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Official Statistics

# Main findings: Non-association independent schools inspections and outcomes in England: August 2022

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**Applies to England**

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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 2022](#) 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 2022
- provisional data for inspections carried out between 1 September 2021 and 31 August 2022
- revised data for inspections carried out between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021

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 standard inspections were suspended in March 2020 until June 2021, due to COVID-19. As a result, we carried out only 95 independent school standard inspections in the 2020/21 academic year. We have excluded 2020/21 from year-on-year comparisons due to the low number of inspections and the criteria for selecting schools, which focused on visiting those schools with a higher risk assessment as well as those that were due a standard inspection.

Non-association independent schools are inspected on a 3-year cycle. This will

restart in January 2023, because the original 2018 to 2021 schedule was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Key findings

Since last year, the proportion of independent schools judged good or outstanding has declined slightly to 75%.

This year, more independent schools declined to requires improvement or inadequate (from good or outstanding) than improved to good or outstanding (from requires improvement or inadequate).

The proportion of independent schools with ineffective safeguarding is 5%, the same as at 31 August 2021. [\[footnote 1\]](#)

## Introduction

There are around 2,420 independent schools in England. We inspect non-association schools, of which there are 1,169. The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspects the remaining schools, which are members of an association.

The non-association independent schools we inspect fall into 2 categories: independent special schools and other independent schools.

**Figure 1: Change in the number of non-association independent schools by type, as at 31 August 2022**



Note: The increase or decrease is based on a comparison with the same data as at 31 August 2021.

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

The total number of schools we inspect remains similar to the number on 31 August 2021. However, as of 31 August 2022, there were 39 more special schools and 33 fewer other independent schools.

Since August 2021, 30 other independent schools have closed and 18 have joined an association, compared with 12 special schools that closed and 2 that left the sector. In the same period, 50 special schools and 18 other independent schools have joined the sector. Additionally, 3 schools were previously other independent schools but are now registered as special schools.

There are 166 more special schools and 77 fewer other independent schools than there were in August 2017.

## Inspection outcomes profile as at 31 August 2022

We judged 75% of inspected non-association independent schools to be good or outstanding.

At 31 August 2022, 1,070 non-association independent schools had received a standard inspection. The remaining 99 schools are yet to be inspected, either because they have recently opened, or because they have moved from ISI to Ofsted and are awaiting their first Ofsted standard inspection.

### Figure 2: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools, 31 August 2022



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

One school had a standard inspection, but did not receive an overall effectiveness judgement.

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We judged 75% of schools as good or outstanding as at 31 August 2022. This is a slight decline from 78% as at 31 August 2021. However, it follows a period of consistent improvement since 2017, when we judged 68% as good or outstanding.

The proportion of schools judged inadequate remains the same compared with 31 August 2021 (8%), but the proportion of schools judged requires improvement has slightly increased, from 14% to 17%.

Since 31 August 2021, 57 schools that we had previously inspected have closed or left the remit. Of these, we judged 67% as good or outstanding at their most recent standard inspection.

## Independent special schools

Independent special schools vary in terms of their size and the support they offer. Many offer a combination of educational and therapeutic support. Special schools continue to have stronger inspection outcomes for overall effectiveness than other independent schools. We judged 81% of independent special schools and 69% of other independent schools to be good or outstanding. However, this is a decrease from 31 August 2021, when the percentages were 84% and 73% respectively.

There is still a need for improvement, with 27 (5%) independent special schools judged to be inadequate, though this is lower than for other independent schools where 60 (12%) are judged inadequate.

The proportion of independent special schools judged good or outstanding (81%) as at 31 August 2022 is lower than for state-funded and non-maintained special schools (89%). [\[footnote 2\]](#)

## 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, which cover areas such as quality of education, student welfare, and leadership and

management. [\[footnote 3\]](#)

At their most recent inspection, 16% of non-association independent schools (167) did not meet all the standards. This is slightly worse than 31 August 2021, when 14% did not meet all the standards. Other independent schools are less likely to meet the standards (22%) than independent special schools (9%).

If a school fails to meet any of the standards in parts 1 to 7, it will normally not meet standards for the quality of leadership and management of schools (part 8). As a result, the part 8 standards are the most likely to be unmet (15% of schools), followed by the standards for the quality of education provided (part 1) at 12% and the welfare, health and safety of pupils (part 3) at 8%.

## Inspections between 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022

### Figure 3: Non-association independent schools and inspections in 2021/22



Note: We also carried out 112 evaluations of school action plans during the 2021/22 academic year.

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

Our inspection activity returned to pre-pandemic levels this year. We carried out 455 standard inspections compared with 453 in the 2018/19 academic year.

### Figure 4: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools inspected, by academic year



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

A small number of inspections were carried out in 2021/22 but not published before 30 September 2022, a higher proportion of which were inadequate compared with published inspections.

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Of the schools inspected in 2021/22, we judged 5% outstanding, 57% good,

24% requires improvement and 13% inadequate.

The proportion of schools judged good or outstanding (63%) is broadly similar to previous years, excluding 2020/21, when very few inspections were carried out, due to COVID-19. However, the proportion of schools that were judged outstanding in 2021/22 is lower than 2019/20 (5% and 9% respectively) and has been steadily declining since 2017/18.

Overall effectiveness declined in 27 (71%) of the previously outstanding schools inspected this year. This was most likely influenced by the quality of education, which was judged less than outstanding in 89% of these schools. Most (93%) of these schools also declined from outstanding in their leadership and management.

### **Figure 5: Proportion of standard inspections where the school was previously judged good or outstanding, by academic year**



Note: Total number of standard inspections where the school had a previous overall effectiveness is shown in brackets.

Excludes 2020/21, when very few inspections were carried out, due to COVID-19.

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This academic year we inspected 337 schools that had previously received a standard inspection. A higher proportion of these schools had previously been judged good or outstanding (70%) compared with the preceding years. This is similar only to 2017/18, when 67% of the schools we inspected were previously good or outstanding. We expect to see this because good and outstanding schools are more likely to be inspected in the final year of the inspection cycle. Both 2017/18 and 2021/22 are the final years of different inspection cycles.

### **Figure 6: The balance between the number of schools improving to good or outstanding (from requires improvement or inadequate) and the number declining to requires improvement or inadequate (from good or outstanding), by academic year**



Note: Total number of standard inspections where the school had a previous overall effectiveness is shown in brackets.

Excludes 2020/21, when very few inspections were carried out, due to COVID-19.

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In 2021/22, 24 more schools declined to requires improvement or inadequate (from good or outstanding) than improved to good or outstanding (from requires improvement or inadequate). This number declined in both special schools (14) and other independent schools (10). This negative balance of outcomes contributes to the [small overall decrease in the proportion of schools judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection](#).

This year is different to both 2018/19 and 2019/20, when more schools improved to good or outstanding than declined to requires improvement or inadequate.

## First inspections

A first inspection is the first standard inspection of a newly opened school. Once registered, a new school will normally receive this inspection in its first year of operation.

### **Figure 7: Non-association independent schools first standard inspections as a percentage of all standard inspections, by academic year**



Note: Total number of inspections is shown in brackets.

Excludes 2020/21, when very few inspections were carried out, due to COVID-19.

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First inspections made up a quarter of all standard inspections this academic year. This is higher than in each of the 3 academic years between 1 September 2017 and 31 August 2020. This is to be expected, because schools continued to open during the COVID-19 pandemic, but we were unable to carry out standard inspections between March 2020 and June 2021.

### **Figure 8: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools inspected, by standard inspection type, 2021/22**



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



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

This year we judged 62% of schools as good or outstanding at their first inspection. This percentage is broadly similar to 2019/20, when 60% of schools were judged good or outstanding at their first inspection, but it is lower than the percentage for established independent schools. This also contributes to the [small overall decline in the proportion of schools judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection](#).

Of the independent special schools that had their first inspection this year, 66% were good or outstanding. However, this is lower than the 74% for established special schools with a previous inspection. In contrast, the overall effectiveness of other independent schools was similar across first inspections and those that had been inspected before.

## Additional inspections

From September 2021 until the end of the summer term 2022, we carried out 235 additional inspections<sup>[\[footnote 4\]](#)</sup> at the request of the Department for Education (DfE). These included the following:

- 52 progress monitoring inspections
- 14 emergency inspections
- 67 material change inspections
- 102 pre-registration inspections

We continued to monitor schools that failed to meet all standards at their most recent inspections. We carried out 52 progress monitoring inspections of schools this academic year. In 58% of these inspections, the schools did not meet the standards that were checked. This is similar to 2019/20, when 57% of schools did not meet the standards, and shows that there continues to be poor performance in the sector.

## Inadequate schools

As at 31 August 2022, 87 independent schools (8%) had been judged

inadequate at their most recent standard inspection. This is similar to August 2021 but has improved since August 2018, when it was 132 schools (13%). However, the 8% of independent schools judged inadequate is more than in the state school sector, where 3% of schools had been judged inadequate as at 31 August 2022.

There are approximately 9,800 pupils in independent schools that have been judged inadequate. Two thirds of these schools have ineffective safeguarding, and in a similar proportion, the quality of education has been judged inadequate.

For inspections that took place in 2021/22, 59 schools (13%) were judged inadequate, which is a similar proportion to previous years. We inspected 37 schools that had also been judged inadequate at their previous inspection. Of these schools, 14 have improved to good, 13 were judged requires improvement, and 10 have remained at inadequate.

## Safeguarding

Effective safeguarding has been a specific judgement in inspections since 1 September 2015 when the common inspection framework was introduced. [\[footnote 5\]](#) For the first time, all schools that we have inspected have been judged on the effectiveness of their safeguarding.

We judged 5% (58) of the schools we inspected to have ineffective safeguarding at their most recent inspection as at 31 August 2022. The proportion is the same as it was at 31 August 2021. All schools with ineffective safeguarding were judged inadequate, apart from one school that received an outcome of insufficient evidence.

## Independent faith schools

As at 31 August 2022, 25% (287) of non-association independent schools were faith schools. [\[footnote 5\]](#) We have inspected 278 of these schools.

Muslim schools account for 44% of faith schools in this sector, followed by Christian schools (31%) and Jewish schools (25%). 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 (17,400) is almost 4 times the number attending Christian schools (4,500).

Independent faith schools have weaker inspection outcomes than independent non-faith schools and faith schools in the state sector. At their most recent inspection, 65% of independent faith schools were judged good or outstanding compared with 79% of independent non-faith schools. However, only 10% (30) of faith schools are special schools, while around two thirds of non-faith schools are special schools. Special schools and other schools are very different, which means it could be misleading to compare faith schools with non-faith schools overall. If we exclude special schools, it still shows that we judged a lower proportion (64%) of independent faith schools good or outstanding compared with independent non-faith schools (74%).

In state-funded faith and non-faith schools the proportions show more similarity, with 90% of faith schools and 87% of non-faith schools judged to be good or outstanding. The characteristics of state-funded faith schools are very different to those in the independent sector, as most (98%) are Christian schools.

Almost a quarter (24%) of independent faith schools did not meet the independent school standards at their most recent inspection. None of these schools met the standards in part 8 (the quality of leadership and management of schools). Of the other standards, faith schools were most likely not to meet the standards in part 1, the quality of education provided (20%); and part 2, the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils (13%).

## Revisions

Provisional data indicated that, between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021, 79 standard inspections were carried out. This data includes inspection reports that were published by 30 September 2021. Based on reports published by 30 September 2022, there were 16 further standard inspections, bringing the total number of inspections carried out to 95.

The addition of these 16 inspections changed the profile of overall effectiveness for schools inspected in the last academic year. The proportion of schools judged good fell from 59% to 54% and the proportion of schools judged inadequate increased from 9% to 14%. You can find further details in the

revised tables in the [charts and tables file](#) accompanying this release.

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 how they may vary across different regions, school types and faith groupings.

Data in this report is from inspections as at 31 August 2022 if the inspection reports were published by 30 September 2022. 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 that took place from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022 and had their reports published by 30 September 2022.

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

The [methodology and quality report](#) that accompanies 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 up to 100.

For academic years before 2021/22, we have used revised data.

## 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](mailto:Anita.Patel@ofsted.gov.uk).

### Annual report

We will publish findings from our forthcoming [Annual Report](#) on 13 December 2022.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following for their contribution to this statistical release: Alison Bateman, Tim Milstead, Chris Dinham and Sam Trapp.

## Annex: data tables for figures

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

**Data for Figure 1: Change in the number of non-association independent schools by type, as at 31 August 2022**

School type	Number of open schools	Net change since 31 August 2021
Non-association independent special schools	622	+39
Non-association other independent schools	547	-33

See [Figure 1](#)

### Data for Figure 2: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools, 31 August 2022

School type	Number of inspections	% Outstanding	% Good	% Requires improvement	% Inadequate
All non-association independent schools	1,069	11	64	17	8
Independent special schools	553	13	68	14	5
Other independent schools	516	9	60	19	12

See [Figure 2](#)

### Data for Figure 3: Non-association independent schools and inspections in 2021/22

School type	Number of open schools	Number of standard inspections	Number of additional inspections
-------------	------------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------------------

<b>All non-association independent schools</b>	1,169	455	235
<b>Independent special schools</b>	622	231	147
<b>Other independent schools</b>	547	224	88

See [Figure 3](#)

**Data for Figure 4: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools inspected, by academic year**

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Number of inspections</b>	<b>% Outstanding</b>	<b>% Good</b>	<b>% Requires improvement</b>	<b>% Inadequate</b>
<b>1 September 2021 - 31 August 2022</b>	455	5	57	24	13
<b>1 September 2020 - 31 August 2021</b>	95	4	54	28	14
<b>1 September 2019 - 31 August 2020</b>	254	9	54	21	17
<b>1 September 2018 - 31 August 2019</b>	453	10	55	19	16

1	567	12	53	22	14
<b>September</b>					
<b>2017 - 31</b>					
<b>August</b>					
<b>2018</b>					

See [Figure 4](#)

**Data for Figure 5: Proportion of standard inspections where the school was previously judged good or outstanding, by academic year**

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Number of schools with a previous inspection</b>	<b>% Schools judged good or outstanding at previous inspection</b>
<b>2021/22</b>	337	70
<b>2019/20</b>	202	54
<b>2018/19</b>	367	50
<b>2017/18</b>	467	67

See [Figure 5](#)

**Data for Figure 6: The balance between the number of schools improving to good or outstanding (from requires improvement or inadequate) and the number declining to requires improvement or inadequate (from good or outstanding), by academic year**

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Number of schools with a previous inspection</b>	<b>Balance between schools improving to good or outstanding (from requires improvement or inadequate) and declining to requires improvement or inadequate (from good or outstanding)</b>
<b>2021/22</b>	337	-24
<b>2019/20</b>	202	18



<b>2018/19</b>	367	48
<b>2017/18</b>	467	-5

See [Figure 6](#)

**Data for Figure 7: Non-association independent schools first standard inspections as a percentage of all standard inspections, by academic year**

<b>Academic year</b>	<b>Number of inspections in brackets</b>	<b>% First standard inspections</b>	<b>% All other standard inspections</b>
<b>2021/22</b>	455	25	75
<b>2019/20</b>	255	21	79
<b>2018/19</b>	453	18	82
<b>2017/18</b>	569	17	83

See [Figure 7](#)

**Data for Figure 8: Overall effectiveness of non-association independent schools inspected, by standard inspection type, 2021/22**

<b>School type</b>	<b>Number of inspections</b>	<b>% Outstanding</b>	<b>% Good</b>	<b>% Requires improvement</b>	<b>% Inadequate</b>
<b>All inspections</b>	455	5	57	24	13
<b>All first inspections</b>	116	3	59	30	8
<b>First inspections: Independent special schools</b>	70	6	60	27	7

<b>First inspections: Other independent schools</b>	46	0	57	35	9
<b>All non-first inspections</b>	339	6	57	22	15
<b>Non-first inspections: Independent special schools</b>	161	8	66	18	8
<b>Non-first inspections: Other independent schools</b>	178	4	49	26	21

See [Figure 8](#)

1. [Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills](#). The impact of safeguarding arrangements will be tested under the EIF judgement on the quality of leadership and management. Inspectors will arrive at a judgement on whether the early years setting, school or further education and skills provider has effective safeguarding arrangements or not. This judgement will contribute to the overall judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management↵
2. [State-funded school inspections and outcomes as at 31 August 2022](#).↵
3. [‘Regulating independent schools’](#), Department for Education, August 2019. The standards cover quality of education; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; welfare, health and safety of pupils; suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors; premises of and accommodation at schools; provision of information; manner in which complaints are handled; quality of leadership in and management of schools.↵
4. [Additional inspections](#) are inspections that occur outside of the normal

inspection cycle and cover emergency, progress monitoring, pre-registration and material change inspections.↵

5. A school is defined as a faith school based on whether it has declared a religious character or 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.↵

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