

# Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools

The inspection framework

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This document outlines the arrangements for the inspections of boarding and residential provision in maintained, non-maintained and non-association independent boarding and residential special schools in England. It should be read alongside the guidance 'Handbook for inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools'.

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## Introduction

1. This document sets out the framework for inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools. This framework covers the following boarding and residential special schools:
  - maintained and non-maintained
  - academies
  - free schools
  - pupil referral units
  - non-association independent schools.
2. This framework does not apply to independent schools inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), Bridge Schools Inspectorate (BSI) and the School Inspection Service (SIS) or to schools that are registered as children's homes (see: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-childrens-homes-framework](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-childrens-homes-framework)).
3. Throughout this document, reference is made to children and young people. Unless otherwise specified, these terms encompass children and young people who are resident at their place of education for all or part of their time during school terms.<sup>1</sup> Under the current framework, the term 'boarding provision' is used for boarding schools and 'residential provision' for residential special schools.
4. The framework for inspecting boarding and residential provision in schools shows how the principles and processes underlying all Ofsted inspections are applied, sets out the statutory basis for inspection, and summarises the main features of the inspection process. The evaluation schedule outlines the main aspects of the service and outcomes against which inspectors will make judgements. It also outlines the grade descriptors that inspectors will use in arriving at their judgements.
5. Further detailed guidance on the inspection process is available in the 'Handbook for inspecting boarding and residential provision in schools' (see: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-inspections-of-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-inspections-of-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools)).
6. The evaluation schedule and the judgements made on inspections are to promote good practice and are underpinned by the national minimum standards for residential special schools (see: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/residential-special-schools-national-](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/residential-special-schools-national-)

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<sup>1</sup> If pupils are resident for more than 295 days per year the school must also be registered as a children's home. This framework does not apply to children's homes.

[minimum-standards](#)) and the national minimum standards for boarding schools (see: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/boarding-schools-national-minimum-standards](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/boarding-schools-national-minimum-standards)). Schools must meet statutory requirements and national minimum standards, having regard to any associated guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE).

7. Ofsted's general principles of inspection and regulation are to:
  - support and promote improvement
  - be proportionate
  - focus on the needs of service users
  - focus on the needs of providers
  - be transparent and consistent
  - be accountable
  - demonstrate value for money.

## Legal basis for inspection

8. The legal basis for inspections of children and young people's welfare in boarding and residential special schools is set out in section 87 of the Children Act 1989 and the National Care Standards Commission (Inspection of Schools and Colleges) Regulations 2002 (see: [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/552/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/552/contents/made)).
9. The National Care Standards Commission (Inspection of Schools and Colleges) Regulations 2002 set out Ofsted's general powers to inspect boarding or residential provision in schools and colleges under the Children Act 1989.
10. In inspecting the welfare of children and young people in boarding and residential special schools, Ofsted will give consideration to:
  - the Children Act 1989 (see: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41))
  - the national minimum standards for boarding schools or residential special schools
  - the Education Act 2002 (see: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents))
  - the Education Act 2005 (see: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents))
  - the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (see: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents))
  - non-maintained special schools approved by the Secretary of State under section 342 of the Education Act 1996 (see: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/IV](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/IV))

- the Education (Non-maintained Special Schools) Regulations 2011 (see: [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1627/regulation/6/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1627/regulation/6/made))
- the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 as amended (see: [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1997/contents/made))
- the Equality Act 2010 (see: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents))
- the Children and Families Act 2014 (see: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted))
- statutory guidance published by the Department for Education.

11. The legislation above applies according to the type of school being inspected.

## Frequency of inspection

12. The frequency with which Ofsted should inspect residential provision in boarding and residential special schools is not prescribed by law. It is set out in a letter to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector from the Secretary of State.
13. Ofsted will usually inspect boarding provision in a boarding school at least once every three years. It inspects the residential provision in residential special schools every year. This frequency recognises the increased vulnerability of residential pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where there are serious safeguarding or welfare concerns, more frequent inspections take place.
14. When Ofsted judges that a boarding school is inadequate or requires improvement for the overall experiences and progress of children and young people, the next full inspection will take place within two years. Ofsted will carry out monitoring inspections as required to ensure the welfare and safety of children and young people and to establish progress following the inspection.
15. Inspections of boarding or residential provision take place at any time that a school is open. The scheduling will normally be related to the timing and outcome of the school's previous inspections. However, it could also be influenced by:
- the timing of the education inspection
  - the outcomes of previous education and welfare inspections
  - a request from the DfE for the inspection of a registered independent or non-maintained school

- other relevant information received by Ofsted that raises concerns about the residential provision, including complaints, allegations and whistleblowing<sup>2</sup>
- information gathered at the education inspection or at an inspection of early years provision that is part of the school.

## Types of inspection

16. The following types of inspection may be carried out by Ofsted in schools with boarding provision.
- A full inspection is carried out once every year in a residential special school and once every three years in a boarding school. This inspection is conducted against the evaluation schedule and will result in a set of judgements and a published report.
  - An emergency inspection may be carried out if there is an incident, complaint or concern regarding the residential provision. Emergency inspections of independent schools are commissioned by the DfE. Ofsted conducts emergency inspections of maintained and non-maintained schools, academies and free schools using its powers under the relevant legislation.
  - Progress monitoring inspections are carried out at independent schools at the request of the DfE. In maintained and non-maintained schools, academies and free schools Ofsted makes the decision to undertake monitoring inspections. Monitoring inspections are undertaken as required to ensure the welfare and safety of children and young people or to establish progress following an inspection.
  - Pre-registration inspections are carried out at independent schools, newly established academies, free schools and pupil referral units (PRUs) at the DfE's request when a proposed new boarding or residential special school seeks to open.
  - Material change inspections are carried out at independent schools at the DfE's request when a school that is already operational wants to open new boarding/residential provision or make a significant change such as age range or number of boarders.
  - All of the inspections above can be carried out as an inspection covering solely boarding/residential provision (known as welfare only) or as part of an integrated inspection covering both education and boarding/residential provision.

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<sup>2</sup> In order for a complaint to qualify under Ofsted's powers to consider complaints about maintained schools under section 11 of the Education Act 2005 as amended, it must meet a set of qualifying criteria. In particular, it must raise matters that fall within one of the areas within Ofsted's school inspection remit under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. Since a school's boarding or residential provision is not inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005, a complaint made solely about boarding/residential provision cannot qualify under Ofsted's section 11 powers to consider complaints about schools.

## **Integrated and aligned inspections**

17. In an integrated inspection, education and boarding/residential provision are inspected at the same time, resulting in one overall judgement and a single report.
18. An aligned inspection may take place when a school's boarding/residential provision is registered as a children's home. The inspection of both the education provision at the school and the children's home takes place at the same time. Information is shared between inspectors but two separate reports are produced.
19. An aligned inspection may also take place when one of the other inspectorates (ISI, BIS and SIS) carries out an education inspection of an independent school at the same time as Ofsted carries out an inspection of the boarding/residential provision. Information is shared between inspectors but two separate reports are produced.
20. The frequency of inspection is likely to vary according to the type and performance of the school. Ofsted will always aim to integrate and align inspections whenever possible.

## **Notice given for inspection**

21. On full inspections of boarding/residential provision (welfare only), the notice given to schools will be a brief telephone call from the lead inspector on the first day of the inspection, a minimum of one hour before the inspection team arrives. The notification of inspection will be confirmed by an electronic formal notification of inspection letter. Where serious welfare or safeguarding concerns have been identified before the inspection, the inspection will be unannounced.
22. On full integrated inspections, Ofsted will give notice of the education and welfare inspection in line with the respective inspection framework (see: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-framework-for-school-inspection](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-framework-for-school-inspection) and [www.gov.uk/government/publications/framework-for-inspecting-non-association-independent-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/framework-for-inspecting-non-association-independent-schools)). The boarding inspection will start a minimum of one hour after the notification of the inspection.
23. Emergency and progress monitoring inspections, whether they concern the boarding/residential provision alone or as part of an integrated inspection, will always be unannounced.
24. Pre-registration and material change inspections, whether they concern the boarding/residential provision alone or are integrated inspections, will be carried out with two days' notice to the school.
25. There are a limited number of circumstances in which Ofsted can decide that an inspection should not go ahead on the planned dates. Ofsted's policy for deferring, cancelling and rescheduling residential inspections and integrated

inspections of maintained schools is set out in the document 'Deferral of school inspections: information for schools' (see: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferral-of-inspections-information-for-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferral-of-inspections-information-for-schools)), and for independent schools in 'Deferral policy for inspections of independent day, boarding and residential special schools' (see: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferral-policy-for-inspections-of-independent-day-boarding-and-residential-special-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferral-policy-for-inspections-of-independent-day-boarding-and-residential-special-schools)).

## **Obtaining the views of children and young people, parents and carers, staff, placing authorities and other relevant parties**

26. Inspectors will take account of the extent to which schools have sought and appropriately acted on the views of children and young people, their parents and carers, staff and placing authorities in reviewing and improving the boarding or residential experiences for pupils and their impact on them. Inspectors will also consider the views expressed in the course of an inspection.
27. Ofsted conducts an annual online point-in-time survey of the views of children and young people, staff and placing authorities at a specific point in the school year. This enables inspectors to have a recent analysis of the views of those at the school before the inspection starts, without compromising the timing of the inspection. Where the results of the survey indicate a cause for concern, they could be used to bring forward the date of inspection. Inspectors may sometimes ask for an additional survey to be completed during the inspection.
28. Ofsted's online service Parent View is available for the parents and carers of children and young people to give their opinion of the boarding/residential provision. The lead inspector should check the returns for the school from the Parent View website as part of their preparation (see: [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/parent-view-results](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/parent-view-results)). This service is not dependent on the timing of the inspection.
29. Ofsted also seeks information from the host local authority about any child protection enquiries or concerns that are ongoing or have occurred at the school since the previous inspection.
30. For more information on the point-in-time surveys and Parent View, please refer to 'Handbook for inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools'.

## **Length of inspection**

31. A full inspection of boarding/residential provision (a welfare only inspection) will usually last three days and includes two evenings. This may vary in exceptional circumstances. Typically, the on-site inspection will start with the arrival of the lead inspector on day one and finish two days later with feedback to the

school's senior managers and proprietor or governors. In schools with very few children and young people, the inspection may take place over two days, including one evening in the residential environment.

32. A full integrated inspection of the education and boarding/residential provision of a school usually takes the same amount of time as a welfare-only inspection and lasts three days. Integrated inspections of both independent and maintained schools usually begin with the arrival of the social care inspector(s) on the first day. The education inspection starts the following morning, and the whole inspection finishes with feedback on the third day.

## **Inspectors**

33. The inspection of boarding/residential provision is conducted by inspectors who are suitably qualified and experienced to inspect the quality of the boarding/residential provision in schools. Inspections may be undertaken by one or more inspectors, depending on the size and location of the boarding/residential provision and the number of children and young people on roll. Integrated inspection teams also include inspectors who are qualified and experienced to inspect the quality of the educational provision.

## **Preparation for inspection**

34. In preparation for inspection, inspectors will look at the information that Ofsted already holds, or is publicly available, about the school and its boarding provision. This includes:
  - previous inspection reports for both the boarding/residential provision and the education provision
  - information and background on the local authority area in which the school is based
  - any concerns and complaints received
  - any information received or gathered from the local authority or other relevant bodies
  - the school's own website
  - analysis of the views of children and young people, staff and placing authorities from the survey conducted at a 'point-in-time'
  - the responses from Parent View
  - any evaluation of the boarding provision provided by the school.

## **Inspection activity**

35. In the course of the inspection inspectors will:
  - meet with children and young people

- observe staff in their day-to-day work interacting with children and young people, including mealtimes and evening routines
- interview boarding staff, including those with responsibility for leading, managing and organising boarding or key aspects of it
- observe how staff work with children and young people and evaluate how policy translates into practice
- observe key activities, such as handover of information between staff
- examine records, for example concerning healthcare and recruitment – records relating to safeguarding will always be inspected
- examine children and young people’s records, case files and other relevant documents – this includes case tracking children and young people involved in significant incidents
- gather views from interested parties such as parents and carers, social workers, health professionals and teachers
- inspect the premises, accommodation, facilities, health and safety arrangements and privacy.

36. Inspection activity will vary depending on the lines of enquiry developed either before or during the inspection. This is set out in further detail in ‘The handbook for inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools’.

## Summary of the evaluation criteria for inspections

37. The principal judgements made in all inspections of children and young people’s welfare in maintained, non-maintained and independent boarding and residential special schools are:

- the overall experiences and progress of children and young people
- the quality of care and support
- how well children and young people are protected
- the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers.

38. Inspection is intended to help raise the quality of the school’s boarding and residential provision, and support improvement and better outcomes for children and young people. This requires a focus on the experiences and progress of children and young people. Ofsted inspection frameworks operate on the basis that only good is good enough for children and young people, whether that is in respect of their care or education. The national minimum standards are basic expectations and the concept of a ‘minimum’ standard therefore is not applied in the evaluation criteria. This framework sets out what good looks like as the expectation for the experiences of children and young people who are boarders/residential pupils at a school.

39. Inspectors will make their judgements on a four-point scale:
- outstanding
  - good
  - requires improvement
  - inadequate.
40. Inspectors will use the descriptors of good as the benchmark against which to grade and judge performance. Inspectors are required to consider the evidence against the evaluation criteria in each judgement area before making judgements at a routine inspection. The judgement is not derived from a checklist but instead is a professional evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the boarding/residential provision on the experiences and progress of children and young people. Failure to achieve a single criterion for good will not automatically lead to a judgement of requires improvement.
41. A judgement of good will be made where the inspector concludes that the evidence overall sits most appropriately with a finding of good. This is what Ofsted describes as 'best fit'.
42. For all children and young people, the expectation is that care and practice are sensitive and responsive to age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation.
43. Boarding and residential special schools must comply with the relevant national minimum standards and statutory guidance. However, meeting all the national minimum standards will not necessarily result in a judgement of good or outstanding. Any serious failure that potentially impacts on the experiences of children and young people will be considered carefully to determine how this should influence the judgements and the outcome of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to assess the impact of any breach on the lives of children and young people and the quality of care afforded to them.
44. Irrespective of whether the boarding or residential provision is inspected as part of an integrated inspection or as a single activity, inspectors will make the same four judgements, using the grade descriptors. In an integrated inspection, the inspection team work together and use professional judgement to determine the impact of judgements arising from boarding provision on the school as a whole. The judgements may vary depending on such factors as the number of children and young people relative to day pupils and the impact of strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors are required to weigh up these factors and the inspection evidence before reaching their judgements about the school as a whole.

## Limiting judgements

45. When inspectors judge 'how well children and young people are protected' to be inadequate, then the judgement on the 'overall experiences and progress of children and young people' will always be limited to inadequate.
46. A judgement of inadequate for either 'the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers' or 'the quality of care and support' is likely to lead to a judgement of inadequate for the 'overall experiences and progress of children and young people' and will be limited to 'requires improvement'. When making that judgement, inspectors will take into account the impact of the shortfalls on the children and young people.

## The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

### Good

47. The judgement on the overall experiences and progress of children and young people is likely to be good if:
  - Children and young people make academic and personal progress, enjoy positive experiences and enhance their life chances as a result of their boarding/residential experience.
  - Leaders and managers are effective at identifying and tackling weaknesses and securing improvement of the boarding/residential provision. They understand the needs of the children and young people they are caring for and ensure that they receive the very best care.
  - The progress that individual children and young people make is monitored and demonstrates the impact and value the boarding/residential provision has had on children and young people's education and personal development.
  - The safety of children and young people is given high priority. There are robust and effective arrangements for safeguarding and staff and young people know how to keep themselves safe.
  - Children and young people are encouraged to build trusted and secure relationships with each other, with staff and with appropriate adults. They feel well supported, valued and respect one another. Strategies are in place to manage behaviour which are well known and effectively implemented.
  - The boarding/residential provision is well organised and run for the benefit of the children and young people. There are sufficient numbers of consistent staff who have time to listen to, understand and meet the needs of the children and young people in their care. Leaders and managers ensure that staff are well trained, supervised and supported in their role.

- The views and feelings of children and young people are routinely sought, including those who do not communicate verbally, and they can demonstrate how their views have made a difference. Complaints are treated seriously and result in a clear response which children and young people understand.
- Children and young people enjoy boarding/residential life and take every opportunity to participate in the activities it offers. They have well-rounded interests and feel able to achieve their full potential. There is a varied programme of activities and events which reflect the needs and interests of the young people. The boarding/residential accommodation is good quality and well maintained and young people feel safe and relaxed.
- The school's healthcare arrangements are effective in promoting and maintaining young people's physical, emotional and psychological health. Medication is managed safely and effectively and staff develop good relationships with health professional to promote good health.
- Children and young people develop the skills and confidence they need to maximise their chances of successful maturity to adulthood and are well prepared for the next stage of life after school.
- The boarding/residential provision works in partnership with other elements of the school, parents and carers, placing authorities and external agencies to support children and young people. There is effective and regular communication and positive feedback from parents, carers and professionals regarding the boarding/residential provision.

## Outstanding

48. The judgement on the overall experiences and progress of children and young people is likely to be outstanding if there is evidence that:
- The experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceed the standard of good and result in sustained progress and achievement in key aspects of their lives. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced.
  - There is evidence that practice is being improved and informed through activities such as research, the reviewing of internal practice and from good practice within the sector and this is making an outstanding difference to the lives and experiences of children and young people.
  - Children and young people, parents, carers and professionals consistently give very positive feedback about the boarding/residential provision at the school.
  - Leaders and managers routinely make excellent use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities to improve outcomes for children and young people.

## Requires improvement

49. The judgement on the overall experiences and progress of children and young people is likely to be 'requires improvement' if:
- There are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good.

## Inadequate

50. The judgement on the overall experiences and progress of children and young people is likely to be inadequate if:
- There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

## The quality of care and support

51. This section covers national minimum standards 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17 for boarding and residential special schools and 21 for residential special schools.

## Good

52. The judgement on the quality of care and support is likely to be good if:
- Children and young people's individual needs are understood and well supported by staff who have time to listen to them and to meet their needs. Children and young people new to boarding/residential life or who are preparing to leave are well supported. There are external avenues of support available which are well known to the children and young people.
  - All members of staff at the school work closely and cooperatively to ensure children and young people receive high-quality care and support.
  - Children and young people are treated with dignity and respect. They experience care and support that is sensitive and responsive to their identity including age, disability, ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, gender identity, language, race and sexual orientation. That care helps them to develop a positive self-view and to build emotional resilience and a sense of their own identity.
  - Boarding/residential accommodation is good quality, comfortable and well maintained so that children and young people feel relaxed and safe. There are effective systems to ensure that children and young people's personal possessions are kept safe.
  - Children and young people enjoy and benefit from a broad range of social and recreational activities which include activities in the wider community.

- Children and young people are actively encouraged to keep themselves fit and healthy. The school's healthcare arrangements promote their physical, emotional and psychological health and include access to outside services and support if required. Arrangements for managing medication are safe and effective and promote independence wherever possible.
- Children and young people have a choice of nourishing meals. The food is varied, plentiful and of high quality. The school caters well for individual dietary/support needs. Meal times are social events which children and young people enjoy.
- Plans in place for children and young people are up to date, detailed and thorough. They meet the needs of the children and young people, are implemented carefully and are reviewed regularly. Young people are consistently and centrally involved in the planning and review of their care. Equality and diversity issues are positively and effectively addressed in plans.
- The views and feelings of children and young people are actively and routinely sought, including those who do not communicate verbally. They feel that they are given due consideration and contribute to the running and improvement of their boarding/residential community.
- Children and young people are encouraged to contact their parents and carers regularly and privately, assisted by staff if necessary. There is regular contact between staff and parents and carers and positive feedback regarding the care and support provided.
- The care and support experienced by children and young people is delivered and supported by good policies and procedures which are routinely implemented.
- The national minimum standards relevant to this section must be met (but this alone does not mean a judgement of good is given).

## Outstanding

53. The judgement on the quality of care and support is likely to be outstanding if:
- The quality of care and support consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in children and young people making sustained and outstanding progress academically and personally. Innovative care and support contributes to outstanding outcomes in the education, health and well-being of children and young people.
  - Children and young people, parents and carers, placing authorities and professionals consistently give outstanding feedback about the quality of the care, support and guidance provided.
  - Partnerships with parents and carers, placing authorities and other agencies are exceptionally effective and ensure that children and young people receive the care and support that they need.

## Requires improvement

54. The judgement on the quality of care and support is likely to be 'requires improvement' if:

- There are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the quality of care and support is not yet good.

## Inadequate

55. The judgement on the quality of care and support is likely to be inadequate if:

- There are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted, safeguarded or if their care and support is poor and they are not making progress.

## How well children and young people are protected

56. This section covers national minimum standards 6, 7, 11, 12 and 14 for boarding and residential special schools.

## Good

57. The judgement on how well children and young people are protected is likely to be good if:

- Children and young people are safe and feel safe. They know how to complain and understand the process for doing so. There is a strong, robust and proactive response from staff working with children and young people that reduces the risk of harm or actual harm to them. Staff know and understand the indicators that may suggest a child or young person is suffering or is at risk of suffering harm and they take the appropriate and necessary action in accordance with local procedures and statutory guidance (see: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children) and [www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education)).
- Staff are clear about procedures where they are concerned about the safety of a child or young person and there is a named and designated lead whose role is effective in pursuing concerns and protecting children and young people.
- Children and young people can identify a trusted adult who they can talk to about any concerns. They report that adults listen to them, take their concerns seriously and respond appropriately.
- Good-quality written records are made and held securely where staff working with children and young people are concerned about their safety or

welfare. Those records are shared appropriately where necessary and with the necessary consent.

- Governors and/or those with responsibility for the school regularly review and monitor the school's policy and practice regarding safeguarding.
- Any child protection and/or safeguarding concerns are immediately shared with the appropriate part of the local authority in accordance with local procedures and a record of that referral is retained. There is evidence that staff follow up the outcome of the referral quickly and ensure that appropriate action has been taken to protect the child or young person from further harm. Where staff are not satisfied with the response from either the local authority where the school is situated or the placing authority they escalate their concerns.
- Children and young people are supported, protected and informed appropriately about the action the member of staff is taking to share their concerns. Parents and carers are made aware of concerns and their consent is sought in accordance with local procedures, unless doing so would increase the risk of or actual harm to a child.
- Investigations into allegations or suspicions of harm are shared with the appropriate agencies and are handled fairly, quickly and in accordance with statutory guidance. Children and young people are supported and protected and support is provided to the person making the allegation and the person who is the subject of the allegation.
- Children and young people who go missing from the school where they live or attend receive well-coordinated responses that reduce the harm or risk of harm to them. Risks are well understood and their impact is minimised. The service is aware of, and implements in full, the requirements of the statutory guidance for children and young people who are missing from home and/or education. Local procedures for notifying the local authority and parents and carers are available, understood and followed. Comprehensive records are held and shared between the relevant agencies to help and protect children and young people.
- Any risks associated with children and young people offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, self-harming, going missing or being sexually exploited are known by the adults who care for them and shared with the local authority children's social care service in accordance with agreed local procedures. There are plans and help in place that are reducing the risk of harm or actual harm and there is evidence that the impact of these risks is being minimised. These risks are kept under regular review and there is regular and effective liaison with other agencies where appropriate.
- Children and young people are protected and helped to keep themselves safe from bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism, extremism, including radicalisation, and other forms of discrimination. Any discriminatory behaviour is challenged and help and support are given to children and young people about how to treat others with respect.

- Staff understand the risks posed by adults or young people who use the internet to bully, groom or abuse children and young people. There are well-developed and effective strategies in place to keep children and young people safe and to support them in learning how to keep themselves safe. Leaders and managers take action immediately if they are concerned about bullying or risky behaviours.
- Clearly written and up-to-date risk assessments, and a consistent response by staff, protect children and young people, while enabling them to take age-appropriate and reasonable risks as part of their growth and development.
- Children and young people feel secure and, where they may present risky behaviours, they experience positive support from all staff. Staff respond with clear boundaries about what is safe and acceptable and they seek to understand the triggers for children and young people's behaviour. They develop effective responses as a team and review those responses to assess their impact, taking into account the views and experiences of the young person.
- Positive behaviour is consistently promoted. Staff use effective de-escalation techniques and creative alternative strategies that are specific to the individual needs of children and young people. Any restraint, including the use of reasonable force or the restriction of liberty, is only used in strict accordance with the legislative framework to protect the child or young person and those around them (see: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/use-of-reasonable-force-in-schools)). All incidents are reviewed, recorded and monitored and the views of the child or young person are sought and understood. Monitoring of the management of behaviour is effective, and the use of any restraint reduces or ceases over time.
- All staff and volunteers who work with children and young people are carefully selected and vetted, and there is monitoring to prevent unsuitable people from being recruited and having the opportunity to harm children and young people or place them at risk.
- There are clear and effective arrangements for staff development and training in respect of the protection and care of children. Staff receive regular supervision and support if they are working directly and regularly with children and young people where there are concerns about their safety and welfare.
- The physical environment for children and young people is safe, secure and protects them from harm or the risk of harm.
- The school has strong and effective links with the local authority where it is located and there is regular communication regarding safeguarding issues.
- The national minimum standards relevant to this section must be met (but this alone does not mean a judgement of good is given).

## Outstanding

58. The judgement on how well children and young people are protected is likely to be outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a good judgement:
- Children and young people's safety is paramount and the school is proactive in implementing and sustaining excellent practice. Policies and procedures are robust and implemented consistently and to a high standard.
  - There is excellent practice in safeguarding and child protection that makes the school stand out from others, and is worthy of wider dissemination.
  - Staff are highly experienced and well trained. They are proactive and alert to possible concerns which means that all children and young people, including the most vulnerable, have a strong sense of safety and well-being.
  - Systematic risk assessment and risk management improves the protection of children and young people. Risk assessments are routinely reviewed and updated in response to changes to the resident group.
  - External agencies consistently report that the help and protection that children and young people receive is of an exceptionally high standard.

## Requires improvement

59. The judgement on how well children and young people are protected is likely to be 'requires improvement' if:
- There are no serious or widespread failures that leave children and young people either being harmed or at risk of harm. However, the protection of children and young people is not yet good.

## Inadequate

60. The judgement on how well children and young people are helped and protected is likely to be inadequate if:
- There are serious and/or widespread failures that leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or their welfare not being safeguarded.

## The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers

61. This section covers national minimum standards 1, 13, 15, 18, 19, 20 for boarding and residential special schools and 22 for residential special schools.

## Good

62. The judgement on the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers is likely to be good if:

- The boarding/residential provision is effectively and efficiently led by suitably trained and experienced leaders and managers.
- The culture of the boarding/residential provision is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all children and young people. Leaders and managers ensure that children and young people make good academic and personal progress, are safe and achieve their goals.
- The ethos and objectives of the boarding/residential provision are demonstrated in practice and effectively communicated by all staff, to parents and carers, children and young people and external agencies.
- The boarding/residential provision is properly staffed and resourced to meet the needs of the children and young people living there. The staff team is stable, suitably vetted, qualified and competent to deliver high-quality services to children and young people.
- Staff are deployed to meet the individual needs of children and young people so that positive relationships can be developed with staff and between peers and any conflicts can be safely managed so all children and young people are protected.
- Leaders and managers actively and regularly monitor the quality of care provided. Leaders and managers use learning from practice and feedback to improve the experiences and care of children and young people such as feedback from children and young people, parents and carers and other agencies in contact with the school. They learn from complaints, staff feedback, from successes and failures, and from any serious incidents. They identify strengths and areas for improvement, have clear development plans that are implemented and action is taken to improve the experiences and care of children and young people.
- There is robust external scrutiny from governors and/or those with responsibility for the school who regularly review and monitor the school's policies and practice.
- Leaders, managers and staff receive regular and effective supervision that is recorded. There is effective support and challenge to ensure the professional development of staff and leaders provide the right environment for good practice to thrive.
- Training and development activities are effective. They are focused on ensuring staff can meet the specific needs of the children and young people at the school and are evaluated to ensure they impact positively on practice. Leaders, managers and staff keep up-to-date with current practice. Induction programmes are robust and support new staff in acquiring the specific skills and knowledge they need to work with the children and young people at the school.
- Robust action is taken to address all issues of concern including any concerns or complaints from children and young people, parents and carers and placing authorities. Proper investigations are in evidence and placing and host authorities are engaged as necessary. Any unmet national

minimum standards and recommendations to improve practice from the previous inspection are met in full.

- The staff team work collaboratively to provide consistency and stability. There are clear responsibilities and accountabilities and the staff team have a sense of shared ownership about their practice. Staff work together across the school to address difficult and challenging issues and develop a consistent and shared approach. Staff report that they are well led and managed and there is evidence that this is the case.
- Policies and procedures are routinely reviewed, updated and implemented effectively in practice. Written records maintained are of good quality.
- Leaders and managers work proactively and positively with parents and carers, the local authority where they are located and placing authorities and other agencies to support children and young people. There is regular and effective communication with them.
- The national minimum standards relevant to this section must be met (but this alone does not mean a judgement of good is given).

## Outstanding

63. The judgement on the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers will be outstanding if:

- There is strong evidence that leaders and managers are inspirational, confident and ambitious for all children and young people. They have high aspirations for children and young people in their care and high expectations of their staff. They lead by example, innovate and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest-quality care for children and young people.
- Leaders and managers know the strengths and weaknesses of the boarding/residential provision well and can provide evidence of improvement over a sustained period of time.
- Leaders and managers have highly effective monitoring systems in place which quickly identify shortfalls and bring about effective improvements without delay.
- All areas of the school work together in a highly effective, collaborative manner to ensure the highest-quality care for children and young people.
- Excellent relationships between the school, parents and carers, placing authorities and relevant agencies ensure the best possible care and experiences for children and young people.

## Requires improvement

64. The judgement on the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers is likely to be 'requires improvement' if:

- The characteristics of good are not yet in place. It therefore requires improvement to be good. However, there are no widespread or serious failures in leadership and management that result in children’s welfare not being safeguarded and promoted. Where there are weaknesses in practice, leaders and managers have identified and remedied them.

## Inadequate

65. The judgement on the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers is likely to be inadequate if:
- There are widespread or serious failures in leadership and management that result in the safety and welfare of children not being safeguarded or promoted.

## Reports

66. A report will be published after an inspection of boarding/residential provision, an integrated inspection of school and boarding provision, or a monitoring inspection.
67. The report following a routine inspection of boarding or residential provision as a single activity will be organised under the headings below.

<b>Service information</b>	<b>Brief contextual information about the school</b>
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people	Grade
Areas for improvement	No grade
The quality of care and support	Grade
How well children and young people are protected	Grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Grade
About this inspection	Information about the legal basis for the inspection

68. The report for an integrated inspection of a school will include a separate section on the outcomes for children and young people and the quality of the boarding provision. However, all other findings from the boarding inspection are captured in appropriate sections of the school report.
69. The draft report following a welfare-only inspection of boarding/residential provision will be sent to the school within 10 working days of the end of the inspection for a factual accuracy check.

70. The headteacher or head of care must return the draft inspection report with any comments on factual accuracy within three working days. The final report will be published on Ofsted's website within 25 working days of the end of the inspection (irrespective of appeals or complaints). The school is responsible for sending copies of the report to parents and carers. While not specifically required to do so, headteachers may wish to draw the report to the attention of local authorities who place children at their school.
71. Monitoring reports for boarding inspections will report on the progress the school has made in rectifying its weaknesses since its last inspection.

## **Quality assurance**

72. Ofsted assures the quality of its inspections and reports. It does so by ensuring that inspectors are suitably qualified and experienced in inspecting boarding and residential special schools. The lead inspector has responsibility for ensuring all evidence gathered, including by team members, is robust, reliable and secure.
73. To ensure national consistency, some inspections will be visited by an inspector from Ofsted to support the quality assurance process. During these visits, the visiting inspector will speak to the inspector, headteacher and other staff and, where possible, children and young people. The inspector will always seek the views of staff at the school on the conduct of the inspection and sample the way evidence is being gathered, collated and used to make judgements.
74. All inspection reports are subject to rigorous quality assurance procedures. In aligned inspections, the quality assurance process cross-references the inspection judgements as part of the moderation process.
75. After the inspection Ofsted will invite the headteacher to complete a short evaluation of the inspection. The responses will be used to improve the quality of our inspections.

## **Communication and feedback**

76. Inspectors provide regular opportunities for dialogue and feedback during the inspection. Oral feedback about findings, including strengths and weaknesses in practice, is given to the school at the end of the inspection. Any national minimum standards not met and areas in need of further development are stated at this time. Judgements are indicative at this stage and may change following quality assurance checks.

## Conduct during the inspection

77. Inspectors must uphold the highest professional standards in their work, and ensure that everyone they encounter during inspections is treated fairly and with respect. The code of conduct requires inspectors to:
- evaluate objectively, be impartial and inspect without fear or favour
  - evaluate provision in line with frameworks, national standards or requirements
  - base all evaluation on clear and robust evidence
  - have no connection with the provider that could undermine their objectivity
  - report honestly and clearly, ensuring that judgements are fair and reliable
  - carry out their work with integrity, treating all those they meet with courtesy, respect and sensitivity
  - endeavour to minimise the stress on those involved in the inspection
  - act in the best interests of service users
  - maintain purposeful and productive dialogue with those being inspected, and communicate judgements clearly and frankly
  - respect the confidentiality of information, particularly about individuals and their work
  - respond appropriately to reasonable requests
  - take prompt and appropriate action on any child protection or health and safety issues.

## Expectations of providers

78. For inspection and regulation to be productive and beneficial, inspectors and providers must establish and maintain a professional working environment based on courtesy and professional behaviour. Inspectors are expected to uphold the code of conduct, and Ofsted also expects providers to:
- be courteous and professional
  - apply their own codes of conduct in their dealings with inspectors
  - allow inspectors to conduct their visit in an open and honest way
  - allow inspectors to evaluate the provision objectively against the standards and framework
  - provide evidence that enables the inspector to report honestly, fairly and reliably about their provision
  - work with inspectors to minimise disruption, stress and bureaucracy
  - ensure the health and safety of inspectors while on their premises

- maintain a purposeful dialogue with the inspector
- draw any concerns about the inspection to the attention of the inspector promptly and in a suitable manner
- respect that inspectors need to observe practice and talk to staff and users without the presence of a manager or registered person.

## Confidentiality

79. Ofsted takes all steps necessary to ensure that information provided to inspectors remains confidential where appropriate, but cannot guarantee this. Evidence gathered during inspections may be subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, but the identity of individuals will not be disclosed.
80. Where Ofsted considers that any information provided indicates actual harm or the likelihood of harm to a child or young person, we pass the necessary information to the local authority children's services for action and we would inform the headteacher of the school where appropriate.

## Concerns

81. The great majority of Ofsted's work is carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns arise during an inspection, these should be raised with the inspector as soon as possible during the inspection. This provides an opportunity to resolve the matter before the inspection is completed. Any concerns about the factual accuracy of the findings in the report can be raised after the inspection and will be considered as part of the quality assurance process.

## Complaints

82. If it has not been possible to resolve concerns through the process detailed in paragraph 81, a formal complaint can be raised under Ofsted's complaints procedure: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted).
83. Lodging a complaint does not normally delay the publication of the final inspection report.

## More information

84. If you have any other general queries about the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools, please contact Ofsted by email at [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk) or by telephone on 0300 123 1231.