect to meet the proprietor, the principal and the person responsible for the day to day management in order to judge whether the proposed school is likely to meet paragraph 34(2) of the independent school standards, which concerns the quality of leadership and management.

28. In judging whether a school is likely to meet the standards, inspectors will refer to:

- non-statutory DfE guidance 'The independent school standards: guidance for independent schools'. Although this document is non-statutory, its aim is to set out the DfE's understanding of the standards
- the relevant statutory legislation, which underpins the standards
- your additional guidance on how the standards are to be interpreted and applied in practice.

29. Inspectors use DfE guidance 'Independent school registration' and the resources to which this document refers.

30. Inspectors will also refer to the following DfE guidance:

- Inspecting teachers of the protected characteristics in schools
- Operational pre-opening guidance for the inspections of mixed sex in educational schools.

Boarding or residential provision

31. In integrated pre-registration inspections of proposed new boarding or residential provision, the lead inspector should consider whether the school's proposed policies, procedures and boarding/residential accommodation are likely to meet the relevant national minimum standards.

Early years provision (part of the school's registration)

16. When early years provision for children aged 2 and upwards is proposed as part of the school registration, inspectors will consider whether the early years provision is likely to meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage. The independent school standards require that the school must be registered for early years provision if it is part of 2 and upwards. Inspectors' judgement on whether the proposed school is likely to meet the requirements of the early years foundation stage will be made by the lead school inspector. A judgement about whether the school is likely to meet the standards overall will be made by the team inspector. The lead inspector and team inspector, as appropriate, will include their judgements for children aged 2 to 5.

17. Early years provision is proposed to be accommodated at a premises other than the main, registered premises, inspectors must be satisfied that the premises is fit for the intended purpose and report this to the relevant regional Senior HMI.

Provision for students aged 16 and over

18. Some proposed schools may intend to admit students aged 16 and over. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that the proposed school is likely to meet the standards for pupils aged 16 and over. Inspectors will need to consider the age of the pupils and their sense of maturity, however, because these students would essentially be adults studying in a school, inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to meet the safeguarding requirements of the independent school standards.[Inspection 24]

Lesson visits

19. In pre-registration inspections of existing providers, including alternative provision, inspectors will need to observe lessons to judge whether the school is likely to meet the standards. Existing unregistered providers must not operate as an independent school before they are registered. Only after registration have they provided full-time education to pupils, and only then can inspections take place.

20. Inspectors will not accept evidence from only lessons to inform their judgements about whether the requirements are likely to be met. These include the requirements of paragraph 34(2) of the independent school standards, which concerns quality that promotes good behaviour (including paragraph 34(2)(a) and the standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (paragraph 5). Inspectors will need to consider evidence from other sources, such as documents, and will judge whether the independent school standards are likely to be met, as well as to whether they are met.

21. Before visiting lessons, inspectors will check with the headteacher whether there are any lessons that they should not visit for certain reasons. Its important that lessons are subject to capability procedures. Inspectors will also ensure that the headteacher is aware of the lessons they intend to visit and that the teachers concerned are informed of the process. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to be able to provide evidence, must not be used as evidence in capability/competency procedures. For the purposes of performance management.

22 Further information about who to interview is available in paragraphs 153-159 of the pre-registration independent school inspection handbook.

Proposed special school for children's homes

23. In judging whether proposed special schools are likely to meet the independent school standards, inspectors will need to be satisfied that the school is likely to be sustainable. Inspectors will take into account the type of special educational needs of the school's proposed to cater for. They will consider whether the proposed provision is likely to meet the needs of pupils and whether the school proposes to cater.

24. Inspectors will consider whether a children's home's proposed education provision is sustainable, including its ability to meet the needs of its pupils. They will also consider whether there is a prompt and effective system of assessing a pupil's educational needs and of providing for the pupil's educational and emotional support, so that discipline in the young person's education can be maintained. They will consider whether the proposed provision is likely to meet the needs of the groups of pupils for which it is proposed to cater. Inspectors will need to be satisfied that education for the children made ready for the DfE's approval of a proposed school, if it meets the definition in paragraph 24 of the handbook.

Checking standards based on the DfE's commission

25. If inspectors identify matters of concern based the scope of the DfE's commission (see paragraph 4.2 above), they should report on the school's capability to meet the DfE's compliance with the relevant paragraphs of the independent school standards which the concerns relate.[Inspection 25] This is likely to occur only in the rare instance where the DfE's commission is based on information that is not in the public domain or proposed school. In these cases, the commission is likely to only ask inspectors to check whether the proposed school is likely to meet some of the standards. Should inspectors identify that the school is not likely to meet the DfE's commission, the lead inspector should report to the DfE's school capacity team, who will then decide whether to cancel the DfE's commission.

Safeguarding

26. Inspectors will always have regard for how well children and learners are helped and protected from harm and abuse. If inspectors have any concerns about the overall material grade or other judgement for this step aspect of a proposed school as part

- information from other relevant accredited children's services as the independent school considers to be relevant to the fitness of the proprietor or the suitability of the premises of the school, or other information which may reasonably be expected to be held by other services, such as any reported evidence of a pattern of behaviour in other settings.
- any other information publicly available or available from relevant regulatory or local authorities and the police.

The DfE will also request information in compliance with aspects of the independent school standards which the proprietor identifies as inspected (such as, where required to do so if the standards, 'processes or information').

DfE then receives much of the information from the identity of the school's proprietor before the inspection starts. This can be confirmed by looking at the previous inspection report, which will include information about the proprietor, the DfE's records, the school's Ofsted inquiry returns, and the school's website. If one exists (this may have to be confirmed by direct-line government arrangements), the discrepancies between 'last information held' and 'current information' will be highlighted and resolved prior to the inspection commencing.

DfE, if it requested schools has moved to sign or use site to a different local authority (LA) or Ofsted region, will inform the receiving LA and Ofsted regional office. Ofsted, where DfE will ultimately inform the school's relevant inspector, will also inform the school's unique reference number (URN). Therefore, the lead inspector will refer to the inspection history relating to the school concerned when preparing for inspection.

NB: Other relevant information may be in the public domain and reported in the press. Inspectors should be aware of any such information, and should be ready to discuss it with governing bodies or other leaders at any safeguarding or other issues, such as a change of governance. Ofsted may need to be followed up during inspection. [Section 88]

NB: On integrated material change inspections of boarding or residential provision in schools, contact between the education and social care regulatory inspectors takes place before the start of the inspection.

Notification and introduction

Ofsted will notify the school's proprietor by telephone to announce the inspection at calendar date (where it is due to start. An inspection support administrator will announce an education only or integrated inspection. The lead social care regulatory inspector will announce a social care inspection.

HMI if the headteacher is unavailable when the notification call is made, we will ask to speak to the proprietor. We will not leave a message with staff or pupils.

Ofsted will also inform the school's proprietor that inspection will take place in 48 hours.

NB: During the initial notification phase, call, the inspection support administrator will ask (inform the proprietor of the date of the school, the governance arrangements of the school and whether the school has any special educational needs and/or disabilities provision, and whether it has any provision for EYFS and 2year-olds in attendance.

YOU: We will also make clear that the inspectors will expect the proprietor(s) and the person(s) responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school to be present at the inspection. This is because inspectors will expect to interview them to judge their knowledge and understanding of the school and its pupils.

YOU: The inspection support administrator will also request the school's most recent pupil key information for leaders to be aware of before inspection. This will include

- Ofsted's school profile
- informing the school that inspectors will use a range of technology to gather information and evidence during the inspection, including mobile phones
- informing the school that inspectors may request to take photographs or recordings, for example of pupils' work and displays, but that inspectors will not take photographs of people.

Information that schools must provide by the start of the inspection

YOU: The inspection support administrator will also send the school a note requesting that the following information is available to inspectors at the formal start of the inspection. This is in addition to the information that inspectors will need to have to meet the requirements of the inspection framework.

- the policies and other documents required by the independent school standards
- the single central register for the school
- the school timetable, current staff lists (including newly qualified teachers) and times of staff arrival
- class lists (showing pupils' names and year groups
- any information about previously planned interruptions to normal school routines during the inspection
- records and analyses of exclusions, pupils taken off roll, incidents of prior behaviour and any use of internal isolation
- the school's most recent self-assessment or annual evidence
- records of bullying, discriminatory and sexualised behaviour, either directly or indirectly, including racist, sexist, disability and homophobic/biphobic/transphobic bullying, and how these have been addressed and responded to
- a list of alternative ways in the designated provision in which the school has met those who were subsequently referred to the local authority, along with brief details of the outcomes
- a list of all pupils who have cases with children's services/social care and for whom there is a multi-agency plan
- activities attendance analysis for all groups of pupils
- documented evidence of the work of the proprietor and/or those responsible for governance of the school
- a summary of any school evaluation or equivalent
- the current school improvement plan or equivalent, including any planning that sets out how the school will address the recommendations of its last inspection
- maps and other practical information
- access to wifi, if it exists, so that inspectors can connect to the internet

Requests for referral or assessment, Ofsted

YOU: A school may request a referral of its inspection. It may make a request to the inspection support administrator where it is notified of the inspection.

YOU: The inspection support administrator must immediately contact the regional duty officer, who will decide if and how decide whether to grant a referral. Inspectors will agree with [section 88]

YOU: Normally, if the school is providing education to pupils, an inspector will go ahead. A neighbouring school, however, may request a referral if it considers that it is deferral after the school has been notified, following a request made by the school.

YOU: The deferral period, means that the absence of the headteacher and/or proprietor, or other key staff, is not a factor in the inspection.

YOU: The timing of the inspection will be determined by the information the DfE gives Ofsted in the EIF. This includes the date that the school's independent school inspection (IISI) is approved by the DfE. Planned change inspections are not normally carried out in the first 12 months after a school has been approved by the DfE. Ofsted schools to be ready to receive a material change inspection, since, the DfE expects to implement the change in the near future.

YOU: Where it appears that a school no longer wishes to continue with its application to make a material change, we will inform the DfE. The inspection will normally not go ahead.

NB: In the case of environmental inspections, any requests for a deferral should be sent to Ofsted's relevant regional director, who will decide whether the request can be granted.

Inspection in the Teacher Training telephone call

YOU: The lead inspector will arrange a meeting or integrated inspection with contact the proposed school at a suitable time following the initial notification call. They will use to discuss the school's EIF, and to agree the inspection arrangements. Depending on the nature of the material change, the lead inspector will:

- discuss the nature of any SEND provision
- discuss any planned changes to the school's offer or school care or holiday clubs (for example, to the school's use of premises if these take place in the school's grounds
- collect information from parents/carers from more than one day, for example if attendance patterns for some pupils are unusual, or if the school is not able to establish the full extents of their visits, not since this is their evidence base and report it to the DfE. Inspectors will use the school's regional Senior HMI to support and report to the inspection to the DfE.
- explore the headteacher, curriculum leaders and other leaders to take part in point visits to lessons and to observe their teaching and feedback
- make arrangements for meetings with relevant staff
- make arrangements for a meeting with the school proprietor (body of the school, proprietor or appropriate to the school to them during the inspection, and make as many members of the proprietor body as possible to attend the final feedback session
- establish with the governance structure of the school, or, and/or arrangements for a meeting with the chair of governors and as many governors as possible (and/or governance leaders, if the school is a multi-academy trust, and/or the school's proprietor and as many governors as possible to attend part of the final feedback session
- establish how the school will use the pupil inspector access to policy documents and other evidence, and how the school will provide pupil inspectors with access to independent school standards. We expect all documents to be provided in advance, if possible or opportunity for the school to ask any questions or to raise any concerns, or to request further information
- let the school know if and when inspectors will be present during the inspection.

The inspection

Days when inspectors and inspection team members

YOU: Material change inspections do not normally last longer than one day, and will usually be carried out by one inspector. Integrated inspection of boarding and residential special schools, there will normally also be one social care regulatory inspector. Inspection team members may be required to be available for inspection, for preparation, the inspection, reporting and writing.

YOU: There is no requirement to deploy inspectors of a particular faith to inspect a school of that faith. The lead inspector will consider the school's ethos and the school's current writing of inspection of that faith.

YOU: For details of what happens when an inspector joins the inspection, refer to paragraphs 224-227.

Arrival time on the day of inspection

YOU: On the day of the inspection, inspectors will not arrive before 8am.

The start of the on-site inspection

YOU: The lead inspector should meet briefly with the headteacher and the proprietor at the start of the inspection to:

- introduce any team inspectors and inspectors
- confirm arrangements for meetings with representatives of those responsible for the governance of the school and staff
- confirm arrangements for providing feedback at the end of the inspection
- confirm the school's arrangements for pupil inspectors to work with
- check whether there are reasons why they should not observe a lesson, for example if any teachers are subject to capability procedures
- ask for a list of any pupils' cases with children's services/social care (dimensions of teaching and learning, where point or otherwise, must such as pupil attendance or capability/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management or other reasons, such as ongoing disciplinary or legal matters) and any other documents and records, further to those listed in the DfE in the school's application to make the material change? [Section 88]
- NB: When there is more than one inspector, a short team meeting should take place to clarify inspection activities and individual roles and responsibilities.

Gathering and recording evidence

YOU: Inspectors will gather evidence about whether the school is likely to meet the independent school standards, and the school's ability to continue to meet the independent school standards, in the case of welfare only integrated inspections, if the material change is implemented. They will document agreed any particular focus specified in the DfE's EIF.

YOU: Inspectors will be rigorous in their evidence gathering and will ask to see any documents they need to see.

YOU: The inspection support administrator will also request the school's most recent pupil key information for leaders to be aware of before inspection. This will include

- the school's offer
- the school's most recent self-assessment or annual evidence
- records of bullying, discriminatory and sexualised behaviour, either directly or indirectly, including racist, sexist, disability and homophobic/biphobic/transphobic bullying, and how these have been addressed and responded to
- a list of alternative ways in the designated provision in which the school has met those who were subsequently referred to the local authority, along with brief details of the outcomes
- a list of all pupils who have cases with children's services/social care and for which there is a multi-agency plan
- activities attendance analysis for all groups of pupils
- documented evidence of the work of the proprietor and/or those responsible for governance of the school
- a summary of any school evaluation or equivalent
- the current school improvement plan or equivalent, including any planning that sets out how the school will address the recommendations of its last inspection
- maps and other practical information
- access to wifi, if it exists, so that inspectors can connect to the internet

Requests for referral or assessment, Ofsted

YOU: A school may request a deferral of its inspection. It may make a request to the inspection support administrator where it is notified of the inspection.

YOU: The inspection support administrator must immediately contact the regional duty officer, who will decide if and how decide whether to grant a deferral. Inspectors will agree with [section 88]

YOU: Normally, if the school is providing education to pupils, an inspector will go ahead. A neighbouring school, however, may request a deferral if it considers that the deferral after the school has been notified, following a request made by the school.

YOU: The deferral period, means that the absence of the headteacher and/or proprietor, or other key staff, is not a factor in the inspection.

YOU: The timing of the inspection will be determined by the information the DfE gives Ofsted in the EIF. This includes the date that the school's independent school inspection (IISI) is approved by the DfE. Planned change inspections are not normally carried out in the first 12 months after a school has been approved by the DfE. Ofsted schools to be ready to receive a material change inspection, since, the DfE expects to implement the change in the near future.

YOU: Where it appears that a school no longer wishes to continue with its application to make a material change, we will inform the DfE. The inspection will normally not go ahead.

NB: In the case of environmental inspections, any requests for a deferral should be sent to Ofsted's relevant regional director, who will decide whether the request can be granted.

Inspection in the Teacher Training telephone call

YOU: The lead inspector will arrange a meeting or integrated inspection with contact the proposed school at a suitable time following the initial notification call. They will use to discuss the school's EIF, and to agree the inspection arrangements. Depending on the nature of the material change, the lead inspector will:

- discuss the nature of any SEND provision
- discuss any planned changes to the school's offer or school care or holiday clubs (for example, to the school's use of premises if these take place in the school's grounds
- collect information from parents/carers from more than one day, for example if attendance patterns for some pupils are unusual, or if the school is not able to establish the full extents of their visits, not since this is their evidence base and report it to the DfE. Inspectors will use the school's regional Senior HMI to support and report to the inspection to the DfE.
- explore the headteacher, curriculum leaders and other leaders to take part in point visits to lessons and to observe their teaching and feedback
- make arrangements for meetings with relevant staff
- make arrangements for a meeting with the school proprietor (body of the school, proprietor or appropriate to the school to them during the inspection, and make as many members of the proprietor body as possible to attend the final feedback session
- establish with the governance structure of the school, or, and/or arrangements for a meeting with the chair of governors and as many governors as possible (and/or governance leaders, if the school is a multi-academy trust, and/or the school's proprietor and as many governors as possible to attend part of the final feedback session
- establish how the school will use the pupil inspector access to policy documents and other evidence, and how the school will provide pupil inspectors with access to independent school standards. We expect all documents to be provided in advance, if possible or opportunity for the school to ask any questions or to raise any concerns, or to request further information
- let the school know if and when inspectors will be present during the inspection.

Quality assurance and complaints

Quality assurance

YOU: All inspections are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector must ensure that the work is carried out in accordance with the principles and standards and the code of conduct.

YOU: We monitor the quality of inspections through a range of formal processes and HMI Ofsted HMI with some proprietors to ensure that inspections are carried out fairly. We may also evaluate the quality of an inspection evidence base. The lead inspector will be responsible for giving team leaders feedback about the quality of their work and their contribution.

YOU: All schools are invited to take part in a voluntary post-inspection survey in order to contribute to inspection development.

Handling concerns and complaints

YOU: The good majority of our work is carried out smoothly and without incident. It concerns to arrive during the inspection. They should be viewed with the best inspector and team leader. We will deal with any concerns or complaints about our inspection in a fair and proportionate way. Our complaints procedure is available on GOV.UK.

YOU: It is not possible to revoke concerns during the inspection or through submitting comments in response to the draft report. We will consider any concerns or complaints raised on receipt of the final report. The lead inspector will ensure that the school is aware of the Ofsted complaints procedure and that information about Ofsted complaints is available on GOV.UK.

The DfE's decision on next steps

YOU: The DfE, as regulator, notified by the independent schools, will decide whether to grant the school's application to make a material change, based on the evidence in the evidence it has about the proposed school's likely compliance with the independent school standards. [Section 88]

YOU: If the school has already implemented the change, and the inspection judged that the school is likely to meet the standards, the DfE may decide to take no further action against the school. [Section 88]

YOU: In addition, if the school was judged good or outstanding at its last standard inspection, the DfE may decide to take no further action against the school in consideration of the inspection report. The inspection report, if the school has not made any material changes, is a key evidence for the DfE. It is a rigorous demonstrating the characteristics of good and outstanding schools. The DfE may also take into account the school's track record in meeting the standards, judge whether the school is likely to continue to meet the standards, and if the DfE can rely on the school's ability to help the school improve.

YOU: Sometimes, a school may have been judged 'likely to meet' most of the independent school standards, but the inspection may have identified a material change, but judged 'unlikely to meet' a small number of the requirements due to omissions in or the quality of its planning or policies. Consequently, it will have been judged 'unlikely to meet' the relevant standards.

YOU: In these cases, after the material change inspection, inspectors will provide a report to the DfE. The DfE will then decide whether to grant the school's application to make a material change, based on the information confirming whether or not the school is likely to meet the standards.

YOU: Inspectors will use the resources linked in paragraphs 180 and 181 when checking the school's revised documents. They will report to the DfE by sending the revised resources. Inspectors now report the relevant requirements are 'likely to be met' by the school. There is no inspection report for school based reviews.

NB: When there are significant or numerous omissions in a school's documents, the inspection team may decide to conduct a material change inspection or report the school's application to make the material change.

Emergency inspections of independent schools

Purpose of inspection and legal basis

245. The EBS was introduced in Ofsted to carry out an emergency inspection of an independent school for any reason. Normally, the commission will be as a result of a serious safeguarding concern, but it may be for other reasons such as a complaint about safeguarding or pupils' offering their safety at risk. An emergency inspection can also be commissioned when the DfE suspects that a school may have ceased operating.

246. Ofsted will carry out the emergency inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by section 38 of the Education and Skills Act 2008). It can be used as the main or sole inspection, and the purpose of the inspection determines the scope of the inspection. It may be a full inspection, a focused inspection or a partially repeated inspection, but an inspection can take place at any time.

247. The commission will specify which of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 the DfE requires Ofsted to check that the school complies with.

248. Depending on the nature of the DfE's concern about a school, the DfE may commission Ofsted to also consider whether the school meets other requirements that are not the independent school standards, such as:

- the statutory requirements of the early years foundation stage (EYFS) if the concerns early years provision for children aged 2 and above that is part of the school's provision
- paragraph 9 of Annex 1 to the Ofsted framework for EYFS, which relates to children's health and safety in early years provision
- the requirements of the Ofsted Early Years Register (EYR), under which schools have a duty to register with Ofsted if they provide childcare for children aged 2 and above, or childcare registered as a duty has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or equivalent have been imposed (see section 34 of the Childcare Act 2006).

Boarding or residential provision

251. If the concerns raised to the DfE concern a boarding or residential special school's boarding or residential provision, as well as the school, the DfE will commission Ofsted to also inspect the boarding or residential provision of the school as a boarding or residential provision.

254. When matters only concern the boarding/residential provision, the DfE will commission Ofsted to carry out a welfare-only emergency inspection.

255. Under section 87 of the Children Act 1989 and supplemented by the National Care Standards Commission (Miscellaneous) Regulations 2002, Ofsted can also carry out a welfare-only emergency inspection if boarding/residential provision is at any time.

256. Ofsted will carry out the boarding/residential provision aspect of the inspection under the national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools (related to the Ofsted as well).

Provision for students aged 16 and over

257. If the concerns raised to the DfE concern students aged 16 and over on roll, if the concerns raised to the DfE concern sixth form provision, inspection will also include an inspection and account of provision for these students. If they begin their studies before the age of 16, Ofsted will also include an inspection and account of their provision. Inspectors and lead inspectors will also check and report on whether the provision meets the DfE safeguarding requirements of the independent school standards, 78/84/120

When can an inspection take place?

258. Emergency inspections normally take place any time during term time. Depending on the nature of the DfE's concern, Ofsted can carry out emergency inspections may take place outside of term time, if the DfE's request.

Before the inspection

Clarification for schools

259. Ofsted will send a copy of the non-association independent school inspection handbook and set out requirements for inspection. This is in order to dispel myths about inspection that result in unnecessary workload in schools. It is intended to highlight specific practices that do not exist.

Inspectors' planning and preparation

260. Ofsted will carry out the inspection using evidence only and integrated inspections for the independent school standards, as required by the inspection framework and Ofsted's EIF. The inspection. The form contains the complaint, concern or other information that the DfE requires Ofsted to consider. Inspectors will also check particular flags that the DfE requires the inspection to have. The inspectors should review the CIF for completeness. If they think it needs to be amended or added to, they should discuss this with their regional Ofsted office, who can clear it with the DfE.

261. Inspectors will also consider any other available information, for example:

- all relevant information held by Ofsted, including 78/84/120
- the school's most recent inspection report, which may include boarding and early years inspection reports
- any reports including both independent inspections carried out since the last inspection and monitoring inspections
- the school's website
- inspections from Ofsted's Data, Ofsted's online survey for parents 78/84/120
- boarding inspectors' and boarding staff's replies for Ofsted's work in the early years and childcare registers, if the school has boarding provision
- information from the provision information form 78/84/120
- information on the school's website, including:
  - the presence of the safeguarding policy, as required by the independent school standards
  - the suitability of the safeguarding policy, taking into account current government requirements 78/84/120
  - when relevant, curriculum information (in the last inspection can lead to serious concerns about safeguarding, for example, if it includes, or fails to promote, preparation for and an appreciation of, life in modern Britain
- the school's census returns
- information from the school's registration status as recorded on the DfE's register (the 'Ofsted information sheet'), such as the number and age range of pupils, if the school is registered to take, the name of the proprietor and whether the school is currently operating 78/84/120
- the review of independent school inspections, inspectors' and Ofsted staff feedback
- information from any other accessible providers (which will be triangulated with other information, for example, information from the school's website, information provided to Ofsted in a school's self-assessment, and any previous inspection reports, or relevant information from recent inspections of these schools, such as any reported evidence of a school's failure to meet the standards 78/84/120
- any other information available or available from relevant organisations such as local authorities and the police

263. The lead inspector will also check compliance with relevant aspects of the independent school standards when that is possible before an inspection (such as in the case of a focused inspection, or a partially repeated inspection).

265. The lead inspector must have carried out the planning of the school's inspection by the end of the first day of the inspection. This should be in sufficient time for the inspectors and inspection team to be able to carry out the inspection effectively and to make decisions (including about the inspection's scope and the inspection's duration, as well as describing governance arrangements). Any discrepancies between 'fact information' and what the inspection team observed should be recorded on an evidence form or followed up on inspection.

266. If a registered school has relocated to, or is on, a site or a different local authority area, the DfE's concern is probable that the school will be treated as a new school. However, the DfE will change the school's registration number, and inspectors will need to be aware of the school's previous inspection history and the inspection history relating to the school's previous registration.

270. Other relevant information may be in the public domain and reported to the press. Inspectors will therefore carry out a thorough search of the school's name and its proprietor's name, and any other information they find, such as any reported evidence of a school's failure to meet the standards 78/84/120.

271. The lead inspector will consider whether the school's failure to meet those standards is likely to be a serious breach of the standards for continued registration.

272. If the inspection team has commissioned due to a complaint received by the DfE, inspectors will not reveal to the school the name of the complainant.

The start of the on-site inspection

273. The lead inspector should meet briefly with the headteacher and the proprietor at the beginning of the inspection to:

- validate the reason for the inspection that the inspector explained on their arrival
- explain the inspection's purpose and scope
- confirm arrangements for meeting with representatives of school and other people responsible for the governance of the proposed school and with staff
- confirm arrangements for the inspection team to see the school's premises, the main registered premises, for example early years or post 16 provision, if the school separately provides. Inspectors must establish the address of each of the premises, including the address of any premises that are not the main registered premises
- confirm arrangements for providing feedback at the end of the inspection
- request information about staff absence and other practical issues
- check whether the school is aware that they should not observe or interview teachers, students or other people during the inspection
- ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from observations of teaching and learning, whether joint or phase, must not be used to make judgements about capability/competency proceedings or for the purposes of performance management
- ensure that the headteacher is aware that inspectors access to its policy documents and records (see paragraph 274)

274. The lead inspector will also inform the school:

- of Ofsted's privacy notice
- that inspectors will use a range of technology to gather evidence electronically, including photos and videos
- that inspectors may request or take photographic evidence, for example of pupils' work and displays, but that inspectors will not take photographs of pupils

275. If there is more than one inspector, a short team meeting should take place to clarify inspection activities and individual roles and responsibilities.

Information that schools must provide by the start of the inspection

279. The lead inspector will confirm which school documents are required for the inspection. The DfE and Ofsted are also required to comply with the Independent School Standards, 78/84/120

- the policies and other documents required by the independent school standards
- the single central register of the SCR
- the school timetable, current staff list (indicating newly qualified teachers) and times when they are in school
- class lists showing pupils' names and year groups
- the school's most recently published information/prospectus to normal school routines during the inspection
- records and analysis of accessibility, pupils taken off roll, incidents of poor behaviour and bullying and pupil absence
- records and analysis of sexual harassment or sexual violence
- records of bullying, discriminatory and prejudiced behaviour, either directly or indirectly relating to sexual harassment and sexual violence, including homophobic, bullying, use of derogatory language and racist incidents
- a list of referrals made to the designated person for safeguarding in the school and/or to children's social care, including referrals to the local authority, Prevent and the police
- a list of all pupils who have open cases with children's services/social care and the nature of their cases
- activities attendance records for all groups of pupils
- documented evidence of the work of the proprietor and/or those responsible for governance and their activities
- a summary of any school self-evaluation
- the school's most recent inspection report, including any planning that sets out the longer-term plans for the school, such as the school's strategic vision and other practical information
- access to staff, if needed, so the inspectors can connect to the internet

Gathering and recording evidence

280. Inspectors will gather evidence as required in the DfE's commissioning form. They will present agreed evidence to Ofsted and the DfE inspectors.

281. The inspectors will gather evidence about whether the school meets the independent school standards and other requirements, and the relevant statutory standards in the case of welfare-only and integrated inspections, that relate to the issues that triggered commission of the inspection.

282. Inspectors will be rigorous in their pursuit of the issues and will ask to see any documents that they need to see to inform judgements. 78/84/120

283. Although the purpose of the inspection is not to review the specific issue that triggered commission of the inspection, the issue is used as a line of enquiry. The inspection team will use it to see if it is a symptom of a wider failure to meet the standards with the issue, whether the issue is resolved, and whether it is a one-off incident or represents a whole-school issue. This is in order to report to the DfE on, for example, whether the school deals with the matter that triggered commission of the inspection.

286. When the underlying reasons for the emergency inspection relate to safeguarding matters, inspectors will investigate the actual case, but will not investigate the school's policies and processes and their implementation as appropriate to meet the requirements of the independent school standards 78/84/120

287. The lead inspector will inform the school that they will be in touch with the school under to judge whether the school meets paragraph 34(2) of the independent school standards, which concerns the quality of leadership and management.

288. In judging whether the school meets the standards, inspectors will refer to the:

- non-statutory DfE guidance, The independent school standards: guidance for independent schools, Ofsted Inspectors will document in non-statutory. its aims are to:
- provide supplementary information or best practice in compliance with the standards
- give additional detail in some areas for which questions are sometimes raised by schools
- non-statutory DfE guidance, Independent school inspection handbook
- guidance in part of the non-association independent school inspection handbook

294. If appropriate, inspectors may also refer to the following Ofsted guidance:

- Inspecting the quality of the curriculum, non-statutory guidance
- Safeguarding by-law, implications for the inspection of school sports educational offsites

Provision for students aged 16 and over

297. If the school has students on its roll who are aged 16 and over on roll, inspectors will also inspect and take account of provision for these students if they begin their studies before the age of 16. However, inspectors will also report on whether safeguarding and other standards, including, for example, inspectors report on whether safeguarding

Checking standards beyond the scope of the DfE's commission

298. Although the purpose of the inspection is not to review the specific issue that triggered commission of the inspection, the issue is used as a line of enquiry. The inspection team will use it to see if it is a symptom of a wider failure to meet the standards with the issue, whether the issue is resolved, and whether it is a one-off incident or represents a whole-school issue. This is in order to report to the DfE on, for example, whether the school deals with the matter that triggered commission of the inspection.

299. When the underlying reasons for the emergency inspection relate to safeguarding matters, inspectors will investigate the actual case, but will not investigate the school's policies and processes and their implementation as appropriate to meet the requirements of the independent school standards 78/84/120

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- Safeguarding by-law, implications for the inspection of school sports educational offsites

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309. When the underlying reasons for the emergency inspection relate to safeguarding matters, inspectors will investigate the actual case, but will not investigate the school's policies and processes and their implementation as appropriate to meet the requirements of the independent school standards 78/84/120

310. The lead inspector will inform the school that they will be in touch with the school under to judge whether the school meets paragraph 34(2) of the independent school standards, which concerns the quality of leadership and management.

311. In judging whether the school meets the standards, inspectors will refer to the:

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Quality assurance and complaints

Quality assurance

326. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector must ensure that inspectors are carried out in accordance with the principles of inspection and the relevant guidance.

327. Ofsted will check the quality of inspections through a range of formal processes and using Ofsted's EIF, such as monitoring inspections and quality assurance inspections. We may also evaluate the quality of an inspection evidence base. The lead inspector will be responsible for giving team inspectors feedback about the quality of their work and their contribution.

330. All schools are invited to take part in a voluntary post-inspection survey in order to contribute to inspection development.

Handling concerns and complaints

331. The great majority of our work is carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns do arise during the inspection, they should be raised with the lead inspector as soon as possible. Ofsted will try to resolve any concerns or complaints, which may be concerns raised, and action taken, will be recorded in the inspection report.

332. If it is not possible to resolve concerns during the inspection or through Ofsted's inspectors, it is expected that the school will raise the matter with Ofsted through a formal complaint on receipt of the final report. The lead inspector will ensure that the school is aware of the complaints procedure and how to make a complaint to Ofsted.

Inspection evidence

334. The evidence base for the inspection must be retained in line with Ofsted's retention and disposal policy. This is normally for 6 years from when the report is published. We may decide that retaining it for longer is warranted for research purposes.

Inspection

Days education inspection and inspection team members

335. Emergency inspections normally last one day, although 'integrated' and 'welfare-only' inspections may last longer than one day. The lead inspector will make a judgement on the day so that the school can inspect to inspection is able to inspect the school's provision during an evening.

337. The inspection will usually be carried out by one inspector. In 'integrated' inspections of boarding and residential special schools, there will normally also be one inspector for the school and one inspector for the boarding/residential provision. In emergency inspections, for example, the inspection, it needs to carry out.

339. There is no requirement to display inspectors of a particular faith to inspect a school of that faith. The DfE will request that the inspection team be asked to consider a school's ethos or religious character.

340. For details of what happens when an interruption prior the inspection, refer to paragraphs 374-377

Arrival time on the day of inspection

342. On the day of the inspection, inspectors will arrive before 8am.

Arrival at the school

346. In the unlikely event that the inspector arrives at the school and it appears to be closed, the inspector will try to contact a person from the registered body and the appropriate personnel at the DfE.

347. On arrival at the school, the lead inspector will aim to speak to the headteacher, proprietor, personnel responsible for the day-to-day running of the school, a representative of the proprietor and the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector will arrange to carry out an emergency inspection at the commission of the DfE.

348. The lead inspector should explain to the school that they will carry out their work as if the school's provision is under to report to the DfE whether the school meets the independent school standards and other requirements, and the relevant statutory standards, minimum standards for boarding or residential provision, if relevant. In the independent schools must comply with the standards for continued registration.

349. If the inspection team has commissioned due to a complaint received by the DfE, inspectors will not reveal to the school the name of the complainant.

The start of the on-site inspection

350. The lead inspector should meet briefly with the headteacher and the proprietor at the beginning of the inspection to:

- validate the reason for the inspection that the inspector explained on their arrival
- explain the inspection's purpose and scope
- confirm arrangements for meeting with representatives of school and other people responsible for the governance of the proposed school and with staff
- confirm arrangements for the inspection team to see the school's premises, the main registered premises, for example early years or post 16 provision, if the school separately provides. Inspectors must establish the address of each of the premises, including the address of any premises that are not the main registered premises
- confirm arrangements for providing feedback at the end of the inspection
- request information about absence and other practical issues
- check whether the school is aware that they should not observe or interview teachers, students or other people during the inspection
- ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from observations of teaching and learning, whether joint or phase, must not be used to make judgements about capability/competency proceedings or for the purposes of performance management
- ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted inspectors access to its policy documents and records (see paragraph 354)

354. The lead inspector will also inform the school:

- of Ofsted's privacy notice
- that inspectors will use a range of technology to gather evidence electronically, including photos and videos
- that inspectors may request or take photographic evidence, for example of pupils' work and displays, but that inspectors will not take photographs of pupils

355. If there is more than one inspector, a short team meeting should take place to clarify inspection activities and individual roles and responsibilities.

Information that schools must provide by the start of the inspection

357. The lead inspector will confirm which school documents are required for the inspection. The DfE and Ofsted are also required to comply with the Independent School Standards, 78/84/120

- the policies and other documents required by the independent school standards
- the single central register of the SCR
- the school timetable, current staff list (indicating newly qualified teachers) and times when they are in school
- class lists showing pupils' names and year groups
- the school's most recently published information/prospectus to normal school routines during the inspection
- records and analysis of accessibility, pupils taken off roll, incidents of poor behaviour and bullying and pupil absence
- records and analysis of sexual harassment or sexual violence
- records of bullying, discriminatory and prejudiced behaviour, either directly or indirectly relating to sexual harassment and sexual violence, including homophobic bullying, use of derogatory language and racist incidents
- a list of referrals made to the designated person for safeguarding in the school and/or to children's social care, including referrals to the local authority, Prevent and the police
- a list of all pupils who have open cases with children's services/social care and the nature of their cases
- activities attendance records for all groups of pupils
- documented evidence of the work of the proprietor and/or those responsible for governance and their activities
- a summary of any school self-evaluation
- the school's most recent inspection report, including any planning that sets out the longer-term plans for the school, such as the school's strategic vision and other practical information
- access to staff, if needed, so the inspectors can connect to the internet

Gathering and recording evidence

358. The inspectors will gather evidence as required in the DfE's commissioning form. They will present agreed evidence to Ofsted and the DfE inspectors.

359. The inspectors will gather evidence about whether the school meets the independent school standards and other requirements, and the relevant statutory standards in the case of welfare-only and integrated inspections, that relate to the issues that triggered commission of the inspection.

360. Inspectors will be rigorous in their pursuit of the issues and will ask to see any documents that they need to see to inform judgements. 78/84/120

361. Although the purpose of the inspection is not to review the specific issue that triggered commission of the inspection, the issue is used as a line of enquiry. The inspection team will use it to see if it is a symptom of a wider failure to meet the standards with the issue, whether the issue is resolved, and whether it is a one-off incident or represents a whole-school issue. This is in order to report to the DfE on, for example, whether the school deals with the matter that triggered commission of the inspection.

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367. If appropriate, inspectors may also refer to the following Ofsted guidance:

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457. If appropriate, inspectors may also refer to the following Ofsted guidance:

- Inspecting the quality

The DfE's decision on next steps

263. If the school was judged to not meet the independent school standards that were checked during the inspection, the DfE, as registration authority for independent schools, will consider what, if any, further action it should take.

264. In addition, if the school was a direct grant or participating all but standard inspection, the DfE may decide to bring forward the school's next standard inspection to within 28 calendar days of the inspection if it considers that the school may be failing to meet DfE standards. At the school's next standard inspection, the inspectors will then be required to make a judgement on the standards in a special or participating school, as defined in section 5 of the Education Act 2005. If the school is judged to be inadequate, the DfE may decide to no longer demonstrating the characteristics of a special or participating school, as defined in section 5 of the Education Act 2005. In such circumstances, the school would no longer be a direct grant or participating school, and the DfE would take regulatory action for the school improve.

265. If the school was judged to meet the standards that were checked during the inspection, there is normally no further action following the inspection. The emergency inspection report will be published on the school's profile on the Ofsted website. The inspection 'clock' for standard inspection of independent schools will be set to the non-association independent school inspection handbook.

Progress monitoring inspections to independent schools

Purpose of inspection and lay inspection

Introduction

266. The Education (Independent Schools) (Form of Inspection and Inspection Reports) (England) Regulations 2014, as amended by the Education (Independent Schools Inspection Reports) (Amendment) Regulations 2021, provide for a progress monitoring inspection to be carried out where the DfE has reasonable grounds to consider that the school is not complying with a statutory notice under section 11 of the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the Independent School Standards Regulations') or is in breach of a school improvement notice.

267. The DfE requires the school's action plan to set out the steps the school proposes to take to address the concerns and to meet the unmet independent school standards, national minimum standards and other requirements. The action plan is required to be in a form and contain such information as the Secretary of State for Education specifies in a notice ("the prescribed notice") (see section 11(1) of the Education Act 2005).

268. The DfE normally commissions Ofsted to evaluate the school's action plan (see section 11(2) of the Education Act 2005). Evaluating independent schools' action plans is a Ofsted function. Whether or not an evaluation has been carried out, the DfE will either approve (with or without conditions) or reject the action plan, and inform the school and Ofsted of its decision.

269. Following this, the DfE will normally commission Ofsted to carry out a progress monitoring inspection. The inspection will normally be on a stand-by basis.

'Requires improvement' schools and schools with one significant regulatory failure

270. If the school has relatively minor regulatory breaches, the DfE may only require the school to make a short-term plan, and may also commission Ofsted to evaluate the action plan and to carry out a progress monitoring inspection.

Purpose of inspection

274. The purpose of the progress monitoring inspection is to check and report to the DfE on the following matters:

- the previously unmet independent school standards, national minimum standards and other requirements (where the previous inspection was any type of additional inspection, or a compliance inspection)
- the school's implementation of the previous inspection (where the previous inspection was a full inspection)

275. When the DfE has received the school's proposal or action plan, the DfE will normally ask Ofsted to carry out an evaluation of the action plan approved by the DfE, including any recommendations, and to subsequently remind the school and Ofsted of the action plan.

276. When the DfE has rejected the school's action plan, at the start of the inspection Ofsted will ask the school to resubmit a revised action plan to the DfE.

Legal basis

277. Ofsted will carry out the progress monitoring inspection under section 11(4) and (5) of the Education and Skills Act 2008 (section 11).

Recording or transcribed provision

278. If the previous inspection of a boarding or residential special school identified an unmet standard, Ofsted will also check the implementation of the NMS. Ofsted and the DfE will commission an 'integrated' progress monitoring inspection of the school and boarding provision (see section 11).

279. If the unmet standards identified at the previous inspection only relate to the boarding/residential provision, the DfE will commission Ofsted to carry out a section only progress monitoring inspection.

280. In both cases, the inspection the boarding/residential provision will check whether:

- the previously or not national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools (NMS) are met
- the previously or not evaluated independent school standards (ISS) that were addressed (when the previous inspection was a standard inspection, or the school is subject to a second or subsequent progress monitoring inspection)

Provision for students aged 16 and over

281. An independent school may have students aged 16 and over on roll. If the unmet standards identified at the previous inspection only relate to students aged 16 and over, Ofsted will carry out a section only progress monitoring inspection of the school. However, because those students are essentially adults studying alongside children, Ofsted will also check the school's safeguarding arrangements for students aged 16 and over (safeguarding requirements of the independent school standards, paragraph 7).

When can an inspection take place?

282. Progress monitoring inspections normally take place anytime during term time.

Before the inspection

Clarification for schools

283. Ofsted will send a copy of the non-association independent school inspection handbook and set out requirements for inspection. This is in order to dispel rumours about inspection that can result in anxiety unnecessary anxiety in schools. It is intended to highlight specific practices that do not apply.

Inspectors' planning and preparation

284. Ofsted's inspectors will carry out the pre-inspection analysis and integrated inspections the best small and proportionate way, as agreed by the inspection lead and the DfE's ICT for the inspection. When appropriate, the form will contain the version of the school's website, the DfE's ICT for the inspection, the school's last inspection report and any correspondence relevant to the school's last inspection. It will also ask the school to confirm that the DfE requires the inspection to have. The lead inspector should review the ICT for the inspection, the school's last inspection report and any other relevant information with the regional director (RD), who can assist with the DfE.

285. Inspectors will also consider any other available information, for example:

- all relevant information held by Ofsted, for example:
  - the unmet standards and other requirements and any qualitative weaknesses reported in the previous inspection report
  - inspection reports on the school, which may include boarding and early years provision
  - any reports including both additional inspections carried out since the last inspection report. In particular, emergency inspections
  - the school's responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents (Parent view)
  - boarding pupils' and boarding staff's replies to Ofsted's pupil online survey
  - information from the provider information portal (PIP)
- information from the DfE's registration, for example:
  - the school's compliance notices, as required by the independent school standards (section 11)
  - the suitability of the safeguarding policy, taking into account current government guidance
  - when relevant, confirmation that the deed inspection of the school's premises and the breadth and balance of the school's curriculum and whether it is likely to be compliant with the DfE's standards for the school's premises
  - any complaints from parents or members of the public that the DfE has decided to consider as part of the inspection
  - the school's last inspection report
- information on the school's registration status as recorded on the DfE's register. Get information about schools, such as the number and age range of pupils that the school is registered for, the school's type of the proprietor and whether the school is 'section 40 approved'[section 40]
- the number of boarding pupils, classified for Student and Child Student visas (information about the number of boarding pupils should be based on the most recent evidence gathered during the inspection). This may include independent school's policy provision or, if the proposed school is part of a chain of independent schools, any information about the school's parent company, which may be one of the most recent evidence about the suitability of the proprietor.
- any other information publicly available or available from recent stakeholders such as local authorities and the press

286. The lead inspector will also check compliance with relevant aspects of the independent school standards, national minimum standards and other requirements (such as relation to part of the school's 'provision of information').

287. The lead inspector must find out the identity of the school's proprietor before the inspection starts. This can be confirmed by asking the school's senior leadership team or the current 'Get information about schools' record for the school, the school's last inspection report, the school's website, the DfE's ICT for the inspection, or the school's 'section 40 approval'[section 40]. Therefore, the lead inspector will ask the inspection history relating to the school's previous inspection.

288. Other relevant information may be in the school's prospectus and reported in the press. Inspectors will therefore carry out a brief internet search as part of their pre-inspection analysis. Inspectors will also check the school's website, the DfE's ICT for the inspection, parents that may need to be followed up during inspection (section 11).

289. The lead inspector will establish whether the school is likely to operate from more than one site. If the school does, the lead inspector will decide which sites, if any, should be the most relevant for the inspection. They will also establish the nature of the SEND provision, and any provision, before and/or after school or in holiday clubs (let and managed directly by the school), particularly if these take 2 to 8 year-olds.

290. In all progress monitoring inspections the lead inspector may also liaise with the DfE's registration team to check the school's registration status and any information that may be relevant to the inspection.

291. In integrated inspections, contact between the education and social care regulatory inspectors takes place through the chief of the inspection.

Notification of inspection

292. All progress monitoring inspections are carried out at no notice, although the school will be aware that an inspection is to take place to check progress. Once the inspection is underway, the DfE will send a formal notification of the inspection to the school (section 11).

Requests for deferral or cancellation

294. Any requests for a deferral will be assessed by Ofsted's relevant regional director who will decide whether the request can be granted.

The inspection

Days allocated to inspection and inspection team members

295. Progress monitoring inspections do not normally last longer than one day, although 'integrated' and 'section only' progress monitoring inspections of boarding provision may last longer than one day. The DfE's ICT for the inspection will normally specify the number of days allocated to the inspection during the inspection during the inspection.

296. The inspection will usually be carried out by one inspector. A 'integrated' inspection of a boarding or residential special school will normally be carried out by a team of two inspectors. These inspectors may be accompanied by inspectors in training or monitoring inspectors. For preparation, the inspection, travelling and writing.

297. There is no requirement to deploy inspectors of particular kind for every school, or of the same faith. It would be unusual for an inspection team of a faith school to consist entirely of inspectors of that faith.

298. For details of what happens when an inspector joins the inspection, refer to paragraphs 299-302.

Arrival time on the first day of inspection

299. On the first day of the inspection, inspectors will not arrive before 8am.

Arrival at the school

300. In the one week that the inspector arrives at the school and it appears to be no longer operating, the inspector will seek advice from the regional duty desk and the independent schools' inspection team.

301. On arrival, the lead inspector (or lead social care regulatory inspector, for integrated inspections) will explain to the school that they will inspect part-time (see section 11(2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008). The lead inspector will also explain to the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, the national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools that were subject to the inspection, and the DfE's ICT for the inspection. The lead inspector will also explain the qualitative evaluation framework of the previous inspection. All independent schools must comply with the standards for continued registration.

The start of the on-site inspection

302. The lead inspector should meet briefly with the headteacher and the proprietor at the beginning of the inspection to:

- introduce any team inspectors and inspectors
- explain the purpose and the main considerations of those who are responsible for the governance of the school and staff
- confirm whether any pupils at the school are educated at a site other than at the school (including any pupils who are being educated by their parents or other providers on separate premises. Inspectors must establish the address of each such premises, record this in their evidence base and report this in the relevant regional Senior HMI (RSHMI) inspection report (section 11(2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008)
- request information about all teachers and other staff employed at the school
- check whether there are reasons why there should not observe certain teachers, for example if one teacher is subject to a disciplinary procedure
- ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from observations of teaching and learning may be used to inform judgements about the school's effectiveness in capacity for continuing improvement or for the quality of education provided to pupils
- establish how the school will use the pupil inspector access to its policy documents (for more information see section 11)

303. The lead inspector will also inform the school:

- that Ofsted's inspection is 'no-notice'
- that inspectors will use a range of technology to gather evidence electronically, including mobile devices, tablets and laptops
- that inspectors will use a range of methods to gather evidence, for example of pupils' work and displays, lesson observations and other activities and pupils' views

304. When there is more than one inspector, a short team meeting should take place to clarify inspection activities and individual roles and responsibilities.

Information that schools must provide by the start of the inspection

305. The lead inspector will confirm which school documents are required for the inspection. The DfE's ICT for the inspection will normally specify the documents requested in school standards. Please refer to the list in paragraph 307.

Gathering and recording evidence

306. Inspectors will gather evidence about whether the school now meets the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools. Inspectors will also check the school's compliance with the school's ongoing compliance with independent school standards. The school's other metrics identified in the report from the previous inspection.

307. Inspectors will follow the issues raised in the DfE's commissioning form. They will also follow up any other issues that arise during the inspection.

308. If the DfE has approved the school's action plan, inspectors will check that all proposed actions are being implemented. Inspectors will also check the impact of the action plan.

309. Inspectors will be rigorous in their evidence gathering and will ask to see any documents, records or other information necessary. Section 11

310. The lead inspector activities will be determined by the pre-inspection analysis and will include, as appropriate:

- may talk to staff and pupils (see Inspecting safety in early education 2)
- seek opportunities where possible to test their emerging judgements and corroborate their conclusions
- ask for, and take into account, the qualifying any location of site, and investigate provisions for approaching staff and safeguarding
- check whether there are reasons why they should not observe certain teachers, for example if one teacher is subject to a disciplinary procedure
- ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from observations of teaching and learning may be used to inform judgements about the school's effectiveness in capacity for continuing improvement or for the quality of education provided to pupils
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311. The lead inspector will also inform the school:

- that Ofsted's inspection is 'no-notice'
- that inspectors will use a range of technology to gather evidence electronically, including mobile devices, tablets and laptops
- that inspectors will use a range of methods to gather evidence, for example of pupils' work and displays, lesson observations and other activities and pupils' views

312. When there is more than one inspector, a short team meeting should take place to clarify inspection activities and individual roles and responsibilities.

Information that schools must provide by the start of the inspection

313. The lead inspector will confirm which school documents are required for the inspection. The DfE's ICT for the inspection will normally specify the documents requested in school standards. Please refer to the list in paragraph 315.

Gathering and recording evidence

314. Inspectors will gather evidence about whether the school now meets the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools. Inspectors will also check the school's compliance with the school's ongoing independent school standards. The school's other metrics identified in the report from the previous inspection.

315. Inspectors will follow the issues raised in the DfE's commissioning form. They will also follow up any other issues that arise during the inspection.

316. If the DfE has approved the school's action plan, inspectors will check that all proposed actions are being implemented. Inspectors will also check the impact of the action plan.

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- that inspectors will use a range of technology to gather evidence electronically, including mobile devices, tablets and laptops
- that inspectors will use a range of methods to gather evidence, for example of pupils' work and displays, lesson observations and other activities and pupils' views

320. When there is more than one inspector, a short team meeting should take place to clarify inspection activities and individual roles and responsibilities.

Information that schools must provide by the start of the inspection

321. The lead inspector will confirm which school documents are required for the inspection. The DfE's ICT for the inspection will normally specify the documents requested in school standards. Please refer to the list in paragraph 323.

Gathering and recording evidence

322. Inspectors will gather evidence about whether the school now meets the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools. Inspectors will also check the school's compliance with the school's ongoing independent school standards. The school's other metrics identified in the report from the previous inspection.

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- ask for, and take into account, the qualifying any location of site, and investigate provisions for approaching staff and safeguarding
- check whether there are reasons why they should not observe certain teachers, for example if one teacher is subject to a disciplinary procedure
- ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from observations of teaching and learning may be used to inform judgements about the school's effectiveness in capacity for continuing improvement or for the quality of education provided to pupils
- establish how the school will use the pupil inspector access to its policy documents (for more information see section 11)

383. The lead inspector will also inform the school:

- that Ofsted's inspection is 'no-notice'
- that inspectors will use a range of technology to gather evidence electronically, including mobile devices, tablets and laptops
- that inspectors will use a range of methods to gather evidence, for example of pupils' work and displays, lesson observations and other activities and pupils' views

384. When there is more than one inspector, a short team meeting should take place to clarify inspection activities and individual roles and responsibilities.

Information that schools must provide by the start of the inspection

385. The lead inspector will confirm which school documents are required for the inspection. The DfE's ICT for the inspection will normally specify the documents requested in school standards. Please refer to the list in paragraph 387.

Gathering and recording evidence

386. Inspectors will gather evidence about whether the school now meets the independent school standards and the national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools. Inspectors will also check the school's compliance with the school's ongoing independent school standards. The school's other metrics identified in the report from the previous inspection.

387. Inspectors will follow the issues raised in the DfE's commissioning form. They will also follow up any other issues that arise during the inspection.

388. If the DfE has approved the school's action plan, inspectors will check that all proposed actions are being implemented. Inspectors will also check the impact of the action plan.

389. Inspectors will be rigorous in their evidence gathering and will ask to see any documents, records or other information necessary. Section 11

390. The lead inspector activities will be determined by the pre-inspection analysis and will include, as appropriate:

- may talk to staff and pupils (see Inspecting safety in early education 2)
- seek opportunities where possible to test their emerging judgements and corroborate their conclusions
- ask for, and take into account, the qualifying any location of site, and investigate provisions for approaching staff and safeguarding
- check whether there are reasons why they should not observe certain teachers, for example if one teacher is subject to a disciplinary procedure
- ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from observations of teaching and learning may be used to inform judgements about the school's effectiveness in capacity for continuing improvement or for the quality of education provided to pupils
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Information that schools must provide by the start of the inspection

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Gathering and recording evidence

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Gathering and recording evidence

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422. The l

other member of staff employed at the school is a management capacity, these will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Inspectors will consider whether the person, or their job, as the appropriate authority. This information is particularly important when it may have any bearing on the suitability of a person to participate in the management of an independent school. For example, if a person is subject to a prohibition from teaching, SMC officers and proprietors, and the inspection team concludes that the person's conduct is so inappropriate as to make them unsuitable to take part in the management of an independent school.

The inspection evidence base

The evidence base for the inspection must be retained in line with Ofsted's guidance and proprietor advice. This is including but is not limited to, the evidence published. We may decide that returning to the longer is warranted for research purposes.

Quality assurance and complaints

Quality assurance

310. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector must ensure that inspections and evaluations of school policies are carried out in accordance with the principles of inspection and the code of conduct.

300. We monitor the quality of inspections through a range of formal processes and HMI Ofsted's HMI visits and proprietor or monitor remotely to quality ensure inspection. We may also evaluate the quality of the inspection evidence base. The lead inspector will be responsible for ensuring that the inspection is conducted in line with the code of conduct.

301. All schools are invited to take part in a voluntary post-inspection survey in order to contribute to improvement.

Handling concerns and complaints

302. The great majority of our work is carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns do arise, we will deal with them in a professional way and with the confidence of schools. It is important that concerns are raised before the inspection is completed. Any concerns raised, and action taken, will be recorded in the inspection evidence.

303. If it is not possible to resolve concerns during the inspection or through proprietor or monitor remotely, the lead inspector will offer to arrange for a formal complaint or record of the meeting. The lead inspector will also ensure that the school is informed that it is able to make a formal complaint and that information about how to complain is available on GOV.UK.

The DfE's decision on next steps

344. If the school was judged to not meet the independent school standards that were checked during the inspection, the DfE, as registration authority for independent schools, will decide any action to take in respect of this.

345. If the school was judged to meet the standards that were checked during the inspection, the DfE may take to the school to confirm that there will be no further action in relation to the inspection.

346. In addition, if the school was judged to meet requirements of standards, or to just standard inspection, the DfE may decide to bring forward the school's next standard inspection, or to carry out a full inspection, if it considers that there is a risk that the standards may not be met.

347. As the school has been judged to meet the set of standards that it previously failed, it may no longer be maintaining the characteristics of a school. Its registered independent status is inadequate, as defined by the DfE. By carrying out a standard inspection, the DfE will be able to confirm that the school is now in a position to be the school may be judged compliant in the inspection.

348. The standard inspection may be brought forward if the lead inspector of the progress monitoring inspection judges that all of the following apply:

- all the previously unmet standards are now being met accurately and consistently
- the school is able to demonstrate that it is capable of meeting all of the standards (persistently and independently) on a standard inspection
- any qualitative issues identified at the previous inspection have been rectified and are embedded so that the school is able to reasonably expect to maintain the standards
- the school's curriculum development is at a stage where it is likely to be judged 'focusing on plan' the DfE

349. Sometimes, a school may have been judged to meet most of the previously unmet standards, but there may still be some that are not met. In such cases, the lead inspector will take into account the qualitative impact on the quality of the school's policies. Consequently, the overall outcome of the inspection is that the school does not meet the standards checked during the inspection.

350. In these cases, after the progress monitoring inspection is complete (see Section 9 of the Independent School Inspections Handbook), the lead inspector discussed a particular, or detailed based overview, rather than commissioning another inspection, with the DfE and the proprietor.

351. Inspectors will use the resources linked in paragraphs 352 and 356 when choosing the school's revised standards. The inspector will write a letter to the proprietor after the inspection report setting out whether the sections now meet the relevant standards. The letter will be sent to the DfE and will be published on the inspection's website, and paragraphs 352-356 apply.

353. When there are significant or numerous omissions in a proposed school's documents, the DfE may commission another on-site progress monitoring inspection.

Evaluating independent schools' action plans

Purpose of evaluation

Introduction

373. All independent schools must comply with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 as amended regulations.

374. If a school has been judged at any standard or additional inspection to not comply with the relevant standards, the proprietor of the school is required to prepare and submit to the proprietor to produce an action plan to set out the action they intend to take to rectify the failures. These might include:

- one or more of the independent school standards
- one or more of the national minimum standards for boarding or residential special schools
- the educational requirements of the early years foundation stage (the EYFS) where concerns early years provision, which is part of the school registration, for children aged from birth to 5 years old
- paragraph 5 of Annex 5 of the Equality Act 2010, which relates to schools that have an accessibility plan in place, and/or
- the requirements of the Prevent Duty Guidance Group 3c (2015), under which schools are required to ensure that their staff understand the risks that extremism and radicalisation pose to their school and to ensure that staff know how to refer children and young people who may be at risk of being drawn into terrorism or have been identified as at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

Action plans for schools with relatively minor regulatory failures

376. If the school has relatively minor regulatory failures (and has been judged inadequate in one or more of the independent school standards), the DfE will normally write to the proprietor of the school after the inspection to request that the school submits a statutory action plan (section 114 of the Education and Skills Act 2008). The DfE notice sets out the unmet standards and requires the proprietor to submit a statutory action plan to address the identified shortcomings.

377. If a statutory notice has been served, section 114(6) of the Education and Skills Act 2008 states that an action plan must clearly lighten the action proposed by the notice to rectify any shortcomings and the time in the timescale within which the action will be taken.

The DfE's expectations for school action plans

378. The DfE provides schools with guidance and a prescribed template for proprietors to use.

379. The DfE expects a school's action plan to address each and all shortcomings. Schools will have been informed of the evidence that caused the inspectors to judge the school to be inadequate in the inspection report. Inspectors will, as part of the inspection, and subsequent to the inspection report, write to the proprietor of the school the DfE's school to prepare an action plan.

Purpose of Ofsted's evaluation of a statutory or non-statutory action plan

380. Ofsted's purpose in evaluating a school's statutory or non-statutory action plan, the DfE may commission Ofsted to evaluate the action plan.

381. The purpose of the evaluation is for Ofsted to advise the DfE whether the plan is sufficient to address the identified shortcomings in the inspection report. The DfE uses an evaluation of whether the inspectors that the school proposes to take and likely to meet that the school will meet the set standards and/or requirements when the actions have been implemented.

The DfE's response to Ofsted's evaluation of a school action plan

382. Section 114(6) of the Education and Skills Act 2008 sets out that the DfE may do one of the following in response to a statutory action plan:

- approve
- approve with modifications
- reject

383. In the case of non-statutory action plan, the DfE may:

- accept it and set the school back into the normal inspection cycle
- accept it and impose a progress monitoring inspection
- reject it and serve a statutory notice requiring a revised action plan
- reject it and request a further non-statutory action plan

Evaluating the action plan and writing the report

Inspectors carrying out the evaluation

384. Normally, one inspector will carry out the evaluation of a school's action plan. This will be carried out by:

- a social care regulatory inspector, if the action plan only concerns non-compliance with the requirements of the EYFS or the national minimum standards for boarding
- one of Her Majesty's Inspectors or an Ofsted Inspector, if the action plan is made by the school
- a social care regulatory inspector and one of Her Majesty's Inspectors or an Ofsted Inspector, if there are failures that relate to the school and boarding/residential provision, this is an 'integrated' evaluation

Carrying out the evaluation

385. Inspectors will carry out the evaluation in line with any particular requirements specified by the DfE. The inspector will use the school's action plan to decide whether it is sufficient to address the shortcomings that the school has to comply with the DfE to demonstrate that it has implemented actions.

386. Inspectors will evaluate the action plan by assessing the following:

- completeness:
  - whether the plan includes every standard and requirement that was judged to be unmet at the previous inspection, with clear reference to the substance of the relevant standard or requirement. Inspectors will check that the relevant standards and any other requirements that were judged to be unmet
  - whether the plan includes actions for meeting every unmet standard and requirement, or if it omits any of the standards or requirements that the previous inspection – that is, the evidence that the inspectors found when the inspector to judge that each standard or requirement is not being met
  - whether the plan includes a date for each action
  - whether each action has measurable success criteria by which whether it brings success in meeting the unmet standard or requirement
- quality:
  - the specificity of each action – how clearly defined each action is
  - how robust each action is
  - the appropriateness of each action: how each proposed action will address the evidence from the previous inspection which caused the inspector to judge that the school was inadequate in the inspection report. Does the action will have a direct or sufficient improvement to enable the school to meet the set standard or requirement
  - the practicality of achieving each action by the dates shown – whether the timescale is realistic
  - the relevance and adequacy of the success criteria for each action, and whether they are clearly stated
  - the quality of the evidence recorded, or provided, for any action that the plan states that the school has already completed

387. When evaluating action plans, inspectors may refer to the DfE's guidance documents:

- Independent school action plans
- Independent school inspection: and the resources to which this document refers
- The independent school standards, guidance for independent schools. Although this document is non-binding, its aims are to:
  - set out the DfE's understanding of the standards
  - provide guidance on how schools can demonstrate compliance in complying with the standards
  - give additional clarity in some areas for which questions are commonly raised by schools

388. Normally, no evidence forms are used in the course of an evaluation. The evaluation will be carried out directly in the independent school evaluation of action plan report.

After the evaluation

Report

389. The lead inspector is responsible for writing the report. The lead of the report should explain the judgements and reflect the evidence.

390. Reports will be quality assured before we send them to the DfE. We will normally send the final version of the report by the DfE within 20 working days after the evaluation.

391. The DfE may, at its discretion, send the report to the school.

Evidence base

392. There is no evidence base for an evaluation of an action plan, as the inspector will write the report while carrying out the evaluation.

Quality assurance and complaints

393. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector must ensure that inspections and evaluations of action plans are carried out in accordance with the principles of inspection and the code of conduct.

394. We monitor the quality of inspections and evaluations of action plans through a range of formal processes and HMI Section HMI and some proprietor or monitor remotely to quality inspection.

Handling concerns and complaints

395. The great majority of our work is carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns do arise as a result of Ofsted's evaluation of a school's action plan, the school may follow the procedures for making a formal complaint. Information about how to complain is available on GOV.UK.

1. See: Transparent of understanding between Ofsted and DfE, independent schools. ↩
2. This is a case for 'wellness only' full inspections of boarding or residential provision, which are carried out as 'school provision' or 'integrated' inspections (inspections of both types of provision). ↩
3. We expect the school to provide or produce, schemes of work, plans and all other documents required for the independent school standards to be met. ↩
4. This information is required by part 3 of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended by the Education (Independent School Standards and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2019, and more recently amended by the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2022. The DfE's guidance Independent school standards, guidance for independent schools will be updated to reflect the requirements with their application. ↩
5. Inspectors have right of entry to inspect the prescribed school (see paragraph 125 ↩
6. Ofsted will not use Parent View when evaluating the independent school standards, or conducting an unregistered independent educational institution (UEI) inspection. See Section 8 of the Independent School Inspections Handbook. ↩
7. The existing provision could be an alternative provider or a children's home. ↩
8. The 'proprietor' is the person or owner on the registration form and accepted by the DfE as the proprietor or the identified proprietor of the prospective independent school. ↩
9. Paragraph 32(2)(g) is not applicable to pre-registration inspections, because these inspections are carried out before the school has been registered with the DfE. This is the requirement for the proprietor to ensure that 'any information' that is requested in connection with an inspection under section 108 of the 2008 Act which is required to be provided by the body conducting the inspection is provided to the body conducting the inspection and that a body's access to the school's premises and attendance at inspections, 'However, under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, independent schools are required to keep attendance and attendance registers and make them available for inspection during any type of inspection. ↩
10. Inspectors should refer to the case records that are uploaded to the pre-inspection documents for our during preparation. ↩
11. Ofsted will not use Parent View when evaluating the DfE's school's action plan. The additional inspection of an independent school that is normally inspected by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors or Ofsted Inspectors. ↩
12. We refer all complaints about independent schools to the DfE in the first instance. See: Independent school inspection: complaints. ↩
13. The proprietor should provide a copy of the school's action plan to the inspectors, and about the provision that an inspect and regulate. ↩
14. In all commissions for progress monitoring inspections, the DfE will commission Ofsted to check that the requirement of paragraph 32(2)(g) in part 6 of the independent school standards is met. Paragraph 32(2)(g) forms part of the standard that requires the proprietor to ensure that a safeguarding policy is implemented across the school's internet website, or where no such website exists, 32(2)(ended to parents and prospective parents. ↩
15. In all commissions for progress monitoring inspections, the DfE will commission Ofsted to check the suitability of the school's safeguarding policy. This is an element of the standard that requires the proprietor to ensure that a safeguarding policy is implemented across the school's internet website, or where no such website exists, 32(ended to parents and prospective parents. ↩
16. Under section 108(1) and 2 of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the school must be subject of a requirement to be a member of a qualifying school inspection body which must be approved with the DfE before being implemented. ↩
17. The lead inspector will inform the inspection support administrator that they have completed the report. The administrator will send confirmation of completion to the school. ↩
18. Paragraph 32(2)(g) of the independent school standards sets out the requirements in proprietors for the proprietor to ensure that 'any information requested in connection with an inspection under section 108 of the 2008 Act which is required to be provided by the body conducting the inspection is provided to the body conducting the inspection and that a body's access to the school's premises and attendance at inspections. ↩
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26. In all commissions for progress monitoring inspections, the DfE will commission Ofsted to check the suitability of the school's safeguarding policy. This is an element of the standard that requires the proprietor to ensure that a safeguarding policy is implemented across the school's internet website, or where no such website exists, 32(ended to parents and prospective parents. ↩
27. A registered independent school can be approved by the Secretary of State under section 162 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to enable the school 'to be the subject of a request for it to be named in an EHC plan'. ↩
28. A change in proprietor constitutes a material change to the school's registration, and requires the new proprietor to apply to the DfE for approval. ↩
29. See: Registering a school and Ofsted's guidance. ↩
30. Paragraph 32(2)(g) is not applicable to material change inspections, because these inspections are carried out before the school has been registered with the DfE. This is the requirement for the proprietor to ensure that 'any information requested in connection with an inspection under section 108 of the 2008 Act which is required to be provided for the purposes of the inspection is provided to the body conducting the inspection and that a body's access to the school's premises and attendance at inspections. However, under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, independent schools are required to keep attendance and attendance registers and make them available for inspection during any type of inspection. ↩
31. Inspectors should refer to the case records that are uploaded to the pre-inspection documents for our during preparation. ↩
32. Ofsted will not use Parent View when evaluating the DfE's school's action plan. The additional inspection of an independent school that is normally inspected by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors or Ofsted Inspectors. ↩
33. We refer all complaints about independent schools to the DfE in the first instance. See: Independent school inspection: complaints. ↩
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41. In all commissions for progress monitoring inspections, the DfE will commission Ofsted to check the suitability of the school's safeguarding policy. This is an element of the standard that requires the proprietor to ensure that a safeguarding policy is implemented across the school's internet website, or where no such website exists, 32(ended to parents and prospective parents. ↩
42. See: Independent school inspection: complaints. ↩

Ofsted to check the suitability of the school's safeguarding policy. This is an element of the standard in paragraph 7 of part 3 of the independent school standards. It is also an element of standard 11 of the national minimum standards for boarding and residential special schools. ↩

79. Under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the Chief Inspector must inspect and report 'to the Secretary of State on the extent to which any relevant standard is being met in relation to the institution'. Under section 109(4)(b) of the Act, '"any relevant standard" means any independent educational institution standard that is… (b) considered to be relevant by the person carrying out the inspection in the circumstances of the case'. ↩

80. Refer to 'Independent schools: regulatory and enforcement action policy statement'. ↩

81. Refer to 'Independent schools: regulatory and enforcement action policy statement'. ↩

82. The term 'report' is used to describe the formal written outcome of the inspection. The inspector records whether the school meets every paragraph of the independent school standards and other relevant statutory requirements in the independent school standards compliance record. ↩

83. See The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, as amended by the Independent Educational Provision in England (Inspection Fees) and Independent School Standards (Amendment) Regulations 2018 and the Independent Educational Provision in England (Provision of Information) and Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) and Independent School Standards (Amendment) Regulations 2018. ↩

84. See Section 118(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Section 115(2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. ↩

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