



Research and analysis

Annual report on inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2024/25

Updated 28 January 2026

Applies to England

Contents

[Letter to the Rt Hon. Bridget Phillipson MP](#)

[Letter to Vanessa Ward, Chief Inspector](#)

[Annual report on inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in the academic year 2024/25](#)

[Introduction](#)

[ISI's inspection activity for 2024/25](#)

[Ofsted's collaborative work with ISI in 2024/25](#)

Letter to the Rt Hon. Bridget Phillipson MP

The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP
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Annual report on inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2024/25

I have a duty in my position as His Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) to prepare and send a report to you, the Secretary of State, about the inspectorates for

independent schools at intervals of no more than a year. In practice, this requires me to prepare a report for you on the work of the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI). In this, I must have regard to matters that you or, in this case, your predecessors may direct about the form and content of the report.

Under the directions set out by the then Secretary of State on 4 November 2019 to my predecessor, Ofsted no longer reports on the quality of ISI inspections but normally only reports on the number of inspections carried out by ISI, and on the extent of the collaborative work carried out by ISI and Ofsted. As in previous years, the Department for Education (DfE) did not commission any other monitoring activity by Ofsted in 2024/25.

Given the above parameters, I am pleased to send this latest annual report to you.

Yours sincerely

Sir Martyn Oliver
His Majesty's Chief Inspector

Letter to Vanessa Ward, Chief Inspector

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Annual report on inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in 2024/25

Please find enclosed a copy of the 2024/25 annual report for the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI), which I have today sent to the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP. The annual report will also be published on Ofsted's website.

Thank you for the collaborative work that you and your colleagues have been involved with over the last year and for the information you provided to Ofsted regarding the number of inspections that ISI completed during 2024/25.

Yours sincerely

Sir Martyn Oliver
His Majesty's Chief Inspector

Annual report on inspection work by the Independent Schools Inspectorate in the academic year 2024/25

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), including early years and boarding provision. Similarly, ISI is approved to inspect registered early years provision connected to schools that belong to one of the ISC associations.

When inspecting registered early years provision, ISI inspectors use Ofsted's education inspection framework to determine the quality of the early years foundation stage (EYFS), as set out in the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage.^{[\[footnote 1\]](#)} This ensures uniformity of inspection for all registered early years providers and gives assurance to the Secretary of State, parents and carers that consistent judgements are made across all registered early years provision nationally. ISI remains responsible for reporting any concerns about the registered early years providers it inspects to Ofsted, as the regulator. Beyond this, ISI inspects the early years provision in schools that fall within its remit, according to its own agreed frameworks.

ISI is also appointed by the Home Office to inspect private further education colleges and language schools in England and Wales.

Under section 107(1) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, His 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.

ISI's inspection activity for 2024/25

Between 1 September 2024 and 31 July 2025, ISI carried out 557 school inspections. These comprised 418 routine inspections, 54 material change inspections, 78 progress monitoring inspections and 7 additional inspections. Over the same period, ISI carried out 23 inspections of registered early years providers.

ISI also carried out 37 inspections of British schools overseas (BSO) and 28 educational oversight inspections of private further education colleges. As in 2023/24, the DfE has separately commissioned Ofsted to monitor the quality of ISI's inspections of BSO. This is part of a wider commission to look at the work of all the BSO inspectorates. Ofsted will publish a separate report on this monitoring activity in early 2026.

Ofsted's collaborative work with ISI in 2024/25

Over the academic year, Ofsted and ISI worked together in the following ways:

- HMCI and ISI's Chief Inspector met regularly to discuss developments in inspection for both inspectorates.
- Senior leaders from both inspectorates liaised to share insights and to discuss proposed changes to legislation that will affect inspection principles and practice.
- ISI submitted a response to Ofsted's consultation 'Improving the way Ofsted inspects education', which closed in April 2025.
- ISI and Ofsted colleagues in the early education remit met twice a term to consider inspections of registered early years settings that Ofsted, as the regulator, commissions ISI to carry out.
- ISI and Ofsted colleagues in the early education remit met to draft and agree the Ofsted guidance 'Regulating and inspecting association independent schools with an early years registration'.^[footnote 2]
- Ofsted colleagues held additional meetings with senior leaders at ISI to prepare them to inspect using the renewed inspection framework.
- Senior inspectors and officials from ISI attended Ofsted's EYFS inspection conferences in November 2024 and January 2025.

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1. '[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#)', Department for Education, July 2023 (updated September 2025). ↵
 2. '[Regulating and inspecting association independent schools with an early years registration](#)', Ofsted, May 2023 (updated November 2025). ↵

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