Ofsted
Ofsted's social care inspection framework (SCCIF)

Guidance

Social care common inspection framework (SCCIF): boarding schools and residential special schools

Updated 30 March 2021

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Introduction

The social care common inspection framework (SCCIF) applies to inspections of:

- children's homes
- secure children's homes
- boarding schools and residential special schools
- boarding schools and residential special schools
- voluntary adoption agencies
- independent fostering agencies
- residential family centres
- residential holiday schemes for disabled children
- residential provision in further education colleges

The SCCIF covers their:

- offer to service stakeholder (inclusive across the range of settings listed above)
- the experiences and progress of children and other service users, wherever they live and receive the service they need
- how the service ensures that we usually report on at each inspection

The SCCIF is not a 'one-size-fits-all' framework. Where necessary, the SCCIF adapts and addresses the unique and distinct aspects of each type of setting. However, the evaluation criteria are our to make judgements and the accompanying guidance are, wherever possible, consistent throughout.

The inspection principles

Ofsted's corporate strategy outlines how we will carry out inspection and regulation activities. We will:

- intelligent
- responsible
- focused

Our approach is further underpinned by the following 3 principles that apply to all social care inspections.

To focus on the things that matter most to children's lives

We have reached a general consensus with the main social care stakeholders that social care services should be judged on the extent to which they promote the welfare of children and adults, and the adults who care for them, which matters most about children's experiences and progress.

Using this to guide us, we focus the criteria for our judgements on the difference that providers are making to children's lives. Adults can only support children well if they're well themselves. We also recognise that children, young people, and their families are some of the quality of the support that the adults who care for children need.

To be consistent in our expectations of providers

It is important for professionals and members of the public to understand services that are good and those that are not. We want to be consistent in our expectations of providers. We make our expectations consistent by basing our judgements on criteria that share the same principles and focus.

Our inspection methods and published guidance only differ where there is a good reason. This includes taking a similar approach to deciding on the frequency of inspection.

To prioritise our work where improvement is needed most

We are committed to inspection in a way that focuses our resources where the need is greatest most.

Providers and managers have shown that they can consistently deliver services for children and young people that are good or outstanding. We don't inspect such services however, we assess how skills acquired that lead to children at risk impacting on frequency. We are a crucial stage of inspection to help us whether standards are being met. We also aim to guide for good and outstanding providers more quickly if we have concerns.

The focus of inspections

The SCCIF has a consistent and clear focus on evaluating the impact of care and support on the experiences and progress of children, largely through carer's loving and winning. This means:

- we focus on evaluating time looking at policies and procedures and more time looking at the impact of services on children's lives
- we give the minimum notice of inspection, so we can see how services are working when inspectors are not on site. We also use unannounced inspections when we believe it is much to assess how we will be reviewing whether to inform the service period for settings that still have relatively lengthy notice arrangements
- we use our pre-inspection analysis of the provider's self-evaluation information supplied by inspectors to focus inspections. We also expect providers to produce their best evidence whenever we give notice of inspection

How inspectors make judgements under the SCCIF

Judgement structure

Our judgement structure stems from our first principle of inspection – to focus on the things that matter most to children's lives. We focus our judgements on the experiences of children and other people who use children's services at the core of inspection.

All SCCIF inspections follow the 4-point scale (outstanding, good, requires improvement to good and inadequate) to make judgements on the overall experiences and progress of children, taking into account:

- how well children are helped and protected
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers

Inspectors of adoption support agencies, voluntary adoption agencies and residential family centres use both or, as appropriate, the equivalent criteria in their judgements.

We also use the 4-point scale to make judgements on the quality of care and support judgement. This means that, if inspectors judge this area to be inadequate, then the 'overall experiences and progress' judgement will always be inadequate.

The judgement criteria (effectiveness of leaders and managers) is a standard judgement. If inspectors judge this area to be inadequate, this is likely to lead to a judgement of 'requires improvement to good' or 'requires improvement'. 'Not sufficiently good or progress'.

Inspectors will make the limiting and graded judgements first so that they can take these into account for the 'overall progress and experiences' judgement.

How inspectors use the evaluation criteria

Ofsted's work uses the descriptors of 'what good' looks like as the benchmarks against which we judge the quality of services. We use the evidence, it is not factual but critical. Ofsted's. A professional evaluation of the effectiveness and impact of the care and support. We use our professional judgement to decide how well the evidence meets the criteria for good and will automatically lead to a judgement of 'requires improvement to be good.

Some criteria will have less relevance than others in some settings because of the nature of the setting and the needs of the children.

Even when all the criteria are relevant, there is always a degree of professional judgement in weighing and balancing evidence against the evaluation criteria.

Inspectors will use the criteria to make judgements, but they will not use them as a mechanical ticking-and-flicking. We call this the 'hard fit'.

The evaluation criteria for SCCIF inspections are broadly consistent across different types of setting but, where necessary, they have been adapted to reflect the varying and unique nature of each type of provision.

Required evidence

Inspectors look at several areas of required evidence for each judgement. Some areas are common to all types of provision, but others are specific to the type of care or provision. The areas of required evidence are set out in the bullet points at the beginning of the evaluation criteria for each judgement.

Evaluation criteria

Inspectors use the following criteria to make judgements, including benchmarks of what good looks like:

The overall experiences and progress of children

Areas of required evidence are:

- the quality of individualised care and support provided and the influence and impact on children's lives, including their emotional wellbeing
- the quality of relationships between professionals, carers and children and parents
- the progress children make in relation to their health, education, and emotional, behavioural and social development
- how well children's views are understood and taken into account
- the quality of children's experiences on a day-to-day basis
- how well children are prepared for their future and how well transitions are managed

Good

The experiences and progress of children are likely to be judged good if there is evidence of the following:

Children are enabled to build trusted and secure relationships with the adults who care for them. Children are helped to feel safe and secure. They are able to talk to time with them, protect them and promote their welfare. Children are able to develop an appropriate sense of belonging. They make progress and have a range of positive experiences.

Children, including those who communicate non-verbally, are supported to express themselves and their views are sought and considered in all matters as appropriate. They are sensitively helped to understand where it may not be possible to act on their wishes, and why other adults need to intervene to keep them safe. Children are helped to understand how they can express their views, for independent advocate and, where appropriate, an independent visitor.

Children know how to complain. The school's complaints policy is easy to understand and children are confident that their complaints are taken seriously, happened as result of their complaint. Their complaints are handled properly and responded to clearly. Urgent action is taken, and practice and services improve accordingly.

Children attend school or other educational provision. They are learning and making good progress from their starting points. Staff are ambitious for children and support them to attend and do well in their education. There is effective liaison between the boarding provision, teaching staff and headteacher.

Children enjoy access to a range of social, educational and recreational opportunities, including activities in the local community, as appropriate, irrespective of any disability they may have. They are able to participate in after school clubs and other activities that promote their interests and development. They are supported to engage in faith-based activities if they wish.

Children are supported to develop their independence according to their individual needs, while protecting themselves from being in unsafe situations or with unsafe people.

Children are in good health or are being helped to improve their health or to manage lifelong conditions. Their health needs (including their mental and sexual health needs, when this is appropriate for their age and understanding) are identified and, where appropriate, they are supported to access appropriate arrangements for managing medication safe and effective and promoting independence wherever possible. Staff develop effective relationships with health professionals to support their needs.

Specialist help is made available according to the individual needs of children, including those who live away from their 'home' authority. The help is available when it is needed, and it is of a good quality and effective. If the home or school if carers are not available, and children are waiting for a long time for help, the school is proactive in challenging and escalating concerns with the placing authority, health authority or parents.

Any specific type or model of care delivered or commissioned by the school is based on evidence that it is effective in promoting positive outcomes for approved. The benefits of this to children are clearly evident. The care is reviewed regularly.

Children are very rare for the boarding provision are welcomed sensitively and with careful and considered planning. When children leave the school, staff promote positive endings. When endings are unplanned, the welfare and well-being of children remain paramount and staff do all at times with this in mind.

Children develop skills and strategies to manage their own conflicts and relationships with other children and young people, including their staff. There are clear, consistent and appropriate boundaries for children.

Children are treated with dignity and respect. They experience care and help that is free from discrimination or harassment on the grounds of protected characteristics (age, disability, ethnicity, race or belief, gender, gender identity, language, sex and sexual orientation. The care and help assist them to develop a positive self-image and to feel valued. Staff are sensitive to children's cultural and religious or faith-emotional wellbeing and a sense of their own identity. They also help them to overcome any previous experiences of neglect and trauma.

Staff always place the well-being of individual children at the centre of their practice. Children's achievements are celebrated and appropriately rewarded. Children are helped to feel safe and secure. They are given clear, consistent, nutritious meals and enjoyable mealtimes.

Children have appropriate contact with their family, friends and other people who are important to them. The school encourages and helps children to maintain such a relationship and helps to prepare children and their carers to promote contact and continuity of care where appropriate.

If there are any breaches of the national minimum standards (NMS), these do not directly impact on the safety or welfare of children.

Requires improvement to good

The experiences and progress of children are likely to be judged requires improvement to be good if there is evidence of the following:

The school is not yet delivering good help and care for children. The weaknesses in practice do not mean that children are being harmed, but the quality of experiences and its mitigate risk in the medium and long term. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded and promoted.

Inadequate

The experiences and progress of children are likely to be judged inadequate if there is evidence of the following:

There are serious or widespread failures that mean that children are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded. Their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.

Outstanding

The experiences and progress of children are likely to be judged outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a good judgement, there is evidence of the following:

Professional practice consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained improvement to the lives of children even where children have complex or challenging needs. There are examples of excellent practice that are worthy of wider dissemination.

There is significant evidence of change and improvement for children because of the actions of the staff working at the school. The progress of children is exceptional, taking into account their starting points.

The experience of staying at the school enhances children's life opportunities. Children are helped to overcome their previous experiences. They have sustained benefit they have had in making a difference to the lives of children in their care.

Research informed practice, some of which may be innovative, continues to develop from a strong and facilitated base, making an exceptional difference to children's experiences and progress.

There are no breaches of the NMS.

How well children are helped and protected

Areas of required evidence are:

- how well risks are identified, understood and managed and whether the support and care provided help children to become increasingly safe
- how well children are helped to understand how to keep themselves or may be at risk of harm, including from exploitation, neglect, abuse, self-harm, bullying and radicalisation
- how well, in emergency situations and behaviour and whether clear and consistent boundaries contribute to a feeling of wellbeing and security for the children
- whether safeguarding arrangements to protect children meet all statutory and other requirements and promote their welfare and prevent radicalisation and extremism

Good

The help and protection offered to children are likely to be judged good if there is evidence of the following:

Children feel protected and are protected from harm, including neglect, abuse, sexual exploitation, accidents, bullying and radicalisation. There is a strong and proactive response from all those working with children that reduces actual risk and the fear of harm. Staff are alert to the signs of potential harm and respond and effective partnership with the child's allocated social worker (if appointed) and their family.

Children are identify a trusted adult they can talk to about any concerns. They report that adults listen to them, take their concerns seriously and respond appropriately.

Any risks associated with children offending, misusing drugs or alcohol, self-harming, going missing, being affiliated with gangs or being sexually exploited are identified and managed well. Staff are alert to the signs of these risks and helps to place them are reducing harm or the risk of harm and there is evidence these risks are being minimised.

Children who are missing experience well-coordinated responses that reduce harm or risk of harm to them. Risks are well understood and minimised. There is a clear plan of urgent action in place to protect them and reduce harm or the risk of harm.

The school is aware of and implements in full, the requirements of the statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education'. Staff understand the role of the independent visitors from reference is not offered or arranged by the local authority. If takes appropriate steps to escalate concerns. Parents are made aware of the role of the child has been or is missing. Staff look for children when they are missing.

Plans and risk assessments are timely and address effectively any known risks and vulnerabilities. Risks are well managed. Children are helped to be safer and regularly reviewed and updated. Children are supported to take age-appropriate risks as part of their development of independent living skills.

Children are protected, and helped to keep themselves safe from bullying, homophobic behaviour, racism, sexism, radicalisation and other forms of discrimination. Children understand how to keep themselves safe and receive support are given to children about how to treat others with respect.

Children receive help and support to manage their behaviour and feelings appropriately and to understand the consequences of their actions. Staff talk to safe and acceptable and seek to understand the triggers for behaviour.

Positive behaviour is promoted consistently. Staff use effective de-escalation techniques and creative alternative strategies that are specific to the needs of each child and developed in consultation with them where possible.

Restraint is used only in strict accordance with the legislative framework to protect little child and those around them. Accidents are reviewed, recorded and monitored and the views of the child, dependent on their age and understanding, are sought and considered.

Conflict management is effective and includes the appropriate use of mediation and restorative practices. Staff are trained in conflict management and personal responsibility and reduce the need for formal police intervention.

Proactive and effective working relationships with the police help to support and protect children. Staff work with the police to protect the children living in the school from any unnecessary involvement in the criminal justice system.

Staff understand the risks that using the internet may pose for children, such as bullying, grooming, abuse or exploitation. They have well-developed strategies in place to keep children safe and support them in learning how to keep themselves safe.

Careful recruitment and regular monitoring of staff, agency staff and volunteers ensure appropriate adults are working with children. Staff are alert to any harm children or its place them at risk. The relevant authorities are informed of any concerns about inappropriate adults.

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Staff, including the designated lead for safeguarding, know and follow procedures for responding to concerns about the safety of a child. Any child protection concerns are immediately shared with the placing and/or local local authority as required and a record of the referral is retained.

There is evidence that the designated lead for child protection follows up the referral to ensure that the child is kept safe and that appropriate arrangements to protect the child from further harm. If the school is not satisfied with the response from other to be seen local authority or the placing authority. A escalation procedure is in place and used. The designated lead for safeguarding is aware of children's services CEO to the local authority and Ofsted.

Investigations into allegations or suspicion of harm are shared with the appropriate agencies and are thorough, fair and carried out in partnership with relevant agencies. Children are supported and protected. Support is given both to the person making the allegation and the person who is the subject of the allegation.

The school has effective links with local safeguards, designated officers and children's services. Staff are aware of the local safeguarding arrangements, safeguarding issues, such as the process and procedures during referral and allegations against staff. The school has good relationships with relevant local agencies. Staff understand their responsibilities. The school has a good knowledge of children's services CEO to the local authority and Ofsted.

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The physical environment for children is safe and secure and protects them from harm. Risks to children are minimised. Children's health and development are regularly reviewed and updated and comply with statutory requirements.

If there are any breaches of the NPS, these do not directly impact on the safety or welfare of children.

Requires improvement to be good

The help and protection offered to children are likely to be judged requires improvement to be good if there is evidence of the following:

Children are not yet receiving good help and protection but there are no serious failures (even them when being learned or at risk of harm.

Inadequate

The help and protection offered to children are likely to be judged inadequate if there is evidence of the following:

There are serious or widespread failures that mean children are being harmed, at risk of harm or their welfare is being safeguarded.

Outstanding

The help and protection offered to children are likely to be judged outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a good judgement, there is evidence of the following:

Professional practice results in sustained improvement to the lives of children. Highly effective planning manages and minimises risks inside and outside of the home. Children's voices are heard in the school, and kids are well-cared-for and are being significantly reduced.

Proactive and creative safeguarding practice means that all children, including those who are vulnerable, are kept safe and are supported to thrive. Children are unlikely to be missing from the school on a regular basis. Children are involved in creating ways to de-escalate situations and finding creative alternative strategies that are effective.

There are no breaches of the NPS.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Areas of required evidence are:

- whether leaders and managers show an ambitious vision, have high expectations for what all children can achieve and ensure high standards of care
- how well leaders and managers prioritise the needs of children
- the extent to which leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the progress and challenges in their organisation or service
- whether leaders and managers provide the right supportive environment for staff through effective supervision and appropriate and high-quality induction and training
- how well leaders and managers ensure that staff are suitable to work
- how well leaders and managers review and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses, present shortfalls, identify weaknesses and take decisive and effective action to address them
- whether the boarding residential provision is achieving its stated aims and objectives
- the quality of professional relationships to ensure the best possible all-round support for children and young people in the school
- whether leaders and managers actively challenge when the responses from other services are not effective
- the extent to which leaders and managers actively promote tolerance, equality and diversity
- how well the school takes into account the views of children

Good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers is likely to be judged good if there is evidence of the following:

The provision is ineffectively and sufficiently by suitably trained and experienced leaders and managers. Urgent action is taken to address any vacancy of the board of boarding (or equivalent)

The provision is properly staffed and resourced. Staff, including agency staff, understand their roles and responsibilities and are suitable to work with children. Arrangements for recruitment and appraisals are robust.

Leaders and managers actively and regularly monitor the quality of care provided to children and use the information to inform the school's overall assessments and plan of children. They learn from complaints, staff feedback, successes and breakdowns, and any serious events. They identify strengths and weaknesses in the provision and implement improvement plans that continually improve the experiences and outcomes of children.

Action is taken to address all issues of concern, including concerns or complaints from children, parents and other professionals. Planned investigations are carried out. Placing and local authorities are engaged as appropriate. The school's complaints procedure is effectively administered and acts to improve from previous inspections.

Leaders and managers ensure that plans for individual children are kept up-to-date and are reviewed regularly. Leaders and staff work productively with other agencies and professionals to meet children's needs.

Leaders and managers seek to build effective relationships with parents, with social workers from placing authorities, and with the local authority and other secure parole authorities for children. The nature and extent of the relationships with these agencies and bodies ensure that the best for future plans for the children and the relationships they have with their parents including the contact arrangements that are in place.

Leaders and staff are proactively with the local community including neighbours, faith groups, local organisations and local business to support children to use the facilities and to develop a sense of belonging, security and purpose.

If children are not settling in, leaders and managers take steps to ensure that children are supported to develop and maintain their relationships with others to consider the best steps to take next. They challenge effectively and take action when they are concerned that placing authorities are not making appropriate plans for children's future. Leaders and managers monitor progress for isolated children are not met or when they cannot keep children safe.

Leaders and managers understand any plans for the children and show commitment to children's well-being and to their educational and other needs. Leaders and managers monitor the progress that individual children make and can demonstrate the positive impact that living at the school has had on individual children's progress and life chances.

Managers and staff receive regular and effective supervision focused on children's experiences, needs, plans and feedback. Supervision is recorded effectively.

Staff and leaders receive effective support and challenge, including through team and management meetings. Is ensure that their professional development is supported and that they are able to meet the needs and the emotional impact of the work on staff is recognised and managed well by leaders and managers.

Training, development and induction activities are effective. They are focused on improvement and are based on the needs of children and the school. Activities are evaluated to ensure that they lead to effective practice. Leaders, managers and staff are up to date with current practice in their specialist area.

Staff work collaboratively to provide consistency and stability. There are clear responsibilities and accountabilities and staff have to come in. Good supervision about its practice. Staff report that they are well-led and managed and there is other evidence to support this.

Leaders and managers make child-centred decisions about children coming to live at the school. They ensure that children's needs are met in the environment and take account of the likely impact of new children joining the school.

The statement of principles and practice is kept under review and clearly sets out the ethos and objectives of the school.

The head of school ensures that the physical environment is maintained to a high standard, is comfortable and meets the needs of the children. Any damage or wear and tear is quickly and regularly repaired.

The school is financially viable and can provide high-quality, stable care for children.

Volunteers, gap-year students or other adults who work with children at the school are trained, supervised and supported to carry out their roles appropriately and to provide a high-quality service that enhances the experiences of children.

The ethos and objectives of the school are characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all children. This is demonstrated in practice.

Leaders and managers regularly review and act on any known risks to children, taking advice and guidance from local partners and agencies.

There are effective relationships with parents or carers so that they feel confident leaving their child at the school and they understand what the service is offering. Parents and carers are kept informed about their child's progress, concerns and complaints. Staff are accessible and keep parents informed about their child's stay at the school.

There is robust external scrutiny from governors and/or those with responsibility for the school, who regularly review and monitor the school's policies, practice and records, including those that address safeguarding.

If there are any breaches of the NPS, these do not directly impact on the safety or welfare of children.

Requires improvement to good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers is likely to be judged requires improvement to be good if there is evidence of the following:

The characteristics of good leadership and management are not in place. Where there are shortfalls in the provision, these are not being addressed in a timely fashion. They have plans in place to address them or they are too serious and there is capacity to take the necessary action.

Inadequate

The effectiveness of leaders and managers will be judged inadequate if there is evidence of the following:

The experiences, progress or protection of children are inadequate and leaders and managers are not taking effective action to address concerns. Leadership has been ineffective in prioritising, challenging and making improvements.

The school fails to work effectively in partnership with others in the best interests of children.

Outstanding

The effectiveness of leaders and managers is likely to be judged outstanding if, in addition to meeting the requirements of a good judgement, there is evidence of the following:

Leaders and managers are inspirational, confident and ambitious for children and influential in changing the lives of those in their care.

Leaders and managers create a culture of aspiration and positivity. They have high expectations of their staff to change and improve the lives of the children they are responsible for.

Leaders and managers lead by example. Innovate and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest quality care for children.

Leaders and managers know their strengths and weaknesses well and can provide evidence of improvement over a sustained period.

Leaders and managers develop and maintain professional relationships between the school and partner agencies that ensure the best possible care, experiences and futures for children.

There are no breaches of the NPS.

Legal context

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Ofsted carries out its work in ways that encourage the services it inspects to:

- improve
- be user-focused
- be efficient and effective in the use of resources

Section 50 of the Children Act 1989 and the National Care Standards Commission (Inspection of Schools and Colleges) Regulations 2002 set out the legal basis for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools. This applies to:

- maintained and non-maintained schools
- academies
- free schools
- pupil referral units

It does not apply to schools that are registered as children's homes.

When inspecting boarding and residential special schools, Ofsted considers the knowledge and understanding gained from previous inspections, and:

- the Children Act 1989
- the National Minimum standards for boarding schools or residential special schools
- statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE)

Ofsted inspects boarding and residential provision in schools but does not regulate it. This means that, unlike some other types of social care or welfare provision, we do not inspect boarding and residential provision in schools against a set of regulations or raise any requirements or issue notices.

The SCCF does not apply to the boarding and residential provision of independent schools that is inspected by the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI).

Notice of inspection

For a standalone inspection of boarding or residential provision, schools are notified by a telephone call from the lead inspector at least 1 hour and no more than 4 hours before the inspection team arrives on the first day of the inspection. We then email the letter of notification to the school.

If serious, written or safeguarding concerns have been identified before the inspection, the inspection will usually be unannounced.

For all other types of inspection, the notice period may be longer. Some inspections, for example material change inspections, may be agreed in advance (see The registration or material change inspection of independent schools).

We ask schools to give the inspection access to premises and records and space for inspectors to work. We also request that schools make staff available to meet with inspectors. Schools do not need to provide files in hard copy unless they are already used, although the inspection may ask for specific reports or documents to be printed.

Request for information at an inspection

At the start of inspection, inspectors will have consulted a range of Ofsted's evidence, requests information about the children, staffing and records. Inspectors agree with school leaders what information is needed and how it will be provided. Some of this information will be requested in the first email sent. We should not request more than the end of the inspection. First day on site.

If the inspection is unannounced, the inspector will email the school with a copy of Annex A on arrival at the school.

The information supports the inspection process and informs the inspection findings. It may generate extra time of enquiry.

The inspector will also provide a letter for the schools to send to the parents and carers of children who are in the school.

The inspector will also provide a letter for the schools to send to all staff who work at the school. It provides contact details of the inspectorate's whistle-blowing hotline during the inspection.

Inspectors should consider whether:

- the amount of time on site should be reduced for inspections of schools with only a small number of children in residence
- additional resources, such as more inspectors or more time, is/will, should be deployed for inspections of larger schools or a large site, or where there are specific issues such as a serious incident to consider

Deferrals

We will grant deferrals in line with our deferral policy.

Types of inspection

Standalone inspections of boarding or residential accommodation

Inspections of boarding or residential accommodation are carried out by at least one social care inspector inspector (SCIPs). The inspection carries out the inspection activities as set out in the guidance.

Aligned inspections

Aligned inspections are inspections of the boarding or residential provision in schools that are carried out by more than one inspector. Inspectors from different teams will attend, whenever possible, share findings and feedback at the same time. Inspectors report on a written about the boarding or residential and the education provision.

Aligned inspections take place when:

- the education provision in a school is subject to a section 5 inspection
- the boarding or residential provision is subject to a Section 8 short or emergency inspection (Education Act 2005)
- a residential special school is also registered as a children's home and both the education provision and the residential provision are subject to inspection. Inspection providers are inspected under section 87 of the Children Act 1989 and section 5 of the inspections of the education provision and inspections under the Care Standards Act 2000
- the DfE may require Ofsted, in rare instances, to carry out an emergency inspection of an independent school with the ISI

Activities specific to aligned inspections

The SCIP should liaise with the lead education inspector to share evidence and discuss activity as necessary, such as the timing of the inspection announcement, start and finish times, and the feedback meeting. The lead education inspector (LEI) is responsible for ensuring that this is managed effectively. Although an education inspector may be part of the inspection team, the LEI is responsible for the overall conduct of the inspection.

We will notify the school of aligned inspections by telephone the day before the inspection starts, giving a minimum of 4 hours' notice. The SCIP should liaise with the lead education inspector to agree the precise time of notification. Either Ofsted's education inspection support team or one of the inspectors will notify the school.

Inspections usually spread 3 days on site.

The lead inspecting inspectors meet and share time throughout the inspection to share evidence, discuss emerging issues, and ensure consistency and fairness as required by the other's work.

Social care and education inspectors follow their respective frameworks and procedures during aligned inspections. However, they work together as far as possible to minimise disruption to the school. The lead inspecting inspectors (LIIs) should also ensure a minimum and make efficient use of resources. Leadership/management discussions the main judgements to ensure consistency, particularly on matters concerning the independent school standards and the NPS.

On the rare occasions that either inspector changes their judgement post-inspection as a result of quality assurance, the lead inspecting inspector will notify the other of the change.

The lead inspecting inspectors must set aside time throughout the inspection to share evidence, discuss emerging issues and ensure consistency and fairness as required by the other's work.

A school with boarding/pupil in-year pupil/ng is subject to requires improvement for its boarding provision. However, judgements about the school's overall effectiveness and boarding/residential provision, such as care, welfare, health, safety and protection, should be made in accordance with the school's overall, as a consistent and clear message to the school.

Integrated inspections

Full integrated inspections are currently on hold pending consultation with the sector.

Emergency inspections of boarding or residential provision (independent schools)

The relevant Ofsted regional director may decide to inspect under section 87 of the Children Act 1989 as a result of a specific concern or following an notified inspection judgement. The regional director decides whether the inspection is carried out by Ofsted or by the relevant inspectorate responsible for independent schools, as set out by the DfE's independent schools team.

We have to inspect if the DfE asks us to carry out an emergency inspection of a boarding or residential provision. The DfE may specify that no notice is given.

For these inspections, one or more SCIEs spend 1 or 2 days on site and produce a short report, which we publish.

Aligned emergency inspections of independent schools

Ofsted and the DfE have agreed that independent schools in residential provision under section 87(2) consider that it is more appropriate to carry out aligned inspections because of the several concerns about the school.

In these situations, the regional director requests a continuation from the DfE to inspect the education provision at the same time as the section 87 inspection of boarding provision.

The DfE may direct Ofsted to carry out these aligned emergency inspections under section 87(2) of the Children Act 1989 and section 108 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

We inspect the residential provision practice at the same time but produce 2 separate reports. Both reports are published. The inspectors are usually unannounced. We may stay on site or on call for some time. Inspection may also go beyond 2 days.

Monitoring visits (residential only)

Independent schools

Where Ofsted has serious concerns about a school's safeguarding, we may carry out a monitoring visit to some proprietors under section 108 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

The DfE may also request that we carry out a progress monitoring inspection visit.

Independent schools monitoring visits have the progress made on other:

- meeting requirements made by the DfE through a notice
- the actions stated in an action plan submitted to the DfE by the school

The inspections are usually unannounced. One or more SCIEs spend one day on site and produce a short report. The DfE may publish the report.

Maintained schools, non-maintained special schools, pupil referral units, academies and free schools

We carry out a monitoring visit of these types of schools to review the progress made on other matters identified in the last inspection report or inspection and the progress of the school's action plan. We publish the report.

The monitoring visit is usually announced but may be agreed in advance if the inspectors want to speak to a particular member of staff or a particular representative. We do not need a commission from the DfE or need to notify the DfE's independent school's team for these visits.

Monitoring visits (aligned)

There are 2 types of aligned monitoring visits we carry out:

Aligned provision

We carry out aligned progress monitoring visits monitor the progress made on any notice served by the DfE under section 108 of the school's educational and residential provision. These visits are usually announced. Inspection usually lasts one or two days and we produce a short progress report (feedback) but we'll wait 2 weeks for the school that we publish the report.

Maintained boarding schools, non-maintained special schools, maintained and independent residential special schools, pupil referral units, free schools and boarding academies

We carry out aligned inspections (school work together to agree the most practical and suitable arrangements for monitoring visits of both the residential and education provision, including the visit announcement as necessary).

If the visit is announced, the school usual inspector should give a minimum of 4 hours' notice. Inspection may arrive on site of the same time.

Pre-registration or material change visits of independent schools

We carry out these visits when a school wishes to:

- start providing residential accommodation
- change its residential arrangements

These visits are part of the responsibilities of the DfE and under The Education and Skills Act 2008 and the Independent School Standards.

Depending on the complexity of the material change visits, there is a minimum of 1 day's notice of the inspection and this is usually aligned in advance with the school. One or more SCIEs spend 1 day on site and produce a short report. The DfE may request that we publish the report.

For aligned pre-registration or material change visits, arrangements are similar, but they may take more than 1 day to complete depending on the size of the school. The proprietor of a school is allotted the pre-registration visit, so that we can establish their understanding of their role in the school. The proprietor is unable to attend this visit because of other commitments, we may need to arrange a second visit to the school's capacity to meet the DfE's standards and management.

Material change visits can be carried out at the same time as a full inspection of the school's residential provision. We may need to do a second visit to the school to assess the impact of the material change. An inspector will be given additional time, as agreed by the DfE, in order to carry out the material change inspection work.

If the proprietor of the last inspection of the residential provision has resigned, it is unlikely that a material change request would be agreed, unless this would enhance the education or address inadequacies.

Timeframe

Day	Professional activity
1	Preparation
	Prepare plan for a large inspection
1-3	Inspection on site or beyond
3	Inform the school that it is leaning days with only emergencies
5	Feedback
10	Feedback meeting with school and provide a draft report
15	Ofsted report sent to the school and other 28 working days after the inspection
20	School has a chance to provide comment within 5 working days of the issue of the final report
25	The final report will be published on the Ofsted website within 5 working days of the issue of the final report
30	School may submit a formal complaint within 5 working days of the issue of the final report
35	The final report will be published on the Ofsted website within 5 working days of the outcome of the complaint

Preparing for an inspection

Analysis and planning

Inspectors are allocated one day to prepare for a full inspection and half a day to prepare for any other type of inspection. They should use this time to review information about the school, including the last inspection report, and to make initial judgements and to use it to plan the inspection. They have guidance.

Inspectors will look at the information that Ofsted already holds and/or that is publicly available about the school and its learning provision, including:

- previous inspection reports for both the boarding/residential provision and the education provision
- the last inspection report for the local authority area in which the school is based
- any concerns and complaints received either about the boarding/residential provision or about the school's education provision
- the school's own website, which may contain relevant policies and procedures
- the school's child protection policy (if available on the website) to ensure that it complies with the DfE's guidance for children and provides sound arrangements and guidance that meets those requirements
- the analysis of views of children in boarding/residential provision, boarding staff and parents, including questions from the point-in-time survey
- the school's Ofsted Parent View

In addition, the inspectors will be aware of relevant background and context information, such as the school's composition of the local authority in which the school is situated.

Some of this information is drawn together in the provider information portal.

The inspector carries out an analysis of the available evidence and information. They must record their planning notes on our inspection database.

The plan for the inspection should identify:

- areas of enquiry
- any areas of apparent weakness or significant strength
- areas where further evidence needs to be gathered

The focus of the inspection may change during its course as further evidence emerges.

Questionnaires

Each year, Ofsted uses online questionnaires to gather a range of views about different types of setting. Where relevant, this includes the views of:

- children
- parents and carers
- staff
- foster carers
- governors
- adult service users
- other interested parties, such as placing social workers and independent reviewing officers

We send links to the questionnaires annually to each provider by email and ask them to distribute these links on our behalf. The responses are submitted directly to Ofsted.

We share responses with the inspector for the service or setting and are used to inform the planning and scheduling of inspections.

If there are no responses for a service or setting, this also forms a line of enquiry for the inspection.

Ofsted Parent View

The online service, Ofsted Parent View is available for the parents and carers of children in schools to give their opinions of the school, including its boarding/residential provision.

As part of their preparation, the lead inspector checks the responses for the school. If no responses have been entered, inspectors will try to gather the views of parents and carers by other means. For example, they may telephone some parents and carers during the course of the inspection.

The on-site inspection

The start of the inspection

At the start of inspection, inspectors confirm their identity by producing their identity cards. They also need to show a copy of their passport or other identity document.

Inspectors always meet with the head of care/head of boarding or the member of staff responsible for residential provision, and usually the headteacher, at the beginning of the inspection to:

- outline the plan for the inspection and lines of enquiry
- provide the headteacher and the member of staff in charge of residential provision with the opportunity to share any current information or personal issues relating to individual children or members of staff that the inspectors need to be aware of during the inspection
- discuss the case tracking process and which children are most suitable for case tracking
- ensure that Ofsted knows the current details on the inspection database, including email address and contact telephone numbers for the school
- inform the school of the inspection team's initial judgements and aims to receive this feedback is normally given to the headteacher and head of boarding/head of care; additional senior staff should be invited to the boarding/residential provision may also attend at the discretion of the inspector. If agreed in advance

Case tracking and sampling

Evaluating the experiences and progress of children is a core inspection activity. This will be largely based on evidence from case tracking and sampling.

For tracked cases, inspectors take an in-depth look at the quality of the help, care and protection that individual children have experienced. For sampled cases, inspectors look at areas of practice within individual cases, usually to follow lines of enquiry.

Inspectors will use information that children experience high quality care and support.

We take into account children's individual starting points and circumstances during inspections. We recognise that some child progress is a particular aspect of their lives may represent a significant improvement for some children. We also recognise that for other children, the same aspect of their lives may be a cause for concern and may not reflect adequate straightforward. Progress is one area may result in significant improvement as they work through the impact of their past experiences.

Children's overall experience and progress are, in part, a result of how well they are helped and protected and the effectiveness of leaders and managers. Inspectors evaluate how well children are helped and protected, and how well leaders and managers, so that they can take these into account when reaching their overall judgements and judgements about the quality of care.

Inspectors track the experiences and progress of some children, dependent on the size of the boarding provision. This is usually 2 per day or 4 children.

Inspectors also sample elements of other cases to follow specific lines of enquiry.

The scale of the provision and the nature of any lines of enquiry will determine how many children are tracked.

Tracked and sampled cases are selected by the inspector from information held by the school. Tracked cases should be representative of the current group of resident children and may include, where relevant:

- a child from a foreign country, especially when the population of children shows high levels of ethnic diversity, including those who are seeking asylum or who have been referred group/country/ethnic/by boarding schools only)
- children who are from the older and younger age groups of the school
- a child who is a boarding/day pupil
- a child who has limited or no accommodation or who is not on the school's roll
- a child who has complex disabilities and/or health needs
- a child who has frequently been absent from the school
- a looked-after child or a child subject to a child protection or a child in need plan
- a child who is a young carer or young parent
- a child who has recently joined the school
- a child who is preparing for a planned exit from the school

Inspectors increase their understanding of children's experiences through evidence from other sources. These sources include observing practice and holding discussions with children, staff, governors and other interested parties.

Inspectors, when talking to the children, consider the extent to which children experiences and progress is consistent and contribute the school has made to the overall progress and experiences of children. Inspectors also consider the extent to which children are helped and protected, and how well leaders and managers have put in place key documents required to enhance understanding or clarify some information.

Inspectors also usually assess the management of medication and administration of medicines. This is so that they can understand how the staff team responds to complex medical needs, how well the school's medical administration is managed by managers and staff and focuses on promoting and safeguarding the health of children.

Inspectors examine, discuss and evaluate cases in line with the evaluation criteria. They look for evidence that the provision has had a positive impact on the overall progress and prospects of children and how managers and staff show they are making a difference to children's lives.

The detail of a school's current and past discussions held some depending on the enquiry for each individual inspection.

Inspectors must record the initials of children, professionals or carers who have been tracked, sampled and/or interviewed as part of an inspection within the evidence base.

Listening and talking to children

The views of children who live in or stay at the school provide important evidence of their experiences and progress.

Inspectors assess how well the school consults with resident children. Children's views may be sought in various ways, including through questionnaires and surveys.

Inspectors must meet with children during the inspection. Inspectors may use other alternative arrangements to speak to children, such as telephone calls at a pre-arranged time.

Many of the experiences of children living in the school take place after the normal school day and it is essential that inspectors are present at this time.

Inspectors should include children in inspection activity whenever they can. Inspectors should use their judgement to decide how to include children, for example:

- asking children to share their views around some of the boarding/residential provision
- meeting groups of children (this may be by year or house group)
- speaking: meetings with children
- spending time observing and talking informally to children in the boarding/residential provision
- observing or participating in recreational activities that children do, such as during the school day – this is particularly important in order to gather the views and experiences of children who are communicate non-verbally

Communication methods

Inspectors should use the most suitable methods for communicating with their families, other children and the adults who care for them. For example, these methods can include their behaviour and cuddle, signs and symbols or a variety of specialist communication aids, including communication books.

Inspectors should bear in mind the details of written consultation with some children who have limited or no verbal communication. Inspectors should also, if they can, consider and take this into account in their evaluation. In these cases, inspectors would expect to see the school using appropriate alternative means of gathering children's views and communicating with children who have limited or no verbal communication.

Inspectors must take into account the communication methods used by individual children. For some children, the inspectors may request the assistance of staff who know the child well and who understand the child's communication methods and who are willing to be a voice for the child. In other cases, they may be appropriate for inspectors to spend time observing children and how they interact with staff and request to their accommodation.

Sometimes, inspectors will spend time observing activities and situations where children are present, such as in the dining room or recreational activities, in order to 'tune in' and gauge (usually) for children. These approaches will be discussed between the inspector as necessary.

Inspectors are expected to discuss with staff the individual communication methods used by children and to communicate/interpret necessary information and understand if this informs staff's approach and practice throughout the care plan. They will use this information to inform their judgements. Inspectors should be aware that children may also particularly interested in the quality of interaction between them. Inspectors should have staff recognise and respond to children's changing needs. For example, they want to be left alone, want to be comforted, want to be with their friends, want to be cared for, hungry and cold. Inspectors will use this information to contribute their overall inspection judgement when evaluating how well staff help children to enjoy positive experiences and make progress.

Inspectors have to balance spending sufficient time observing interaction between children and staff and ensuring that children have opportunities to be with their friends who is unlikely to them to spending their routines and feelings of security. Inspectors will follow up with staff requesting to explore any lines of enquiry arising from their observations.

Some children use a form of sign language, for example Makaton or British Sign Language. An independent trained signer will accompany the inspector if this is necessary. Inspectors will use the services of a family member, a member of the local community, staff or parents and they may be required to spend some time with an unfamiliar to them or who does not understand their particular 'accent' or vocabulary.

Inspectors can request the services of an interpreter to join the inspection. This is helpful when the children and/or staff are fluent in British Sign Language. Inspectors should be aware that the inspection process may be lengthened if a leader / notice where possible.

Children, including those with limited or no verbal communication, may wish to share their views or asks for the inspector.

Practice when gathering the views of children

Inspectors demonstrate good practice by:

- letting staff when and where conversations with children are taking place and who is involved
- being sensitive to the fact that some children may not want to be involved in the inspection
- explaining to children that they will not include comments that will identify them, the inspection report or feedback to staff without their permission
- ensuring that they do not conduct individual meetings with children, and that children may have the presence of any staff
- where appropriate, explaining to children that information suggesting that they or others are at risk of harm will be passed on to the school's designated safeguarding person able to take necessary action about their concerns

Inspectors respect the privacy and confidentiality of personal information at all times. They always review staff's any decisions about children's involvement in the inspection.

Inspecting the accommodation and facilities

Inspectors are required to judge the suitability of the school's premises, including any accommodation providing accommodation and the area used for out-of-school day and recreation.

In the case of a school with a very large number of boarding/residential houses, inspectors may choose to inspect a sample of these. The lead inspector will be responsible asked to accompany the inspection team and on the tour of the boarding accommodation. When touring premises or grounds, the inspector(s) may take the opportunity to speak to staff or pupils they meet.

Inspectors may use a number of extra-curricular or school activities and opportunities to talking to children about their experiences, including about which hospitals at weekends.

Children living in lodgings

When inspecting a boarding school that arranges lodgings for children to live in (or stay in), the inspection team should visit a sample of the lodgings, which may be a list of the adults who provide the lodgings and the children placed there.

Inspectors will only visit a sample of lodgings if this is a specific line of enquiry.

Inspectors may consider a sample of the recruitment checks carried out for the host families and the training and support provided to the host families by the school (or the initiative's guidance). This includes the application for a DBS enhanced certificate for the designated carers and their friends/ close friends carried out before any child was placed with them. Inspectors expect that it may take two months to apply for a DBS enhanced DBS check.

Inspectors should also look at whether other appropriate checks are made before placing the student. These checks may include:

- references (character reference from employer and/or volunteer group) for those aged 16 and over
- interviews with those living in the home
- risk assessment of the home before placement of the student
- consideration of the suitability of the host family and their relation to terms of safeguarding, for example ensuring the designated carer does not leave the child in the care of a bigger or older child

Inspectors will usual take into account:

- safeguarding issues – for example, the quality of the training provided to host families and the guidance given on a safety, child-sexual exploitation and online safety issues
- the instruction provided to host families and ongoing training in relevant areas such as first aid
- whether the children share bedrooms and, if so, whether a risk assessment been completed and appropriate action taken
- whether the school has considered if the arrangements may contribute unfair trading
- the extent to support provided to host families and children, including in the evening and at weekends
- the guidance given to host families on "house rules" and times to return and what to do in an emergency
- if the host family has relevant medical information, including medical consent forms and their arrangements if the child is unwell
- children's access to organised activities in the evenings and at weekends

Observing activities

Inspectors can use the school's scheduled activities as opportunities for observing and listening to how children enjoy. These activities could include:

- staff handover between education and boarding
- school council meetings
- professionals' meetings

Inspectors should have meals with children and observe the serving arrangements. This provides direct evidence of catering arrangements and an opportunity to observe interactions between staff and children and informal and informal communal setting. Inspectors evaluate how individual dietary needs are met. Inspectors should speak to the catering manager and ask to see a sample of menus only if this is a specific line of enquiry.

Inspectors always try to strike a balance between the time taken to observe an activity with the weight of the data collected by its observation.

Gathering views of other professionals

Inspectors consult with a range of professionals to inform the inspection findings. This is usually through telephone calls during the inspection, or on site if a inspection is usually arrange. These professionals may include:

- placing social workers
- the chair of governors and other members of the governing body

Inspectors contact the designated officer from the local authority where the school is situated during, or immediately before, the inspection for relevant information. They will protect from enquiries relating to the school that are ongoing or have been carried out (in the last 12 months) in the case of investigations, special notices, or cases in which the boarding schools).

Inspectors ask for the relevant contact details.

Inspectors should always take account of any concerns and confidentiality when talking to stakeholders on the telephone during the inspection.

Discussions with managers and staff

Individual interviews are always held with the head of boarding/head of care or the member of staff in charge of the residential provision. The inspector will also meet with interviewed deputies or the chair of the school and the chair of the school governors through case tracking and case sampling.

The interview with the member of staff in charge of boarding/residential provision

usually addresses issues that have arisen from the inspector's analysis of pre-inspection information, and provides a chance for the inspection team and school leaders to discuss progress in meeting recommendations from previous inspections.

During the inspection, the inspector shares emerging findings about the school's strengths and areas for improvement with school leaders. This is part of the process of evidential provision so that they can potentially understand emerging issues.

The inspector usually meets with them at the end of day one to share emerging findings. The inspector normally sets out what they intend to consider on the second day of inspection, where relevant, so that any specific information or evidence can be prepared. The inspector usually meets with the school leaders at the end of their inspection to specify information or evidence required.

Shortfalls that could have an immediate impact on the safety of staff or children are brought to the attention of the school leaders ahead of one as soon as the inspector identifies such shortfalls.

Inspectors want to establish that the school's monitoring systems are robust enough to identify any emerging and repeated issues in practice. However, inspectors do not time routining counting medication or party-pack, carrying out vehicle checks, checking fire equipment, checking CCTV footage, freezers and food storage unless this is a specific line of enquiry.

Inspectors should be prepared to alter interview arrangements if staff have to attend to the needs of children.

Examining records, policies and procedures

Inspectors do not routinely examine all policies and procedures. Inspectors examine documents, such as children's records or staff recruitment records, when they are relevant to the inspection, or when they need to check for compliance.

Inspectors focus on the content of documents, such as risk assessments, when they work in practice, rather than the format. What matters is that they are fit for purpose and that they are being implemented. Inspectors do not expect to see any particular safety-and-operational. When paper or electronic personnel records are requested from the school, the inspector may ask to see those records, if they are included within the lines of enquiry for the inspection.

The school must be able to provide evidence that it is satisfied that all staff working at the school are fit to work with children, including those who are employed by agencies and/or MPSs and other relevant third parties.

If the school uses the DfE sample service to check the status of an individual's DBS certificate, the inspector may request to see evidence that the school has checked the identity of the individual. If the school does not have a sample service membership, then the inspector may request that a small sample of full personnel records are made available at the inspection visit.

Implications of the Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 came into effect on 1 October 2010. The Act makes it unlawful for employers to ask suitable-employer questions about their health or disability before they are offered employment, whether on a conditional or unconditional basis.

Social care providers must comply with both the Equality Act and the sector-specific regulations that require them to employ people who are fit, both physically and mentally, for the work.

To comply with both laws, providers may give conditional offers of employment to candidates, offers that are not conditional upon jobs, subject to appropriate checks and health checks.

There are a number of exemptions to the provisions in the Act. If a provider believes that a particular application to be recruited to a post of a child is in the over-aged cohort or the mother

Inspectors will assess whether providers have a rigorous recruitment and vetting process in place, including ensuring that their employees are mentally and physically fit before they begin work as part of their inspection.

How inspectors record the evidence

Inspectors must analyse the information they gather on inspection and use their professional judgement to make a judgement on the experiences and progress of children and other service users.

Inspectors' evidence should be clear, evaluative and sufficient to support the judgements.

The evidence should tell the story of the experiences and progress of children and other service users, including those who are vulnerable, those who are hard to reach, identify individual children if it is necessary to protect a child to be supported in these instances, inspectors can use individuals' initials.

Inspectors can record direct quotes from children, adult service users and other relevant people in evidence to support judgements.

The inspector should be able to explain the impact of the evidence. For example, whether evidence is from observation, a perfect sample or a backlog inspection, and what it means for children, the record must include the time of the interview and the interviewee's job title in relation to the child.

Throughout the inspection, inspectors maintain a record of their evidence. Electronic records are acceptable. Inspectors should record the evidence they have seen, the conversations they have had and any recommendations or requirements. Inspectors must ensure that the provider understands the evidence that the inspector has seen, the conversations they have had and the feedback.

After the summary evidence has been signed-off by the inspector for inspection, inspectors should not destroy any duplicate handwritten evidence until at least 10 days after the inspection report has been published, in case the provider requests a review of the inspection feedback to take place during the inspection. This 10 day period is counted as the last day of the inspection.

The inspector should:

- cover the main findings of the inspection, including both strengths and weaknesses.
- clearly communicate the likely judgements.
- indicate likely recommendations, with clear reference to the relevant NMS, providing a rationale for each recommendation.
- use the grade descriptors and the evidence to clearly indicate how the judgements have been reached.
- confirm when they expect will be sent to the schools for comments.

Inspectors will not provide a written summary of the inspection or written feedback in advance of the inspection report being sent. Providers may choose to take their own notes at feedback.

Making recommendations

Inspectors will make recommendations to improve practice when an NMS is not met.

In making a recommendation, inspectors should refer to the NMS for boarding schools or residential special schools. They should always give enough detail for the provider to be clear what they need to do. The relevant part of NMS should be summarised. Inspectors should not make recommendations in relation to other relevant guidance such as:

- Working together to safeguard children
- Statutory guidance for children who run away or go missing from home or care
- Keeping children safe in education

If, during an inspection, the inspector identifies a minor administrative error that has no impact on the safety or welfare of children, or one of a general nature, the inspector may need to make a recommendation about that matter. However, they may refer to this in the leadership and management section of the report.

Points for improvement

Inspectors may make points for improvement when an NMS has been met but an aspect of practice could be improved, even if the school is judged outstanding. The report must link any points for improvement to the relevant NMS.

Inadequate judgements: next steps

A judgement of inadequate for the overall experiences and progress of children will lead to a post-inspection dialogue between the inspectorate and the MPS or proprietor. The inspectorate will inform the MPS or proprietor of the opportunity for them to discuss the inspection and the quality of the evidence, and to consider the implications of the inspection for the school's future overseas. The policy authority in this context is the authority hosting the placement.

The case review

The case review must consist:

- actions to be taken
- that the DCS of the authority where the school is based must be notified
- if the school is an academy or free school, that the regional school commissioner must be notified. If the school is a boarding school, the Department for Education (DfE) is the relevant area lead for an inadequate judgement
- that Ofsted has alerted the local authorities that have funded placements to the school, and that the local authorities have taken appropriate action to safeguard placements. the case review should produce arrangements for the monitoring of pupils as with the details of the placing authorities, and plans for us to contact each one
- that the DCS of the authority where the school is based must be notified and informed about the provisional outcome of the inspection, including the recommendations, and with the feedback given to the school

The indicative judgement from inspection feedback should be sent to the DCS by the end of the working day following the case review. The school must be sent a copy of the indicative DCS feedback, and should be given the chance to check the factual information therein. As a judgement is still provisional, the DCS, the local authority, MSC and ISEPA (as applicable) must not be informed to use the information sensitively and not share it with anyone else. The school, the DCS, the local authority, MSC and ISEPA (as applicable) must not be informed of the inspector datasheet for future inspections.

The timing of the case review should be proportionate to the risk. It should be no later than 5 working days following the inspection. If this timescale is not met, the DCS may request a further extension of 5 working days. The case review should be completed within 10 working days of the inspection. If the DCS is unable to have concerns about the welfare of children, the case review should be completed within 5 working days of the inspection. If the DCS is unable to have concerns about the welfare of children, the case review should be completed within 10 working days of the inspection.

Following an inadequate judgement, a post-inspection dialog between the lead inspector and the MPS should be held as soon as possible, followed by a case review. The DCS, the local authority, MSC and ISEPA (as applicable) may also be invited to the post-inspection dialog with the inspector. After the case review, the inspector should complete and send to the DCS a case review report. The DCS should then, as soon as possible, send a copy of the case review report to the MPS or proprietor. If the school is independent schools team to log and send to the DfE.

The region can carry out any monitoring visits and/or full inspections that it considers necessary. It can be satisfied that children are safe, can be cared for, and are not in danger.

When the DfE receives the inspection report, it requests from the school an action plan setting out how the school intends to address the breaches in the NMS. The DfE uses this plan to Ofsted to evaluate and then may request that the region carries out a monitoring visit. The DfE may also request a further inspection. Ofsted may carry out a full or a focused inspection of a school in its discretion.

As part of the funding agreement with the ESFA, all academies and free schools with boarding or residential provision must meet the relevant NPS. When the provision is inspected, the inspectorate will inform the ESFA if the provision is judged to be inadequate. If the school has referred to the relevant NSC for breach of NPS and for further action to be considered.

The inspection report

The report should be succinct and evaluative. Inspectors' analysis must include clear evidence for their professional judgements.

In most instances, each inspection judgement section of the report should be no more than 1 page. Inspectors should use the grade descriptors in the Ofsted's Inspection settings that have sweet-weaknesses or that have been judged outstanding may require more detailed explanations for the judgements but should still focus on the key issues. Inspectors should ensure that the reports are long enough to say what needs to be said and no longer.

Content of the SCCIF report

Section of report	Details
Information about the provision	Brief contextual information about the service
Overall experiences and progress of children and other service users	The extent to which children and other service users are thriving
Inspection judgements	The judgements made and an evaluative paragraph for each judgement
Areas for improvement	Any recommendations and points for improvement (where relevant)
Information about the inspection	What we gathered and how we gathered it, including the inspection team
Service details	Information on the provider running the service

Child-friendly summary reports

Inspectors complete a child-friendly summary of the inspection findings. If children need an adapted form of summary, it should be sent to the provider with a request for it to be shared with children who need it in a suitable way.

When we know that children at the school will find an alternative version of communication to verbal communication, or children have limited receptive and expressive language, we will produce a child-friendly version of the report that include pictures and/or sign and other concrete vernacular.

It is anticipated that agency staff will transmit the child-friendly summary, if necessary, for those children who speak English as an additional language and for those who use alternative systems of communication. The summary can set out an expectation that staff will support children to understand their letter from Ofsted.

Quality assurance and arrangements for publishing the report

The inspector is responsible for the quality of the report. The inspector will check the completed report carefully before submitting it their manager for pre-publication quality assurance and moderation.

Any proposed change of judgement from the provisional judgement given at verbal feedback during the inspection will be discussed by the appropriate managers within Ofsted. The inspector will be informed of any proposed change to the provisional judgements and provide reasons for the change before the provider receives the draft report.

We will send the draft inspection report to the school within 10 working days of the end of the inspection.

The school will have 5 working days to comment on the draft report, process and feedback.

We will consider all comments and we will respond to the comments when we share the final report with the school. This will be within a maximum of 20 working days of the inspection.

Following the inspection, we will ask schools for feedback about the inspection through a post-inspection survey. This is sent to the school at the same time as when they receive the draft inspection report. Feedback from schools will be used to improve the quality of inspection.

Conduct during inspections

It is important that inspectors are polite and considerate and maintain a positive working relationship based on courteous and professional behaviour. Both must follow guidance in Ofsted's conduct during inspections policy.

Concerns or complaints about an inspection

Concerns

Most of Ofsted's work is carried out smoothly and without incident. It provides an area of concern, inspectors should try to resolve any concerns that arise with the provider during the inspection visit. This provides an opportunity to resolve the matter before the inspection is completed.

If the concern is unresolved, discuss the matter with the inspector. they should contact the inspector's MPI for further discussion.

Schools also have another opportunity to raise concerns about the draft inspection report, process and findings when they receive the draft report.

Complaints

If they not been possible to resolve concerns, a formal complaint can be raised under Ofsted's complaints procedure before the final inspection report is published.

If the school wishes to submit a formal complaint, it will have until the end of the fifth working day after receiving the final inspection report.

Monitoring visits

Monitoring visits are carried out according to the general principles of the SCCIF.

Monitoring visits are usually carried out for any of the following reasons:

- to follow up concerns
- following an inadequate inspection
- at the request of the DfE.

Timing and frequency

The decision to carry out a monitoring visit is usually taken at a case review, or at the request of the DfE. The frequency of monitoring visits is decided on a case-by-case basis and may be as frequent as weekly if that is what is needed. Timing of monitoring visits should be proportionate to the risk. It should be carried out no later than 10 days after the case review.

The inspector will tell the school that it is the subject of monitoring. Monitoring visits are usually unannounced.

Preparing for the monitoring visit

When preparing for a monitoring visit, inspectors take into account:

- the last inspection report
- recommendations set at the last inspection report
- the school's self-evaluation
- the school's plan for improvement
- any information recorded on the inspection database, including information from complaints, for example, the police, designated officers, complaints and similar issues
- any action that should be monitored at the request of the DfE.

How inspectors carry out monitoring visits

The monitoring visit should:

- determine the impact of any completed recommendations on the welfare and outcomes for children
- follow up any other additional concerns exist
- determine the capacity of the leadership/board/trust of/governing to sustain the changes required
- consider any further action that may need to be taken

The inspector must notify either the head teacher or head of boarding they arrive on site.

The inspector should judge how effective the improvement is and how, by taking the recommendations, the school has improved the experiences and progress of children.

To demonstrate the necessary improvement, the school need to show that its actions have resulted in a sustained improvement in the experiences and progress of children and an operational ability, as a result change of leadership, governance or poor leadership, do not to demonstrate sufficient proof of the ability of the school to sustain improvement.

Finding further concerns during monitoring visits

If inspectors clear that there are new or further issues of concern, or that no taking the actions from the last inspection the school has left other aspects to slip or other parts of its affairs or are not making sufficient progress, then the inspector should consider whether to carry out a full inspection. This includes considering new recommendations or notification to the DfE.

If the inspector is concerned or unsure about any aspect of the visit, they can contact their manager or a social care compliance inspector.

How inspectors gather evidence in a monitoring visit

The inspection will question how effective the provider is active, are in:

- meeting the recommendations set at the last inspection
- improving the experiences and progress of children

Evidence should be recorded in the inspection datasets.

The evidence should reflect the areas for improvement that were identified in the inspection report. This section should include evidence of the most significant recommendations and points for improvement. The inspector should decide what further need to take forward. The inspector must decide whether the school has made sufficient aspects slip so that there is new cause for concern in different areas.

Inspectors must decide whether the school has the capacity to sustain any improvements to they made. Inspectors should also decide whether the improvements are having a sustained and significant impact on all areas of provision.

Feedback at the end of the monitoring visit

The inspector provides verbal feedback to the school at the end of the visit. The inspector must:

- make clear any new issues to take forward
- make clear any areas of concern that have arisen of the visit and what the next steps will be, especially if the issue has arisen or improvement is needed
- be clear with the school when the next steps will be confirmed if the inspector needs to consider
- explain the outcome of monitoring visit in a suitable form. The inspector will report on the school website only alongside the last report, unless requested by the DfE
- make clear that the text of the report may differ slightly from the oral feedback, but should not be significantly different in tone
- ensure that the school understands that the overall judgement of inadequate has not changed (where relevant), although progress and improvements may have been made.

Monitoring reports

Ofsted will usually publish all monitoring reports on its reports website, although RPIs and RSIs will not be published on monitoring visits to residential provision. Inspectorate

Monitoring reports should outline any significant developments and evidence of progress that has occurred since the last visit. They should clearly explain the action the school has taken to address the previous recommendations and the impact of any improvement on the experiences and progress of children.

The report must:

- set out the reason for the visit
- evaluate where progress has been made and where progress has not been made
- clearly state the impact of continued concerns on children, alongside any action that Ofsted will be taking to notify placing local authorities and the DfE, and/or to protect children
- set out clearly where and what further action is needed

Inspectors must use clear language to indicate the level of concern, for example, 'this visit has raised serious concerns about care and practice in the [school]'.

Inspectors can clearly state that the school is likely to be subject to further action when this is the case.

Review of the monitoring report and evidence base

The monitoring visit report and evidence base will be reviewed by the inspector's manager before the draft report is sent to the school for comment. This is to ensure that they accurately reflect the improvements made and that the evidence base supports any further enforcement action we may wish to take.

The draft monitoring report is shared with the school and finalised using the same process and timescales as a standard inspection report (see the 'quality assurance and arrangements for publishing the report' section).

We may withhold publication of the monitoring report at the request of the DfE.

Incomplete inspections

We will apply our policy on incomplete inspections, where appropriate.

Positive environments where children can flourish

Inspectors should use Positive environments where children can flourish to evaluate how providers and managers create a positive environment for children to live and learn in and where staff interact positively with children. This guidance applies to inspections of children's homes and the welfare provision in residential special schools and boarding schools and to the inspection of schools.

The guidance is not a summary of the law or guidance on the area of physical intervention and restriction of liberty. This is about an approach to inspection.

When SCRIs are carrying out inspections alongside education inspectors, they must familiarise themselves with the relevant Ofsted frameworks and inspector guidance, and also the non-statutory DfE guidance for governing bodies, headteachers and school staff clarifying the use of force in schools:

- education inspection framework
- non-association independent school inspection handbook
- Use of reasonable force in schools

Safeguarding and child protection concerns

If serious issues of concern arise during the inspection, such as a failure to follow child protection procedures or if a child is discovered to be at immediate risk of harm, the inspector must notify the headteacher or the person in charge as soon as possible. If that may compromise a child or adult's safety, the inspector must ensure that the appropriate authorities are notified immediately.

Inspectors should always follow Ofsted's safeguarding policy.

Inspectors should contact their manager or regional social care compliance inspector if they need advice.

The inspector ensures that the referral is made to the relevant local authority children's services and the child's allocated social worker and/or the relevant local authority adults' services and, where appropriate, the vulnerable adult's allocated social worker. You can find further guidance in Safeguarding concerns: guidance for inspectors. If the concerns relate to allegations against staff, they are referred to the designated officer.

Inspectors must ensure that concerns about the safety and welfare of a child are communicated immediately to the DCS for the responsible placing local authority, if this is relevant. A record that this has been done must be kept. The regional Senior HMI should follow up the action that has been taken by the local authority.

The 'Prevent' duty

Extremism is unlikely to be a routine line of enquiry during SCCIF inspections. Inspectors should, however, be alert to signs of risks of extremism, such as literature, posters, videos or DVDs, or regular visitors to the setting when the purpose of their visit is not clear. Initial enquiries about the possibility of extremism must be directed to the manager or person in charge.

Inspectors should note the detail of any relevant concerns or referrals made by the responsible individual and how effective the multi-agency response has been. The DfE has published advice for schools and childcare providers on the 'Prevent' duty.

Inspectors can contact their RIM, who may seek specialist advice. If inspectors are unable to contact their RIM and remain concerned, they should follow Ofsted's safeguarding policy.

Female genital mutilation: the duty to notify police

Since 31 October 2015, when section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 inserted new section 5B into the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, specified regulated professionals (including social workers) must report to the police any cases of female genital mutilation in girls under 18 that they come across in their work.

The duty applies when the professional either:

- is informed by the girl that an act of female genital mutilation has been carried out on her
- observes physical signs that appear to show an act of female genital mutilation has carried out and has no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth

If a child discloses information regarding female genital mutilation to an inspector, the inspector should follow Ofsted's safeguarding concerns: guidance for inspectors.

Reporting concerns about the administration and management of controlled drugs

If inspectors come across concerns or incidents about the safe management of controlled drugs during their normal inspection duties, or receive information through any other source, they should email an outline of the concern and action taken to the social care policy team: socialcare@ofsted.gov.uk.

This action is in addition to any regulatory action or recommendations made as a result of the concern. Referrals should be made even when no requirements or recommendations are to be made. The social care policy team will collate all these referrals and share these with the Care Quality Commission (CQC)'s Controlled Drugs National Group.

Detailed information about controlled drugs (examples include morphine, pethidine, methadone and Ritalin) is available from the CQC.

Use of personal data

As part of our inspection activities under the SCCIF, we may gather personal data that is necessary to help us evaluate children's social care services.

Our personal information charter sets out the standards you can expect from Ofsted when we collect, hold or use personal information, and that we will follow all applicable data protection legislation in how we treat personal information.

Our privacy notice for social care sets out in more detail what data we collect and our powers to do so, what we do with it, how long we keep it for and people's rights under data protection legislation.

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