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## Guidance

# Aligned inspections of schools with boarding or residential provision from October 2021

Updated 1 October 2021

This guidance sets out how Ofsted inspects schools with boarding and residential provision from 1 October 2021.

It temporarily replaces the guidance in:

- paragraphs 372 to 382 of the [school inspection handbook](#) (maintained schools and academies)
- paragraphs 380 to 390 of the [independent schools inspection handbook](#) (non-association independent schools)

From 1 October 2021, we will no longer carry out integrated<sup>[footnote 1](#)</sup> standard inspections of independent residential special schools or boarding schools. We will also no longer carry out integrated [section 5 or section 8 inspections](#) of state-funded boarding or residential special schools. Instead, when the relevant inspection<sup>[footnote 2](#)</sup> of a school's education provision and the full residential inspection are both due in the same term, we will align the inspections.

We will continue to carry out integrated [additional inspections](#) of independent schools when the Department for Education commissions us to do so and in line

with the guidance in the [handbook for additional inspections](#).

Aligned inspections are carried out by 2 separate teams, education and social care. They result in 2 sets of graded judgements and 2 separate published reports. We will also publish a summary letter using extracts from both reports on [Ofsted's reports website](#).

The judgements for boarding or residential provision are made in accordance with the guidance and grade descriptors in the [social care common inspection framework \(SCCIF\): boarding schools and residential special schools](#). We carry out the inspection of the education provision under the education inspection framework.

Education inspectors must consider the impact of the boarding/residential judgements on the overall effectiveness judgement for the whole school. They will need to take account of the proportion of boarders/residential pupils who also attend the school and the seriousness of the issues found.

In practice, inspectors from both teams will work closely together to plan the inspection activities. They will discuss their findings throughout the inspections. They will also normally carry out meetings with key personnel such as the safeguarding lead(s) and the proprietor together. The 2 teams will share inspection evidence where it is appropriate to do so, for example in assessing the strengths of the links between the day school and the boarding provision.

We will notify the provider of the aligned inspections at around 2pm on the day before both inspections are due to start. The lead education and social care inspectors will then follow this notification call with separate calls to the headteacher and head of boarding respectively. All inspectors will arrive on site at the same time.

In instances when the boarding/residential inspection is aligned with a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school and that inspection is deemed to be a section 5 inspection, the inspections will cease to be aligned at that point. They will continue as stand-alone events.

## **Inspections of schools that are registered as children's homes**

The inspection of education in a school that is also registered as a children's home may take place as a stand-alone inspection of the education provision or be aligned with the full [inspection of the children's home](#). When possible, we will attempt to align both inspections so that inspectors may work together and share evidence.

When the education inspection takes place as a stand-alone event, inspectors

must read the most recent education and children's home reports on the preparation day. They must make themselves aware of any current issues concerning children's welfare that may affect aspects of the school inspection. Inspectors should ensure that they take these into consideration during the inspection.

1. Integrated inspections take place when the full inspection of a school's education provision and the full residential inspection are both due at the same time, and we combine them into one inspection of the whole school. These inspections are carried out by one team, leading to one published report. [↩](#)
2. This will be either: a full standard inspection of an independent school, a section 5 inspection of a state-funded school or a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding state-funded school. [↩](#)

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