

# Inspection of residential provision in boarding and residential special schools

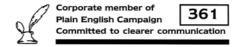
Consultation document

This is a consultation document on proposals for a revised framework for the inspection of residential provision in boarding and residential special schools. Ofsted seeks the widest possible range of views from those who have an interest in boarding and residential special schools, in order to ensure that the inspection framework takes proper account of the needs and circumstances of all interested parties.

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#### Introduction

- 1. The government is revising the national minimum standards for boarding schools and residential special schools. These changes will affect how Ofsted inspects residential provision in independent, maintained and non-maintained boarding and residential special schools. As a result, we are making proposals for changing and improving our inspection arrangements. These are set out below and we welcome your views on these proposed improvements.
- 2. The inspection of residential provision in maintained and independent schools is carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 and is based on the relevant national minimum standards for boarding schools or residential special schools and the associated regulations. The proposed revised national minimum standards are the subject of a current consultation by the Department for Education (DfE). The outcome of their consultation will be published shortly.
- 3. Our consultation welcomes the views of everyone with an interest in the inspection of residential provision in boarding and residential special schools.
- 4. The DfE plans to introduce two revised sets of national minimum standards one for boarding schools and another for residential special schools in September 2011. These new minimum standards will underpin our inspections from that date. We will, therefore, be incorporating the new standards as well as making some changes to our inspection framework.
- 5. In doing so, we are taking the opportunity to revise the inspection framework to ensure that our inspections of residential provision focus even more on what is important in a boarding and residential special school: that it is well managed, that children are safe and well cared for, and that their experience of living away from home contributes in a positive way to their personal and social development.

# The benefits of change

6. We believe that our proposed changes will lead to an improved quality of inspection, greater coherence in the inspection of residential provision across maintained, non-maintained and independent boarding and residential special schools, and more helpful inspection reports. We believe the proposals will benefit schools, teachers and proprietors by providing them with better information about inspection methodology, especially about the way in which inspectors reach their judgements and report on them. The greater focus on the quality of residential provision will, we believe, promote improvement and provide clearer information to the readers of our inspection reports, particularly parents, carers and placing authorities. Most important of all, these changes should have an impact in ultimately providing a better residential experience for children.



#### How we inspect now

7. Ofsted's document entitled *Inspecting residential provision in boarding and residential special schools*<sup>1</sup> provides guidance for the inspectors and informs schools about how we inspect the residential provision they make for children and young people in their care. It explains how the inspection of residential provision is organised and what inspectors look for when they inspect schools with boarders and residential pupils. Our inspection framework requires that inspectors cover the current national minimum standards and our guidance is common to all the welfare settings which Ofsted inspects.

## What we plan to change

# **Judgements**

- 8. We think it is important to establish as much common ground as possible in the way in which Ofsted inspects all schools with residential provision. Thus, although the national minimum standards for boarding schools may differ from those for residential schools, we propose to make the same key judgements and adopt the same grade descriptors for all the schools we inspect. This will enable parents, carers and placing authorities to compare the residential provision in boarding and residential special schools in both the maintained and independent sectors.
- 9. If you have any comments on our intention to apply the same evaluation schedule to boarding and residential special schools and make the same key judgements about them we would like to hear your views.
- 10. The new national minimum standards for residential special schools and boarding schools have not yet been finalised by the DfE. As soon as the standards are published, we will provide further details about how we will take account of them in our inspection framework. However, we are confident that the four broad themes on which we propose to make key judgements and the aspects that inspectors would consider in making judgements, outlined below, reflect coverage of all of the proposed national minimum standards.
- 11. We propose to make an **overall evaluation** of the boarding experience:

Overall effectiveness of the boarding provision<sup>2</sup> made by the school – this will be an overall grade taking account of the key judgements in the sections below. Inspectors will weigh up the key judgements they have made and be guided by the

<sup>2</sup> 'Boarding provision' will be used in boarding schools only. It will be replaced by 'residential provision' in residential special schools. Similarly, the term 'boarders' will be replaced by 'residential pupils'.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Inspecting residential provision in boarding and residential special schools, Ofsted, No. 100180; www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/100180.



grade descriptors before using their professional judgement to reach an overall evaluation of the boarding experience which the school provides.

12. We propose the four **key judgements** outlined below. These cover the DfE's proposed national minimum standards for boarding and residential special schools. The DfE held a full 12-week consultation on these last year and a further four-week follow-up consultation directly with affected schools earlier this year. The DfE plans to publish the national minimum standards in early April.

**Outcomes for boarders** – inspectors will take account of the national minimum standards and the regulations relating to:

- the progress of boarders' social and personal development
- the quality of relationships
- their behaviour
- their health and fitness
- how safe they feel
- the contribution they make to their residential experience
- their enjoyment of it.

The quality of boarding provision and care – inspectors will take account of the national minimum standards and the regulations relating to:

- the sufficiency of suitably qualified and experienced staff
- the quality of pastoral support
- the arrangements for promoting and caring for boarders' health
- the quality of catering arrangements
- the arrangements for boarders to keep in touch with families and friends
- the quality, safety and security of the premises and boarding facilities.

**Safeguarding boarders** – inspectors will take account of the national minimum standards and the regulations relating to the school's arrangements for keeping boarders safe and happy, including the effectiveness of policies and procedures for:

- safe recruitment of staff
- child protection
- tackling bullying
- promoting good behaviour
- encouraging boarders to keep themselves and others safe.



The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the residential provision – inspectors will take account of the national minimum standards and the regulations relating to:

- how well the aims of boarding are achieved
- the effectiveness of the management of residential provision
- the impact of the deployment, supervision, training and professional development of staff
- the accuracy of monitoring and self-evaluation and their impact on improvement
- how well the school achieves equality of opportunity for the children
- the effectiveness of record keeping
- the quality of communication with parents, carers and other key partners
- the effectiveness with which complaints are handled.
- 13. We would like your views on whether the key judgements proposed above are the right ones to capture the essence of a boarding or residential special school and evaluate effectively what is important for its different stakeholders.

#### **Equality and diversity**

14. We recognise the vitally important duty of schools to recognise and value diversity among their residential pupils and promote equal opportunities for them. Inspectors will consider equality and diversity in every aspect of the inspection and when reaching key judgements, particularly in the effectiveness of leadership and management of the boarding facilities. For this reason we do not propose to make a separate judgement on equality and diversity, but we will expect that consideration of these aspects will inform all the key judgements and sections of the report.

# **Grading scale**

15. We will continue to use Ofsted's standard grades: outstanding, good, satisfactory and inadequate. We intend to publish grade descriptors to assist inspectors in making the key judgements. We believe that this will help to achieve greater consistency, openness and transparency. Inspectors will use the grade descriptors to reach an overall evaluation of the residential provision. We will engage different groups of schools as we develop the grade descriptors to ensure that they are suitable for all types of school.



#### **Self-evaluation**

16. Self-evaluation has been an important part of Ofsted's inspections over the last few years, and schools have told us that they value the self-evaluation process, not just for preparing for and contributing to inspection, but also as a school improvement tool. We will no longer be asking schools to complete the online self-evaluation forms (SEF and SIEF) currently in use but self-evaluation itself is central to improvement and so will remain central to inspection. The online forms will cease in August 2011 and, from that time, we will use schools' self-evaluation in whichever form they wish to present it. We will be providing grade descriptors for our key inspection judgements, and they should support schools' own self assessment, and lead to a common understanding of quality between schools and inspectors.

#### The integration of welfare with the school inspection

17. In our informal discussions with boarding and residential special schools there has been overwhelming support for the 'integrated inspection' of the whole school, which brings together the inspection of the education and residential provision. We would like to reassure schools that, wherever possible, we will continue with this practice. However, changes to the timing of some school inspections in future may mean that an 'integrated inspection' is no longer possible. We will continue to conduct an inspection of boarding provision once in a three-year period in boarding schools, and annually in residential special schools. Whenever a school inspection is also due, we will bring them both together in a single inspection of the whole school.

#### Letter to boarders

18. We currently provide a letter for pupils after the school inspection in a maintained school. We are seeking your views on whether to introduce a letter for boarders which would provide them with a summary of the main findings of the residential inspection. A survey on the introduction of the letter to pupils in maintained schools in September 2005 was carried out in April and May of the following year. Of the pupils who responded to the survey, a majority thought that the letters were a good idea and a majority of headteachers were very pleased with the pupils' letter. When we conduct the inspection of boarding as part of the school inspection, the pupils' letter always makes reference to the residential provision, but when we conduct a separate boarding inspection, as we do annually in residential special schools, we do not produce a separate letter for residential pupils. We would like your views on whether we should do so in future. Were we to do so, the cost of this would fall on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> School inspectors' letters to pupils: lessons learned and ways forward, Ofsted, HMI 2376, www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Education/Leadership/Governance/School-inspectors-letters-to-pupils-lessons-learned-and-ways-forward/(language)/eng-GB.



schools, since we would provide them with an electronic copy of the letter and ask them to distribute it to boarders.

#### Capturing parents' and carers' views

- 19. We value highly the views of boarders themselves, as well as parents, carers, staff and local authorities who use the services of boarding and residential special schools, and we follow up the issues they raise in our inspections. Some boarding and residential special school headteachers have told us that it is difficult to obtain the views of parents and carers given the short notice of five days that schools have before their residential inspection.
- 20. To what extent do you agree that for parents and carers of pupils in boarding and residential special schools, five days' notice of inspection is an appropriate length of time? We welcome your comments on how we can better capture the views of parents and carers without compromising either the amount of notice we give to schools of their residential inspection or the confidentiality of respondents.

# **Additional proposals**

#### **Publication of progress monitoring reports**

21. Occasionally, we come across schools which are making inadequate provision for their residential pupils and failing to meet a substantial number of the national minimum standards. When this happens, Ofsted monitors the school closely after its inspection to ensure that it is making good enough progress. However, we do not currently publish a report of a monitoring visit to the residential provision. We do publish a monitoring report on the educational progress of the school. We now propose to publish a report after we monitor the progress of a residential setting where serious weaknesses have been found. This will ensure that parents, carers, boarders and placing authorities have a good picture of the progress that the school has made in rectifying the shortcomings of its residential provision since the last inspection. We consider that this will improve transparency and be fairer for schools that have improved.

# **Consultation arrangements**

#### Earlier consultation

22. In the spring and summer 2010, Ofsted commissioned a preliminary consultation with parents, carers, teachers and boarders to ask about our inspections and what changes they would like to see in future. We have taken account of their views in formulating the proposals in this document.



#### Additional consultation

- 23. As well as this online consultation, we will consult others who have an interest in residential provision in the following ways:
  - Parents and carers we will hold focus groups with parents and carers whose children attend boarding and residential special schools
  - Boarders and residential pupils we will hold children's and young people's focus groups and produce a children's version of the online consultation. We will also visit some boarding and residential special schools
  - Schools proprietors, headteachers, trustees, governors and staff in schools will have the opportunity to take part in the online consultation. There will also be an opportunity to participate in the evaluation process during the testing of the new framework.
- 24. Our standard consultation period is 12 weeks. However, because of the need to introduce the framework by the start of the autumn term 2011, we intend to run this online consultation for eight weeks only, closing it on 25 May 2011. To ensure that we mitigate any negative impact of this shorter than usual consultation we have made the additional consultation arrangements outlined above. We consider that eight weeks is sufficient time for us to assimilate your views, take account of the new national minimum standards which the DfE intend to publish in April, and inform you of our proposed way forward before schools close for the summer break. We recognise that some independent boarding schools close at the end of June.
- 25. During the summer term, we will pilot the draft framework and inspection documents alongside the existing inspection documents on a small sample of inspections. These inspections will represent a cross-section of boarding and residential special schools as far as it is possible to do so within the inspections that have been scheduled. Inspectors will discuss the draft framework with the schools to be inspected and we will take account of these views in the final framework document which we will publish in August 2011.
- 26. The new framework for inspection will come into force on 1 September 2011, in line with the introduction of the new national minimum standards. However, we intend a 'slow start' to the autumn term with fewer inspections taking place in September. We would particularly value feedback from the schools inspected during this period, as this will help us to respond swiftly to any issues that arise.
- 27. We will publicise this consultation by writing to all maintained and independent schools and special schools with residential provision and to the inspectorates. We will encourage as wide a range of users and stakeholders to respond to this consultation through articles in *Ofsted News* and other education and social care publications.



# What happens next?

28. The information from the online consultation will be collated and the key findings will be published in mid July 2011. These findings, along with the output from the additional consultations we will carry out, will be taken into consideration in the further development of the inspection judgements and grade criteria during the summer term 2011. We will publish the new framework in August 2011 and will alert the independent and maintained boarding schools and residential special schools to its publication through the August edition of *Ofsted News*.

# Sending back your questionnaire

There are three ways to complete and submit the questionnaire in the next section and/or send us comments:

#### Online electronic questionnaire

Visit our website to complete and submit an electronic version of the questionnaire:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/110028.

#### **Print and post**

This document can be printed and completed by hand. When you have completed the questionnaire, please post it to:

Boarding and residential special schools consultation Ofsted NBU Royal Exchange Buildings St Anne's Square Manchester M2 7LA

#### Download and email

This document can be downloaded and completed on your own computer. When you have completed the questionnaire, email it to: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk. Please put 'Boarding and residential special schools consultation' in the subject line.

The consultation runs from Wednesday 30 March to Wednesday 25 May 2011.



#### Questions

- Q1 To what extent do you agree with our proposal to inspect boarding and residential special schools in the same way and make the same key judgements about them? (paragraph 8)
- O2 To what extent do you agree with our proposal to make a summary judgement about the overall effectiveness of the boarding provision? (paragraph 11)
- Q3 To what extent do you agree with our proposal to make the following four key judgements in residential inspections: (paragraph 12)
  - outcomes for boarders
  - the quality of boarding provision and care
  - safeguarding boarders
  - the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the residential provision?
- O4 To what extent do you agree with the way we have grouped the proposed national minimum standards under the four key judgement areas? (paragraph 13)
- O5 To what extent do you agree that we should produce a letter for boarders/residential pupils after the inspection? (paragraph 18)
- Of To what extent do you agree that for parents and carers of pupils in boarding and in residential special schools, five days' notice of inspection is an appropriate length of time? (paragraph 20)
- Q7 Do you have any suggestions for how we can better capture the views of parents and carers without compromising the amount of notice we give to schools of their residential inspection or the confidentiality of respondents? (paragraph 20)
- Q8 To what extent do you agree that Ofsted should publish a report after a visit to monitor the progress of a residential setting? (paragraph 21)
- Q9 Are there any other comments that you would like to make about our proposals for change?



# Questionnaire for consultation on inspection of residential provision in boarding and residential special schools

#### Confidentiality

The information you provide will be held by us. It will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research to help us to become more effective, shape policies and inform inspection and regulatory practice.

We will treat your identity in confidence, if you disclose it to us. However, we may publish an organisation's views.

Section 1  If you are completing the consultation on behalf of an organisation and would like us to consider publishing the views of your organisation, please indicate this below.  Organisation:  Section 2  Which of the below best describes you? Please tick one option.  I am:  a carer	Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?								
Section 1  If you are completing the consultation on behalf of an organisation and would like us to consider publishing the views of your organisation, please indicate this below.  Organisation:  Section 2  Which of the below best describes you? Please tick one option.  I am:  a carer  a parent  a parent  a pupil who boards  a representative of a school or national association  a representative of a placing authority  a member of boarding or care staff  Prefer not to say	Yes  please complete Section 1	please complete Section 1							
If you are completing the consultation on behalf of an organisation and would like us to consider publishing the views of your organisation, please indicate this below.  Organisation:  Section 2  Which of the below best describes you? Please tick one option.  I am:  a carer	No  please complete Section 2								
to consider publishing the views of your organisation, please indicate this below.  Organisation:  Section 2  Which of the below best describes you? Please tick one option.  I am:  a carer	Section 1								
Section 2  Which of the below best describes you? Please tick one option.  I am:  a carer	If you are completing the consultation on behalf of an organisation and would like us to consider publishing the views of your organisation, please indicate this below.								
Which of the below best describes you? Please tick one option.  I am:  a carer	Organisation:								
I am:  a carer	Section 2								
a carer	Which of the below best describes you? Pl	ease ticl	cone option.						
a parent	I am:								
a pupil who boards  a representative of a school or national association  a representative of a placing authority  a member of boarding or care staff  a representative of a school or national association  Brefer not to say	a carer		a proprietor						
a pupil who boards  a representative of a placing authority  a member of boarding or care staff  national association  an inspector  Prefer not to say	a parent		a headteacher						
a member of boarding or care staff  Prefer not to say	a nunu wno noards								
	a representative of a placing authority		an inspector						
Other (please tell us)	a member of boarding or care staff  Prefer not to say								
	Other (please tell us)								



#### Questions

Q1. To what extent do you agree with our proposal to inspect boarding and residential special schools in the same way and make the same key judgements about them? (paragraph 8) Strongly Neither Disagree Strongly Don't know Agree agree disagree agree nor disagree Please comment on our proposals. Q2. To what extent do you agree with our proposal to make a summary judgement about the overall effectiveness of the boarding provision? (paragraph 11) Strongly Strongly Neither Disagree Don't know Agree disagree agree agree nor disagree Please comment on whether you think that making an overall effectiveness judgement will be helpful.



Q3. To what extent do you agree with our proposal to make the following four key judgements in residential inspections: (paragraph 12)								
outcomes for boarders								
■ the qu	uality of boardi	ng provision a	nd care					
■ safeg	uarding boarde	ers						
■ the ef provis	fectiveness of sion?	the leadership	and managem	nent of the resi	dential			
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know			
Please comme	nt on whether	you think thes	e are the right	key juagemer	its.			
Q4. To wha	t extent do you num standards							
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know			
Please comment on our proposed approach.								



Q5. To what extent do you agree that we should produce a letter for boarders/residential pupils after the inspection? (paragraph 18)

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know					
Please comme	Please comment on our proposal.									
Q6 To what and in resident length of time										
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know					
Please comme	nt.									



Q7 Do you have any suggestions for how we can better capture the views of parents and carers without compromising the amount of notice we give to schools of their residential inspection or the confidentiality of respondents? (paragraph 20)							
Q8 To what to monitor the			fsted should pu ting? (paragrap		after a visit		
Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know		
Please comme	nt on our prop	osal.					



29. oropo	Are there any other comments that you would like to make about our osals for change?



# Additional questions about the consultation

# What did you think of this consultation?

One of the commitments in our strategic plan is to monitor whether our consultations are accessible to those wishing to take part.

Please tell us what you thought of this consultation by answering the questions below.

	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Don't know			
I found the consultation information clear and easy to understand.							
I found the consultation easy to find on the Ofsted website							
I had enough information about the consultation topic.							
I would take part in a future Ofsted consultation.							
<ul> <li>☐ Ofsted website</li> <li>☐ Ofsted News</li> <li>☐ Ofsted conference</li> <li>☐ Another organisation (please specify, if known)</li> </ul>							
Other (please specify)  Is there anything you would like us to improve on or do differently for future consultations? If so, please tell us below.							
Thank you for taking part i	n our consul	tation					



# Optional additional questions about you

You do not have to answer the following questions but if you choose to it will help us to evaluate how successfully we are communicating messages from inspection to all sections of society. We would like to assure you that all responses are confidential and you do not have to answer every question.

Please tick the appropriate box.

	• •	•							
1. Gende	r								
Female	] Ma	le 🗌							
2. Age									
Under 14	14–18	19–24	25–3	25–34 35–44 45–54 55–64 65-					
3. Ethnic	origin								
Asian				Mi	xed ethnic	origin			
Bangladesh	leshi			e					
Indian	Black Africa		ck African a	nd White					
Pakistani				Bla	ck Caribbea	n and White			
Any other Asian background (specify if you wish)				Any other mixed ethnic background (specify if you wish)					
Black				WI	nite				
African	rican			An	y White bacl	kground (sp	ecify if you	wish)	
Caribbean				An	y other eth	nic backgı	ound		
	Any other Black background (specify if you wish)			Any other background (specify if you wish)					
Chinese									•
Any Chinese (specify if y	_	und							



# 4. Sexual orientation

Heterosexual	Lesbian	G [	Bay	Bisexual		
5. Religion/Belie	ef					
Buddhist			Muslim			
	rch of England, Catholic, Christian denominations)		Sikh			
Hindu			None			
Jewish			Any other,	please st	ate:	
6. Disability						
Do you consider yours	self to have a disability?	Yes	□ No	,		