

# Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools

A leaflet for parents and carers

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## In which schools does Ofsted inspect residential provision?

Ofsted inspects the residential provision in all independent boarding and residential special schools, except those that are members of associations affiliated to the Independent Schools Council. We also inspect the boarding and residential provision in all maintained and non-maintained schools, academies, free schools and pupil referral units.

## How often do inspections happen?

Ofsted conducts an inspection of boarding provision in a boarding school at least once every three years. It inspects the residential provision in residential special schools every year. This frequency recognises the increased vulnerability of residential pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where there are serious safeguarding or welfare concerns, more frequent inspections take place.

## Are inspections of residential provision ever combined with the inspection of the school?

Yes. Where the school inspection and the residential inspection are both due at the same time, they are combined into an integrated inspection of the whole school covering both education and the boarding/residential provision. This results in one overall judgement and a single report. At all other times, the inspection of boarding or residential provision is carried out as a single activity. Integrated inspections are carried out as frequently as possible, but the frequency of education inspections can vary according to the judgement given at the last inspection. For example, for all schools, other than independent schools, judged as good at their last education inspection receive a short one day inspection. These inspections never take place at the same time as the inspection of the boarding and residential provision.

## How long do inspections last?

A full inspection of boarding/residential provision usually lasts three days and includes two evenings. This may vary in exceptional circumstances. Typically, the on-site inspection will start with the arrival of the lead inspector on day one and finish two days later with feedback to the school's senior managers and proprietor or

governors. In schools with very few children and young people, the inspection may take place over two days, including one evening in the residential environment.

A full integrated inspection of the education and boarding/residential provision of a school usually takes the same amount of time as a welfare-only inspection and lasts three days. The inspection of the boarding/residential provision usually starts the evening before the start of the education inspection.

### **Who inspects residential provision in schools?**

The boarding and residential provision in schools is inspected by Ofsted's own inspectors. They are either social care regulatory inspectors or Her Majesty's Inspectors. All inspectors are suitably qualified and experienced to inspect the quality of the boarding/residential provision in schools. Inspections may be undertaken by one or more inspectors, depending on the size and location of the boarding/residential provision and the number of children and young people on roll. Integrated inspection teams also include inspectors who are qualified and experienced to inspect the quality of the educational provision.

### **Notice periods**

On full inspections of boarding/residential provision (welfare only), the notice given to schools will be a brief telephone call from the lead inspector on the first day of the inspection, a minimum of one hour before the inspection team arrives.

On integrated inspections, the school is notified as set out in the education inspection framework and it is usual that the boarding/residential inspection will start before the education inspection.

### **What happens during an inspection?**

Inspectors draw on information that the school keeps, including any evaluation of its boarding or residential provision that the school may wish to share. They also analyse the views of boarders/residential pupils, parents and carers, staff and placing authorities in the case of residential special schools. They talk to the children and young people who use the boarding/residential provision, the headteacher, governors or owners and boarding/ residential staff. They inspect the quality of the premises and accommodation provided. They observe mealtimes, school routines, extra-curricular activities and arrangements for the healthcare and support of residential pupils.

The inspection of boarding or residential provision follows 'The framework for inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools' whether it is conducted as a single activity or integrated with the school inspection. Inspectors make judgements about the overall experiences and progress of children and young people, the quality of care and support, how well children and young people are protected and the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers. They also assess whether the boarding or residential provision meets the national minimum standards relevant for the type of school. Where it does not, they state clearly in the

inspection report which standards are not met. 'Handbook for inspections of boarding and residential provision' covers the inspection process in more detail.

On an integrated school inspection, inspectors also make judgements about the effectiveness of the education provision according to the criteria set out in 'The common inspection framework: education, skills and early years' or, as appropriate.

### **Gaining the views of parents, carers, pupils and others**

- Parents and carers can give their views about their child's education and boarding/residential provision on [Parent View](#), which can be accessed at any time.
- Pupils will be asked every year to comment on their boarding/residential provision (and in the case of independent schools, their education provision) through an online point-in-time survey.
- Local authorities who place pupils in an independent school will be asked every year to comment on the school through an online point-in-time survey.
- Staff working in the boarding/residential provision of boarding or residential special schools will be asked to comment on the boarding provision through an annual online point-in-time survey.

### **What happens after the inspection?**

Following the inspection, the provisional inspection findings and judgement(s) are reported to the headteacher and, if appropriate, the governors. The inspectors' findings are published in a report for the school, parents and the wider community. This may either take the form of a separate report on the residential provision (where it has been inspected as a single activity) or as part of an integrated report that covers both education and boarding provision.

The inspection report provides information about how effective the residential provision is and will usually contain points for improvement. The school is given time to comment on the accuracy of the draft report prior to publication.

When the report is finalised, the school must take all reasonable steps to make sure parents and carers receive a copy of the report. The school must also take steps to ensure that pupils are made aware of the findings of the inspection. The report of an independent school is sent to the Department for Education (DfE), which is the registering authority. Reports are also published on our website at [www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk).

### **What happens if Ofsted judges the residential provision in a school to be inadequate?**

If the inspectors judge the residential provision in a school to be inadequate, or if the school has failed to meet the national minimum standards, this will be made clear in the inspection report.

In the case of an **independent school**, whether the inspection of boarding or residential provision was carried out as a **single activity or integrated** with the school inspection, the DfE may serve the school with a statutory notice to improve and ask the school to produce an action plan for improvement within a given timeframe. It is likely that the DfE will ask inspectors to monitor and report on the school's progress. If the school does not make satisfactory progress, the DfE can issue an order to prevent the school from taking residential pupils; in extreme circumstances, the DfE may issue the school with a deletion order from the register of independent schools.

If the education provision of a **maintained or non-maintained school, academy, free school or pupil referral unit** is judged to be inadequate in an **integrated** inspection, the school will be placed in a category of concern. In such cases, the lead inspector will return to the school to carry out a monitoring inspection. More information can be found on our website at:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-inspections-of-schools-that-are-subject-to-special-measures-from-september-2012](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitoring-inspections-of-schools-that-are-subject-to-special-measures-from-september-2012).

In the event that boarding or residential provision is the only inadequate aspect of the school, social care inspectors will make a monitoring inspection to the school to report on its progress. This report will be published.

Where the boarding or residential provision of a **maintained or non-maintained school, academy, free school or pupil referral unit** is judged to be inadequate where the inspection was carried out as a **single activity**, Ofsted will ask the school to produce an action plan for improvement within a given timescale. It is likely that inspectors will carry out a monitoring inspection to ensure that the improvements have been made. Ofsted will also speak to public bodies such as local authorities and funding agencies, where appropriate, to inform them of the concerns. Ofsted will take account of the inadequacies in deciding the actions taken and the timing of the next inspection of the school.

### **What happens if headteachers or others have concerns about the inspection?**

Complaints are rare, but we treat them very seriously. You can find out more on our website at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted), or by calling our helpline on 0300 123 1231.

If you need any more information about our work, please visit our website or call our helpline.

### **How can parents or carers express concerns about their child's school?**

If parents are concerned about their child's school, they should start by talking directly to the boarding or care staff or the headteacher. Or, if necessary, they can talk to the governing body, proprietor or the local authority (in a maintained school).

In the case of maintained and non-maintained schools, academies, free schools and pupil referral units if parents are not satisfied with the responses they receive, Ofsted may be able to help.

Concerns about independent schools should be addressed to the registration authority:

Independent Education & Boarding Team  
Level 3 Riverside  
Bishopsgate House  
Feethams  
Darlington  
DL1 5QE

The registration authority may ask Ofsted to investigate.

Parents can find out more about inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools on our [website](#) or by calling our helpline.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

**Helpline: 0300 123 123**

[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)