



## Revised independent school standards

1. From 5 January 2015 a revised set of independent school standards comes into force. These standards apply to independent schools and in part, to academies and Free schools.

### Full text of standards

2. The further revisions, together with all previous amendments, have now been brought together into a single set of regulations made under s.94 of the Education and Skills Act 2008. These have now been published and can be found at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/contents/made>

### Inspection implications

3. From 5 January 2015 schools will be inspected against the new standards, but should be ready to discuss with the inspection team their plans for meeting any standards where it appears that the school is currently falling short and there has been insufficient time since the revisions came into force to make appropriate changes. This can then be taken into account in the inspection report.

### Summary of changes

#### **Part 1: Quality of Education (this Part does not apply to academies or free schools)**

4. Changes to this Part are intended to raise the threshold so that schools currently only just meeting the quality of education standards are likely to have to make improvements. Specific changes to this end include a requirement that pupils make good progress, that teachers have good knowledge of their subject, and that resources are of good quality. Other changes in Part 1 include requirements that the curriculum and teaching do not undermine Fundamental British Values, and that teaching does not discriminate against pupils contrary to the Equality Act 2010. The standards do not place new duties on schools under the Equality Act, but ensure that regulatory action can be taken when appropriate.

5. Changes to Part 1 also raise the requirements for ways in which schools prepare pupils for adult life, and provide careers guidance.

**Part 2: Spiritual, Moral, Social and cultural development of pupils (SMSC) (this Part applies to academies and free schools)**

6. This is unchanged since the revisions which came into force in September 2014. The Department issued supplementary guidance on this standard in November. This, together with the earlier guidance that it supplements, can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-smsc-development-of-pupils-in-independent-schools>

**Part 3: Welfare, health and safety of pupils (this Part applies to academies and free schools)**

7. Some of the standards in this part are effectively the same as at present, but have been reworded to focus attention on practical implementation as well as on schools having correct policies in place. Inspectors will seek evidence that schools are actually doing what school policies say should happen.

8. One completely new standard in this part requires schools to draw up an appropriate risk assessment policy and take action to reduce the risks identified.

**Part 4: Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors (this Part applies to academies and free schools)**

9. The changes here bring the requirements for barred list checks into line with those set in place by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012, and make it a requirement that no member of staff or proprietor works at the school in contravention of a prohibition order issued by the Secretary of State, or occupies a management position when subject to a direction barring that person from such a post.

**Part 5: Premises and accommodation (this Part applies to academies and free schools)**

10. These are unchanged from the existing Standards in this Part, which are identical to those specified in other regulations for maintained schools.

## **Part 6: Provision of Information (some sections of this Part apply to academies and free schools)**

11. The revisions include requirements to inform parents when specified forms of regulatory action have been taken by the Secretary of State. The requirement to publish staff numbers and qualifications (which did not apply to academies and free schools) has been deleted.

## **Part 7: Manner in which complaints are handled**

12. The main changes are removal of the requirement to record all complaints, so there is discretion as to the recording of informal (non-written) complaints, and a requirement that action taken as a result of formal complaints is recorded.

## **Part 8: Quality of Leadership and management in schools**

13. This is a new standard, requiring that those with leadership and management responsibilities (including governors) have good skills and knowledge for their role, fulfil their responsibilities effectively and actively promote the well-being of pupils. The existence of this standard is intended to allow the Secretary of State to take action when it is apparent that other failings against the standards are due to poor leadership and management at the school, and changes need to be made to alter that situation.