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Official Statistics

Non-association independent schools inspections and outcomes as at 31 August 2021

Published 24 November 2021

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This is the main findings report for the [non-association independent schools inspections and outcomes in England as at 31 August 2021](#) release. The following are also available:

- [underlying data and tables](#)
- [methodology](#)
- [pre-release access list](#)

Summary

This release contains:

- the most recent inspections and outcomes as at 31 August 2021

- provisional data for inspections completed between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021
- revised data for inspections completed between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020

Ofsted carried out inspections from 1 September 2019 under the [education inspection framework \(EIF\)](#). This replaced the common inspection framework, which was in effect from 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2019.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this release

All routine inspections and the publication of inspection reports were suspended in March 2020 (the previous academic year) due to COVID-19. Additional inspections resumed from 1 September 2020 but standard inspections did not restart until the summer term 2021. As a result, we carried out only 95^{[footnote 1](#)} independent school standard inspections in this academic year compared with the 3 years before the pandemic, when there were, on average, 460 inspections per year.

The most recent inspection outcomes of independent schools are at a similar level to last year, with 78% of schools judged good or outstanding.

Fourteen per cent of inspected schools did not meet the independent school standards at their most recent inspection.

Although we have been unable to carry out many standard inspections this academic year, we have continued our activity by completing around 350 additional inspections.

There has been a 6% growth in the number of non-association independent schools this year, mostly due to an increase in the number of special schools.

Introduction

There are around 2,420 independent schools in England. Of these, we inspect approximately 1,160 of the non-association schools and the [Independent Schools Inspectorate \(ISI\)](#) inspects those schools that are members of an association. The non-association independent schools we inspect fall into 2 categories: independent special schools and other independent schools.

Inspection outcomes profile as at 31 August 2021

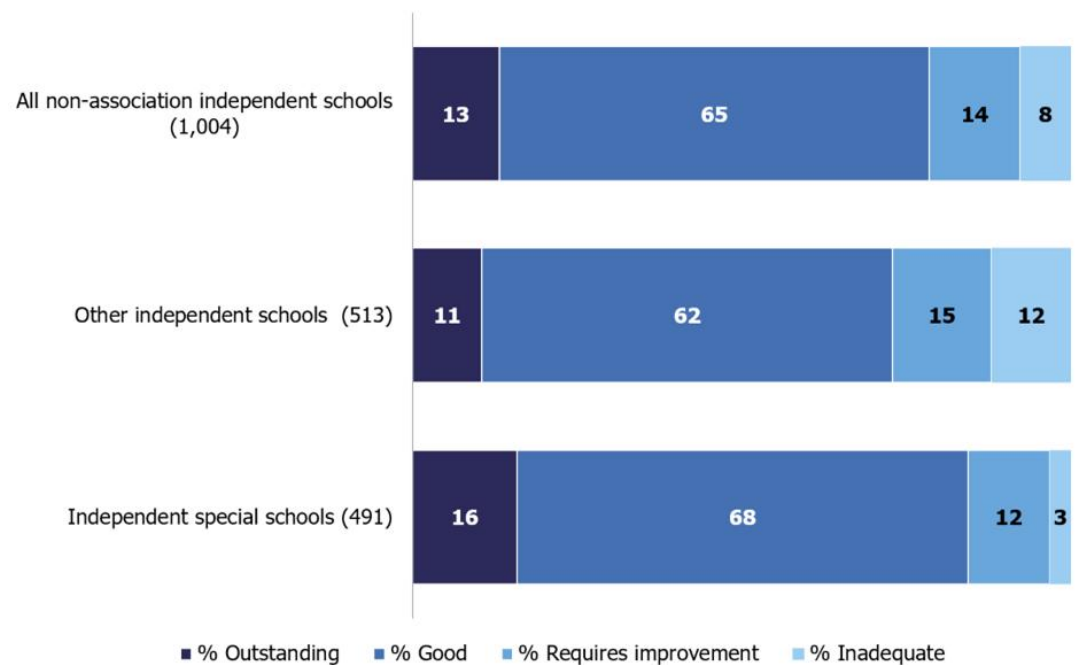
Seventy-eight per cent of inspected non-association independent schools are good or outstanding.

At 31 August 2021, 1,005 non-association independent schools had received a standard inspection. The remaining schools have either recently opened or have moved from ISI to Ofsted and are awaiting their first Ofsted standard inspection.

The outcomes for non-association independent schools have remained broadly similar to last year, with 78% judged good or outstanding at their most recent standard inspection compared with 77% at 31 August 2020. Fourteen per cent of schools are judged requires improvement and 8% inadequate, which is a slight fall from the 10% inadequate in 2020.

The minimal change in outcomes this year is to be expected because of the low number of standard inspections completed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools at their most recent standard inspection, 31 August 2021



Total number of schools with an overall effectiveness outcome is shown in brackets.

There is 1 school that had a standard inspection but did not receive an overall effectiveness judgement.

View [data in an accessible format](#).

The number of non-association independent schools has grown. The vast majority of schools coming into the sector are new schools opening, though some are schools moving inspectorate as a result of leaving an association. Since 31 August 2020, there are 121 extra schools, while 55 schools have left the sector either by closing (31 schools) or moving to the ISI (24 schools). This has resulted in a 6% increase in the number of non-association independent schools. The net increase of schools in previous years has ranged from 0% to 2%. However, the percentage increase this year may be due to COVID-19 and the suspension of inspections during 2019/20. Some schools may have had their pre-registration inspection, which is a requirement for a school to open, delayed from 2019/20 until 2020/21.

Of the 55 schools that have left the sector this year, 32 were judged to be good in their most recent overall effectiveness, 11 requires improvement and 10 inadequate. The remaining schools had not yet had a standard inspection.

Independent school standards

All independent schools are required to meet the government's independent school standards (the standards). There are 8 parts to the standards that cover areas such as quality of education, student welfare, and leadership and management.

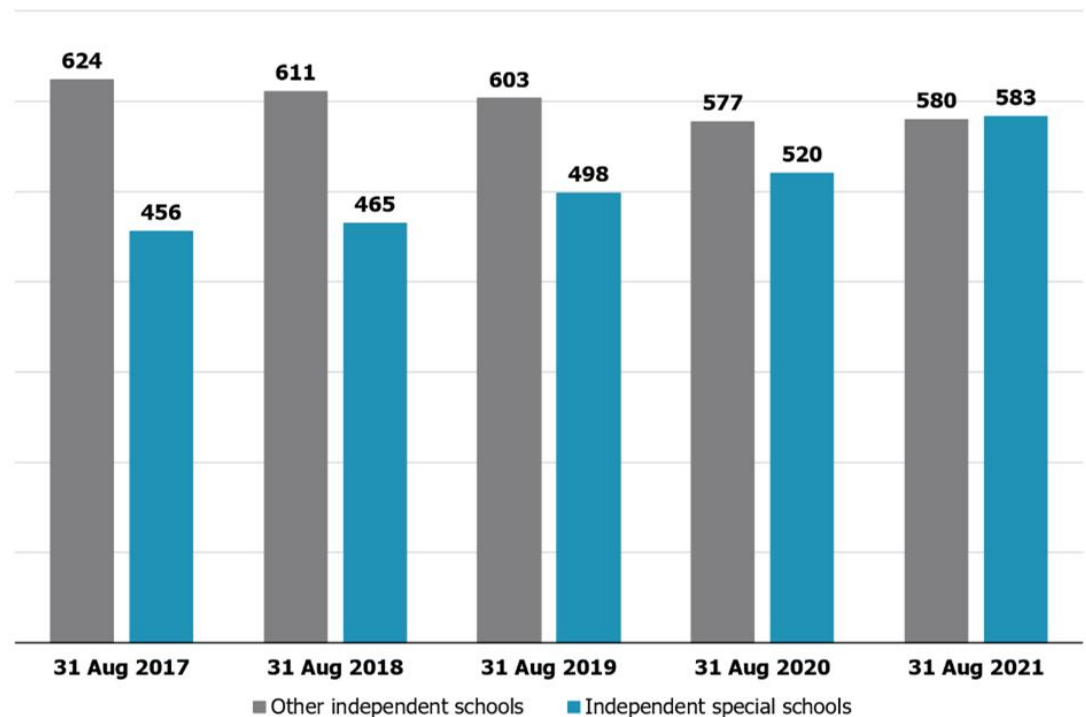
At their most recent inspection, 14% of non-association independent schools (141) did not meet all the standards. Of these schools, 79 have received a progress monitoring inspection since their most recent standard inspection. Just over half of these failed to meet the government’s minimum standards checked at the progress monitoring inspection.

If a school fails to meet any of the standards, it will not meet standards relating to the quality of leadership and management of schools (part 8 of the standards). As a result, the standards relating to this part have a high level of non-compliance (14%). The standards relating to the quality of education provided (part 1) have the next highest level of non-compliance (10%) followed by the welfare, health and safety of pupils (part 3) (8%).

Independent special schools

The number of independent special schools has grown by 12% since August 2020 and by 28% since August 2017. For the first time, independent special schools make up around half of non-association independent schools (see [Figure 2](#)).

Figure 2: Number of non-association independent schools by type of education over time



View [data in an accessible format](#).

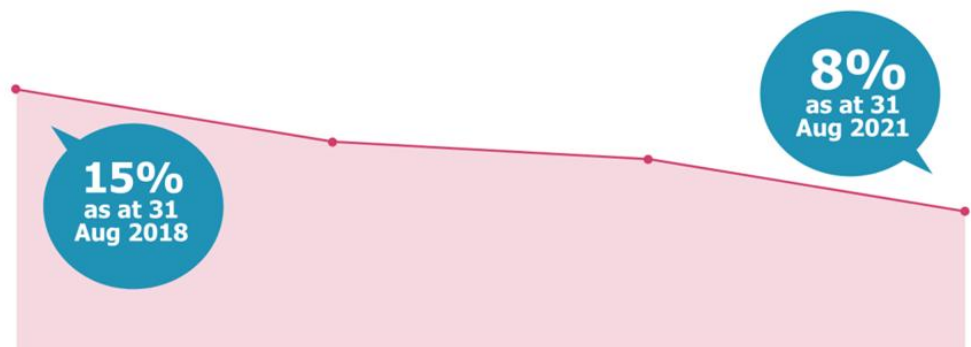
Independent special schools have stronger inspection outcomes for overall effectiveness than other independent schools. We judged 84% of independent

special schools good or outstanding compared with 73% of other independent schools. This compares with 83% and 71% respectively on 31 August 2020.

The proportion of independent special schools judged good or outstanding is 6 percentage points lower than for state-funded and non-maintained special schools (90%) in [management information for state-funded schools as at 31 August 2021](#). The difference between the 2 sectors has consistently narrowed since 31 August 2015, when it was 17 percentage points.

Figure 3: Proportion of non-association schools not meeting the independent school standards over time

The proportion of independent special schools failing the standards has consistently fallen since 31 August 2018.



View [data in an accessible format](#).

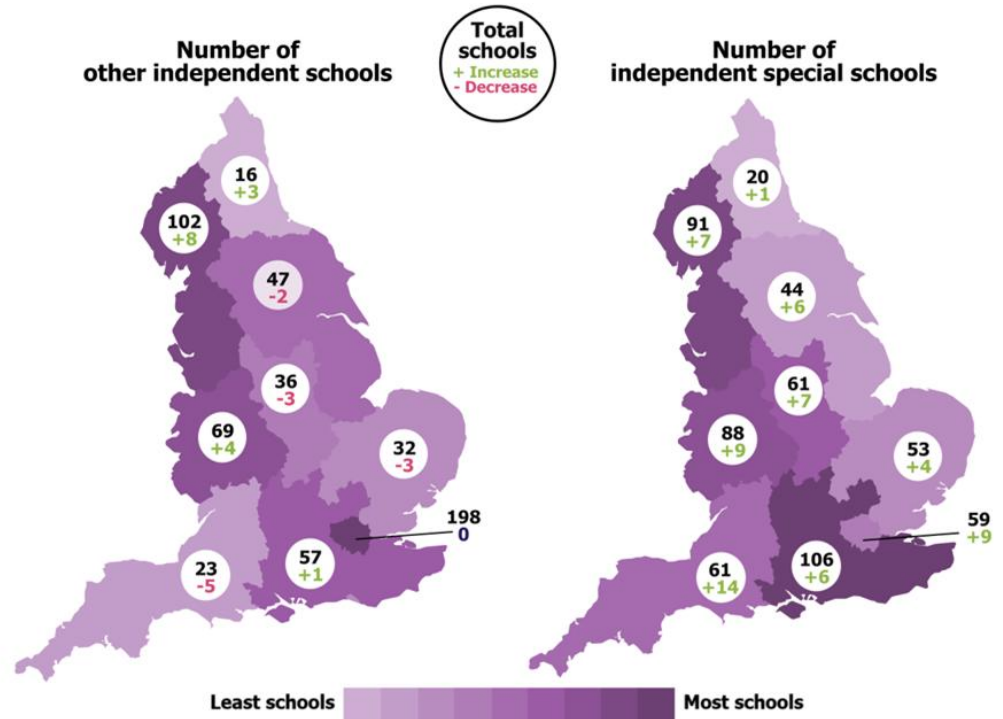
The proportion of independent special schools failing to meet the standards has fallen over time. We judged 8% of those schools inspected by the end of August 2021 as not meeting the standards compared with 11% in August 2020. This continues a downward trend in which there is a 7 percentage point fall compared with 31 August 2018. There is still a need for improvement as these schools do vital work in educating children with special educational needs. Placements in special schools can also be very costly and many places are funded by local authorities. There are around 890 pupils on roll at special schools that did not meet the standards as at 31 August 2021.

Regions

Across the 9 regions, the number of non-association independent schools varies

greatly. This ranges from 257 schools in London to 36 in the North East. The increase in the number of special schools since August 2020 can be seen in all regions in England. The South West has the largest net increase with an extra 14 (30%) independent special schools that have opened. The South East still has the most special schools with 106.

Figure 4: Number of non-association independent schools by type of education and region, 31 August 2021

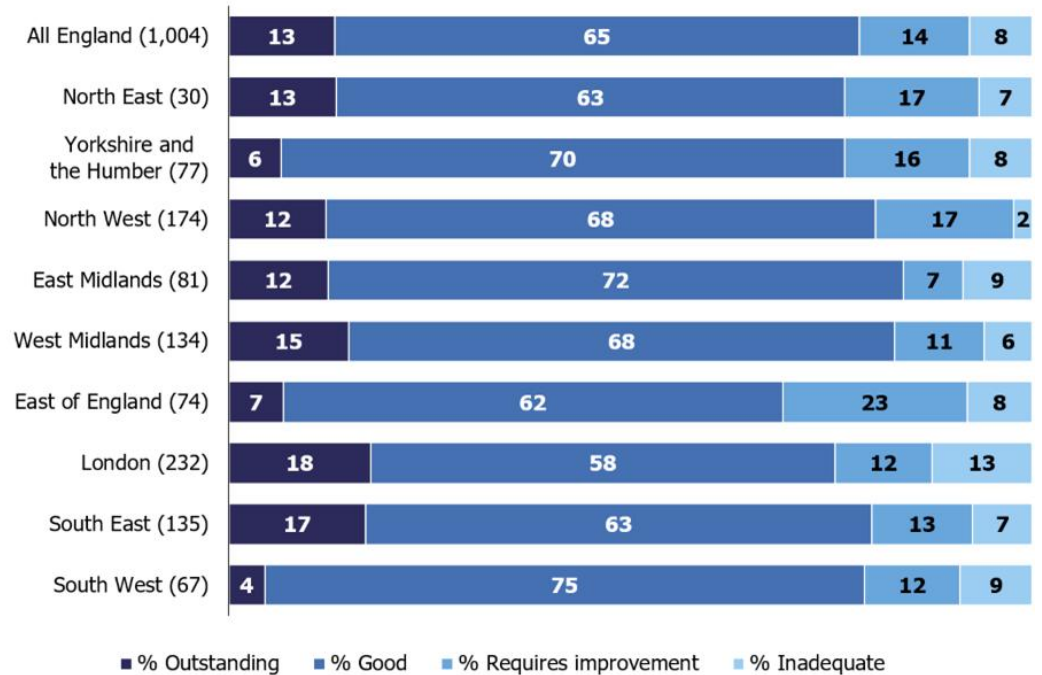


The increase or decrease is based on a comparison with the same data as at 31 August 2020.

View [data in an accessible format](#).

The regions with the highest proportion of schools judged good or outstanding were the East Midlands (84%) and West Midlands (83%) (see [Figure 5](#)). The East of England had the lowest, at 69%, despite an increase of 8 percentage points from 31 August 2020. London has the highest proportion for both outstanding schools (18%) and inadequate schools (13%). This is similar to the previous year. However, regional inspection outcomes can vary from year to year due to the low number of independent schools in each region.

Figure 5: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools at their most recent inspection by region, 31 August 2021



Total number of schools with an overall effectiveness outcome is shown in brackets.

There is 1 school in the South East that had a standard inspection but did not receive an overall effectiveness judgement.

Some percentages are based on small numbers and should be treated with caution.

View [data in an accessible format](#).

Independent faith schools

As at 31 August 2021, 26% (301) of non-association independent schools are faith schools. ^[footnote 2] We have inspected 278 of these schools.

Muslim schools account for 45% of faith schools in this sector, followed by Christian schools (31%) and Jewish schools (24%). However, the number of pupils taught in Jewish schools tends to be larger than in the other faith schools. This means that the number of pupils attending Jewish schools (17,000) is over 3 times those attending Christian schools (4,700).

The inspection outcomes for non-association independent faith schools are weaker than the outcomes for state-funded faith schools. At their most recent standard inspection, the percentage of independent Jewish and Muslim faith schools judged good or outstanding was 36% and 69% respectively. This is compared with 86% and 93% for Jewish and Muslim state-funded schools in [management information for state-funded schools as at 31 August 2021](#). Christian schools were more comparable: 83% of independent Christian schools were judged good or outstanding, compared with 89% for state-funded Christian schools.

Independent faith schools have a high proportion (25%) of schools not meeting the standards. In particular, 55% of Jewish schools did not meet the standards at their most recent inspection, which affects nearly 9,800 pupils.

Safeguarding

Effective safeguarding is critical for a school's overall effectiveness judgement. It has been a specific judgement in inspections since 1 September 2015 when the common inspection framework was introduced.

The proportion of inspected schools with ineffective safeguarding is 5%. Although it is essential that all schools have effective safeguarding in place, this percentage has continued to reduce, compared with 7% on 31 August 2020 and 14% on 31 August 2016.

A higher proportion of other independent schools have ineffective safeguarding (8%) compared with independent special schools (2%). Faith schools fare particularly poorly, with 11% judged to have ineffective safeguarding. All schools with ineffective safeguarding are judged as inadequate overall.

Inspections between 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021

All routine inspections were paused in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional inspections resumed from 1 September 2020 but standard inspections did not restart until the summer term 2021. As a result, we only carried out 95^{[footnote 3](#)} standard inspections during this period. Of these 95 inspections, 79 were published on our reports website within the timescales for these statistics.

Of the 79 published reports, 4% of schools were judged outstanding, 59% good, 28% requires improvement and 9% inadequate.

Due to the low number of inspections, it is not appropriate to compare this year's in-year inspection outcomes with previous years. The criteria for selecting schools in the summer term were different to previous years and focused on visiting those schools with a higher risk assessment as well as those due a standard inspection.

Around a third of the schools selected for inspection had a previous overall effectiveness outcome of requires improvement or inadequate. A further 36 schools had no previous standard inspection. Overall, we inspected 43 schools that had a previous judgement. Of these, 24 schools improved their overall effectiveness outcome, 9 declined, and the remaining 10 stayed the same.

The inspection activity this year has focused on additional inspections. This is because the Department for Education (DfE) prioritised pre-registration and material change inspections based on a requirement to increase school places where it was most needed. Also, emergency inspections and progress monitoring inspections were prioritised if there were concerns about the safeguarding or safety of pupils.

From September 2020 until the end of the summer term 2021, we carried out 348 additional inspections. These included the following:

- 77 progress monitoring inspections
- 52 emergency inspections
- 70 material change inspections
- 149 pre-registration inspections

We continue to monitor schools that failed to meet all standards at their most recent inspection. We carried out 77 progress monitoring inspections to schools this academic year. Of these inspections, 51% of the schools did not meet all the standards that were checked. Although this has fallen since 2019/20, when 57% of schools did not meet the standards, it still shows there is persistent poor performance in the sector.

At the request of the DfE, we completed a larger number of emergency inspections this year compared with 2019/20. Of the 52 emergency inspections that we carried out, 44% of schools failed to meet the standards that were checked.

Revisions

Provisional data indicated that, between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020, 254 standard inspections were carried out. This data includes inspection reports that were published by 30 September 2020. Based on published reports by 30 September 2021, there was 1 additional standard inspection, bringing the total number of inspections carried out to 255.

The addition of this extra inspection did not change the profile of overall effectiveness for schools inspected in the last academic year.

Revisions have been made to data in this publication in line with [Ofsted's revisions policy for official statistics](#).

Notes

The purpose of these official statistics is to provide data and insight on the Ofsted

inspections of non-association independent schools. They provide information about how the judgements have changed over time and also how they may vary across different regions, school types and faith groupings.

Data in this report is from inspections as at 31 August 2021, if the report was published by 30 September 2021. If an inspection report was not published by the cut-off date, then the previous inspection will be reported as the school's most recent inspection where applicable. Any data, charts and tables referring to in-year outcomes are based on inspections from 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 and published by 30 September 2021.

Data in this official statistics release reflects judgements made on inspections carried out under sections 99, 109(1) and 109(2) of the [Education and Skills Act 2008](#). The regulations set out the standards on which inspectors report on. This includes the extent to which the school meets the requirements of the [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#) (referred to as the independent school standards).

The accompanying [methodology and quality report](#) for this release sets out the main uses of this data, further contextual information and arrangements for quality assurance. It also provides information about strengths and limitations of the statistics.

Where we have quoted percentages in this report, figures have been rounded and may not add to 100.

Glossary

Definitions of terms are in our [glossary](#).

Further information

Contact for comments or feedback

If you have any comments or feedback on this publication, please contact Anita Patel on 03000 130 914 or Anita.Patel@ofsted.gov.uk.

Annual report

We will publish findings from our forthcoming [Annual Report](#) on 7 December 2021.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following for their contribution to this statistical release: Alison Bateman, Tim Milstead and James Jordan.

Annex: data tables for figures

This section contains the underlying data in an accessible table format for all figures.

Data for Figure 1: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools at their most recent standard inspection, 31 August 2021

School type (number of inspections in brackets)	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
All non-association independent schools (1,004)	13	65	14	8
Other independent schools (513)	11	62	15	12
Independent special schools (491)	16	68	12	3

See [Figure 1](#)

Data for Figure 2: Number of non-association independent schools by type of education over time

	Number of other independent schools	Number of independent special schools
31 Aug 2021	580	583
31 Aug 2020	577	520
31 Aug 2019	603	498
31 Aug 2018	611	465
31 Aug 2017	624	456

See [Figure 2](#)

Data for Figure 3: Proportion of non-association schools not meeting the independent school standards over time

Date (number of inspections in brackets)	% independent special schools not meeting the standards
31 August 2021 (491 total inspections)	8
31 August 2020 (482 total inspections)	11
31 August 2019 (467 total inspections)	12
31 August 2018 (435 total inspections)	15

See [Figure 3](#)

Data for Figure 4: Number of non-association independent schools by type of education and region, 31 August 2021

Region	Number of other independent schools	Net change since 31 August 2020	Rank based on number of other independent schools	Number of independent special schools	Net change since 31 August 2020	Rank based on number of independent special schools
North East	16	+3	9	20	+1	9
Yorkshire and the Humber	47	-2	5	44	+6	8
North West	102	+8	2	91	+7	2
East Midlands	36	-3	6	61	+7	4
West Midlands	69	+4	3	88	+9	3
East of England	32	-3	7	53	+4	7
London	198	0	1	59	+9	6
South East	57	+1	4	106	+6	1
South West	23	-5	8	61	+14	4

See [Figure 4](#)

Data for Figure 5: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools at their most recent inspection by region, 31 August 2021

Region (number of inspections in brackets)	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
All England (1,004)	13	65	14	8
North East (30)	13	63	17	7
Yorkshire and the Humber (77)	6	70	16	8
North West (174)	12	68	17	2
East Midlands (81)	12	72	7	9
West Midlands (134)	15	68	11	6
East of England (74)	7	62	23	8
London (232)	18	58	12	13
South East (135)	17	63	13	7
South West (67)	4	75	12	9

See [Figure 5](#)

1. This data is based on the [non-association independent school management information as at 31 July 2021](#). We carried out 95 standard inspections in the summer term. Of these 95, 79 had been published by the cut-off date for these official statistics.↵
2. A school is defined as a faith school based on whether it has declared either a religious character, a religious ethos, or both. The school updates this information directly on the [Get Information About Schools \(GIAS\)](#) website maintained by the DfE. If the school does not declare a religious character or ethos, it is categorised in our statistics as 'non-faith', although it is possible that some of these schools also operate as faith schools.↵
3. This data is based on the [non-association independent school management information as at 31 July 2021](#). We carried out 95 standard inspections in the summer term. Of these 95, 79 had been published by the cut-off date for these official statistics.↵

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