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23 November 2021

The Rt Hon. Nadhim Zahawi MP
Secretary of State for Education
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London
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Amanda Spielman
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

Annual report on inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2020/21

During 2020/21, the Department for Education did not commission Ofsted to carry out any monitoring of the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). This was in line with the directions made by your predecessor in November 2019.

As with last year, Ofsted can only report on the number of inspections carried out by the ISI in 2020/21 and on the collaborative work between the ISI and Ofsted over the same period.

Owing to the continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, much of our collaborative work this year has occurred remotely. However, Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges created opportunities for greater collaboration between Ofsted and the ISI. We will continue to collaborate in this area over the coming academic year.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Spielman
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

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23 November 2021

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Amanda Spielman
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

**Annual report on inspection work by the Independent Schools
Inspectorate in 2020/21**

Please find enclosed a copy of the 2020/21 annual report for the Independent Schools Inspectorate, which I have today sent to the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon. Nadhim Zahawi MP. The annual report will also be published on Ofsted's website.

The continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that much of our collaborative work this year has occurred remotely. However, Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges created opportunities for greater collaboration between our organisations. I look forward to working with you next year.

Yours sincerely



Amanda Spielman
Her Majesty's Chief Inspector

Annual report on inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in the academic year 2020/21

Introduction

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect registered independent schools belonging to the associations that make up the Independent Schools Council (ISC). This includes its registered early years provision and boarding provision.

Under section 107(1) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has a duty to prepare and send a report to the Secretary of State about the inspectorates for independent schools, at intervals of no more than a year. Under section 107(2), HMCI must have regard to matters that the Secretary of State may direct about the form and contents of the report.

The Secretary of State's directions to HMCI were set out in a letter from the Department of Education (DfE) to HMCI on 4 November 2019. The letter set out new directions that removed Ofsted's previous role in monitoring the work of the ISI. Ofsted normally only reports on the number of inspections carried out by the ISI and on the extent of the collaborative work carried out. As in the previous year, the DfE did not commission any other monitoring activity by Ofsted in 2020/21. However, as part of Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges, Ofsted reviewed 15 of ISI's inspection evidence bases. Ofsted's findings and recommendations from this work were published on 10 June 2021 in 'Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges'.¹

Independent Schools Inspectorate's inspection activity for 2020/21

ISI's routine inspection activity was suspended up to July 2021. This accounts for the reduced number of inspections carried out over this academic year. Between September 2020 and July 2021, ISI carried out 92 inspections. This included 15 educational quality inspections and 20 regulatory compliance inspections. Other types of inspection, including additional and short-visit inspections, account for the remaining 57 inspections. The ISI carried out 65 remote reviews during this period. British Schools overseas inspections were suspended throughout the entire academic year due to the restrictions resulting from the pandemic.

¹ 'Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges', Ofsted, June 2021; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges>.

Ofsted's collaborative work with the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2020/21

Over the academic year, Ofsted and the ISI collaborated in the following ways.

- By meeting regularly and jointly with the DfE to align inspection practice to take account of the impact of the pandemic on schools. The inspectorates also worked with the DfE to ensure that the resumption of routine inspection was aligned across the state and independent sectors.
- In the summer term, the government asked Ofsted to carry out a rapid review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges. The review answered key questions about safeguarding and the curriculum; multi-agency safeguarding arrangements; victims' voices and the reporting of sexual abuse. The terms of reference for this review asked Ofsted to work with external representatives, including the ISC and ISI. This was achieved in the following ways:
 - the Chief Inspector of the ISI was a member of all the reference groups set up to inform the review
 - Ofsted included 14 ISI-inspected schools in the sample of schools visited for the review
 - ISI inspectors observed 13 visits Ofsted made to both state-funded and independent schools
 - Ofsted prepared 2 days of refresher safeguarding training before the visits, with a specific focus on peer-on-peer sexual harassment and violence. This was attended by ISI inspectors
 - Ofsted and the ISI separately reviewed how complaints about independent schools are handled and also inspector training. The ISI shared its findings with the review team
 - as stated above, Ofsted reviewed 15 evidence bases of ISI inspections, reporting on how effectively inspectors had considered the schools' safeguarding arrangements.
- Following publication of the review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges, Ofsted led a series of meetings. The discussions focused on how to sharpen inspection practice and to inform inspector training. Ofsted subsequently developed further training on inspecting safeguarding in education settings. Ofsted and the ISI delivered this training to ISI inspectors for the start of the new academic year.