



[Home](#) ▾ [Education, training and skills](#) ▾ [Inspections and performance of education providers](#)
▾ [Renewed education inspection framework: supporting evidence base](#)



Research and analysis

Education inspection toolkits: statutory and non-statutory guidance, professional standards and relevant research [for version 2 of the toolkits]

Updated 12 June 2026

Applies to England

[Contents](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Early years](#)

[State-funded schools](#)

[Non-association independent schools](#)

[Further education and skills](#)

[Initial teacher education](#)



This research should be read alongside version 2 of the education toolkits that come into force in September 2026.

Introduction

This document gives references to statutory and non-statutory guidance, professional standards and relevant research that Ofsted reviewed to inform and develop the education inspection toolkits.

Early years

This section provides references for the expected standards, as set out for each evaluation area in the early years inspection toolkit. These are taken from the key guidance documents (including statutory and non-statutory guidance), the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework and relevant research.

Safeguarding

The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework that are relevant to this evaluation area are:

Changes that must be notified to Ofsted, child absences, concerns about children's safety and welfare, disqualification, information about the child, information and record keeping, introduction, organising premises for confidentiality and safeguarding, references, safeguarding policies and procedures, safeguarding training, staff taking medication/other substances, suitable people, supervision of staff, supporting and understanding children's behaviour, whistleblowing.

Standard: Leaders have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to safeguard children 2026’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders and practitioners meet their responsibilities to promote the safety of children, in relation to the statutory requirements for safeguarding. Multi-agency working is effective.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to safeguard children 2026’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Parents and children know who to go to for support.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to safeguard children 2026’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders identify children who may need early help and who are at risk of harm or who have been harmed. Practitioners recognise that babies and young children, including those with SEND, may be more vulnerable to abuse and neglect and that they depend on adults to recognise and respond to concerns on their behalf. Leaders and practitioners identify children who are in need of early help or are at risk of harm.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for

Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to safeguard children 2026’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders manage recruitment safely, ensuring that practitioners have the relevant qualifications and training and have passed any checks required for their roles.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders and practitioners understand and follow the requirements for reporting, referrals, record-keeping and the ‘Prevent’ duty. Policies and procedures for keeping children safe are clear and accessible.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to safeguard children 2026’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders fulfil their duty to refer allegations or concerns to relevant agencies, including the LADO and the DBS.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to safeguard children 2026’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders ensure supervision, support and monitoring of adults is appropriate.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[providers](#)', Department for Education, September 2025.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: The conduct and behaviour of staff are appropriate.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders and practitioners are receptive to challenge and reflect on their own practice so that the impact of safeguarding policies, systems and processes is kept under continual review.

['Working together to safeguard children 2026'](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Inclusion

The learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework that are relevant to this evaluation area are:

Acting on concerns, assessment, ongoing assessment, progress check at age 2.

The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework that are relevant to this evaluation area are:

Special educational needs.

Standard: Leaders identify children's needs quickly and accurately, including any emerging or changing needs. This includes the needs of disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social

care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Help for early years providers: SEND assessment guidance and resources’](#), Department for Education, Dingley’s Promise.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health, January 2015.

Standard: Leaders have high expectations for these children. Typically, the support they provide reduces barriers to the children’s learning and/or wellbeing.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Help for early years providers: SEND assessment guidance and resources’](#), Department for Education, Dingley’s Promise.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health, January 2015.

Standard: Leaders ask for and implement advice from specialists and external partners, when needed.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Help for early years providers: SEND assessment guidance and resources’](#), Department for Education, Dingley’s Promise.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health, January 2015.

Standard: Leaders take a graduated approach (as explained earlier), which means that children's SEND needs are generally met well. Practitioners receive suitable training and support to implement this approach.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Help for early years providers: SEND assessment guidance and resources’](#), Department for Education, Dingley's Promise.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health, January 2015.

[‘The EEF guide to the early years pupil premium’](#), Education Endowment Foundation, August 2025.

Standard: Leaders have a secure understanding of these children's needs and progress. They use appropriate evidence to inform their decisions about the EYPP, which has a positive impact on reducing barriers to learning and/or wellbeing that these children face.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health, January 2015.

[‘Help for early years providers: SEND assessment guidance and resources’](#), Department for Education, Dingley's Promise.

[‘The EEF guide to the early years pupil premium’](#), Education Endowment Foundation, August 2025.

Standard: When required, the identified SENCo has the knowledge, understanding and skills to make a positive difference for children with SEND.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health, January 2015.

Standard: Leaders ensure that, when appropriate, local partnership strategies have a positive impact on the children in the setting.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health, January 2015.

Curriculum and teaching

The learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework that are relevant to this evaluation area are:

Approaches to teaching and learning, a quality workforce focused on learning and development and health and safety, curriculum guidance, educational programmes, English as an additional language, learning and development considerations, the areas of learning and development.

The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework that are relevant to this evaluation area are:

Special educational needs.

Standard: Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching in their setting. They have a clear action plan to bring about improvement.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Guide to effective professional development in the early years’](#), Education Endowment Foundation, no date.

Standard: The curriculum is designed so that, across all areas of learning and development, it is clear what leaders and practitioners want children to know and be able to do. The order in which to teach this, to give children the knowledge and skills they need for their future learning and development, including being ready for school, where appropriate, is also clear.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Development matters - non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage’](#), Department for Education, September 2023.

[‘Birth to 5 matters’](#), Early Years Coalition, 2021.

Standard: The curriculum is an entitlement for every child. Leaders take effective action to make sure that children access an equally ambitious curriculum. This includes those attending part time or attending more than one setting, disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health, January 2015.

[‘Help for early years providers: SEND assessment guidance and resources’](#), Department for Education, Dingley’s Promise.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the curriculum is typically taught well. They ensure that staff use assessment to check what children know and can do. Teaching is tailored to children’s different starting points, needs and stages of development.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based](#)

[providers](#)', Department for Education, September 2025.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: There is a sharp focus on developing children's communication and language and their love of books.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Children's physical development from the earliest age is prioritised, to develop their strength, coordination and positive attitudes to physical activity.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Practitioners teach mathematics explicitly. They focus on the mathematical learning that promotes children's confidence in and enjoyment of mathematics.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: The curriculum recognises and promotes equality and diversity. Practitioners support children to reflect on their similarities and to understand what makes them unique.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

['Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Achievement

The learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework that are relevant to this evaluation area are:

Approaches to teaching and learning, curriculum guidance, educational programmes, English as an additional language, learning and development considerations, the areas of learning and development.

Standard: Children develop age- and/or stage-appropriate knowledge and skills across the 7 EYFS areas of learning and development as they progress through the curriculum.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Children are suitably prepared for the next stage of their learning, including school, where relevant.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Children, including disadvantaged children, children with SEND, children known, or previously known, to children’s social care and those who face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, typically achieve well from their starting points. They receive the necessary support to reach developmental goals and/or age- and stage-appropriate end points of the curriculum.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Help for early years providers: SEND assessment guidance and resources’](#), Department for Education, Dingley’s Promise.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health, January 2015.

Behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines

The learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework that are relevant to this evaluation area are:

Approaches to teaching and learning, curriculum guidance, educational programmes, English as an additional language, learning and development considerations.

The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework that are relevant to this evaluation area are:

Key person, special educational needs, supporting and understanding children’s behaviour.

Standard: Leaders and practitioners set high expectations for children’s behaviour and attitudes to learning. These expectations are commonly understood by practitioners, parents and children. They are generally applied consistently and fairly. Incidents of poor behaviour, including unkind or discriminatory words and/or actions, when they occur, are quickly addressed.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders promote to families the importance of attendance and punctuality.

[‘Attendance matters \(England\)’](#), Coram Pacey, March 2025.

[‘Study of early education and development \(SEED\): impact study on early education use and child outcomes up to age 7 years’](#), Government Social Research, October 2021.

Standard: Practitioners teach children the importance of treating others with kindness, care and respect and are positive role models.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Practitioners explicitly teach children the executive function skills they need to develop positive attitudes to learning. They help children to focus attention on what matters, screen out anything that is not relevant, hold information in mind to work on it, and focus on a goal and work out when it is necessary to change approaches to achieve that goal.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Practitioners explicitly teach children the executive function skills they need to develop positive attitudes to learning. They help children to focus attention on what matters, screen out anything that is not relevant, hold information in mind to work on it, and focus on a goal and work out when it is necessary to change approaches to achieve that goal.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health, January 2015.

Standard: Practitioners understand and consider each child’s individual needs and

circumstances, including those of disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face barriers to their learning. Any adaptations and/or reasonable adjustments maintain the high expectations of behaviour that reflect the children's ages and stages of development. Practitioners proactively work with other agencies to serve children's best interests.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health, January 2015.

Standard: Practitioners give explicit praise to reinforce children's positive behaviour.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Children play games and activities collaboratively and get along well with others in a way that is appropriate for their age and/or stage of development.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Children's welfare and wellbeing

The learning and development requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework that are relevant to this evaluation area are:

Approaches to teaching and learning, a quality workforce focused on learning

and development and health and safety, educational programmes.

The safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework that are relevant to this evaluation area are:

Accident or injury, baby room, English language skills, food and drink, food and drink facilities, food poisoning, indoor space requirements, information about the child, information about the provider, information and record keeping, information for parents and carers, insurance, key person, medicines, outdoor access, paediatric first aid, risk assessment, safer eating, safety of premises, safety on outings, sleeping arrangements, smoking and vaping, staff: child ratios, toilets and intimate hygiene.

Standard: Leaders establish policies and practices that support children's welfare, mental health and wellbeing. These are generally understood by staff and parents and implemented well across the setting.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders ensure that statutory guidance for safe sleeping arrangements, weaning and safer eating is well understood and implemented effectively.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders create a safe, welcoming space where children typically enjoy play, learning and social activities and have daily access to outdoor learning.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Hygiene practices ensure that the personal needs of babies and children of all ages are met appropriately. Practitioners teach children to become increasingly independent in managing their personal needs.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Practitioners teach children about making healthy choices about food, rest, exercise and screen time.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage nutrition guidance’](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

Standard: Leaders and practitioners provide a healthy diet. Practitioners make sure that mealtimes are opportunities to promote children’s good manners and social skills.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage nutrition guidance’](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

Standard: Practitioners support children to develop their physical and emotional health. They provide children with the age- and stage-appropriate knowledge that they need to stay safe and healthy.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Children, especially disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, develop secure attachments and a sense of belonging through warm and positive relationships with key persons, which promote their wellbeing effectively.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Leadership and governance

All learning and development and safeguarding and welfare requirements of the early years foundation stage statutory framework are relevant to this evaluation area.

Standard: Leaders understand the setting's context, strengths and areas for development. They are ambitious for children, taking appropriate action to drive improvement and/or maintain high standards of education and care. When improvements are needed, leaders' actions are timely and effective.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: The nominated individual ensures that leaders have a suitable vision and strategy for the quality of provision and that resources are managed well. They typically support and challenge leaders appropriately, giving due regard to leaders' wellbeing and workload.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for

Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders provide regular, relevant and appropriate professional learning and expertise activities and constructive feedback for all practitioners, which equips them to carry out their roles successfully.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders take action to ensure that staff feel valued and workload is manageable. They avoid creating unnecessary burdens.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders engage with parents and professionals thoughtfully and positively in a way that supports children’s education and care. This includes at times of transition, to enable children to settle quickly when they start at the setting and move on seamlessly to other settings or school, when appropriate.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for childminders’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to safeguard children 2026’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

State-funded schools

This section provides references for the expected standards, as set out for each evaluation area in the state-funded school inspection toolkit. These are taken from the key guidance documents (including statutory and non-statutory guidance),

professional standards and relevant research.

Safeguarding

Standard: Leaders and those responsible for governance have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Multi-agency working is effective. There is strategic oversight of all aspects of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. Leaders actively try to learn from safeguarding cases and incidents and take any action needed.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to safeguard children 2026’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

[‘Academy trust governance guide’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

Standard: Pupils are kept safe and feel safe. Their voices are heard, including the voices of pupils who are not on the school site (whether long term, temporarily or for part of the school day). Teaching pupils about how they can stay safe and when they may need help is embedded across the curriculum. Pupils and parents know who to go to for support.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools’](#), Department for Education, November 2014.

[‘Prevent duty guidance: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales’](#), The Home Office, 2023.

[‘Relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education guidance’](#), Department for Education, 2019.

[‘Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges’](#), Ofsted, June 2021.

Standard: All staff are vigilant and carry out their responsibilities effectively to keep pupils safe. Staff understand the signs of possible safeguarding concerns. They respond by following the school’s systems confidently and consistently.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to safeguard children 2026’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child-on-child violence. This includes (but is not limited to) bullying, physical abuse (including physical assault and harm (or the threat of harm) with a weapon), sexual violence and harassment, and domestic abuse in pupils’ own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse).

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to safeguard children 2026’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders, staff and those responsible for governance know and fulfil the statutory requirements for safeguarding. This includes managing safer recruitment, reporting, referrals, record-keeping and the Prevent duty.

[‘Academy trust governance guide’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Maintained schools governance guide’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

[‘Prevent duty guidance: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales’](#), The Home Office, 2023.

[‘Working together to safeguard children 2026’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: The school has clear and accessible policies and procedures that keep pupils safe. Leaders are receptive to challenge and are reflective about their own practices. This means that the impact of safeguarding policies, systems and

processes is kept under continual review.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders ensure that staff’s work is monitored and that they get appropriate supervision and support. The conduct and behaviour of staff are appropriate. Leaders follow local authority procedures in managing safeguarding concerns or allegations about adults.

[‘Academy trust governance guide’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Maintained schools governance guide’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

[‘Staffing and employment advice for schools’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

Inclusion

Standard: Leaders identify pupils’ needs quickly and accurately, including any emerging or changing needs. This includes the needs of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Standard: Leaders have high expectations for these pupils. They engage proactively and in a timely manner with them and their families to help reduce barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. Typically, the support they provide (following engagement and any specialist advice, if needed) reduces barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Leaders take a graduated approach (as explained earlier), which means pupils’ needs are generally met. Staff receive suitable training and support to implement this approach.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Standard: Leaders have a secure understanding of these pupils’ needs and the progress they make. They use appropriate evidence to inform their pupil premium strategy, including when selecting approaches to take. The strategy and approaches are generally understood and implemented by staff.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Service pupils in schools: non-statutory guidance’](#), Ministry of Defence and Department for Education, April 2025.

[‘Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘The special educational needs and disability regulations 2014’](#), legislation.gov.uk, 2014.

Standard: Where relevant, the qualified SENCo has sufficient authority within the leadership structure to make a positive difference for pupils with SEND.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Standard: Leaders are committed to, and understand, their role in the local area partnership’s strategy to improve the experiences of, and outcomes for, pupils with SEND. Where appropriate, they ensure that local partnership strategies have a positive impact on pupils at the school.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Standard: Leaders support pupils well who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, including looked-after and previously looked-after children. Staff work effectively, including with the virtual school, so that pupils generally improve their learning opportunities and experiences. This includes leaders and staff having regard to the pupils’ personal education plans, if any are in place.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children’](#), Department for Education, February 2018.

Standard: Alternative provision is commissioned appropriately and is used in pupils’ best interests. Leaders take responsibility for the education and welfare of pupils who are placed in it.

[‘Arranging alternative provision’](#), Department for Education, February 2025.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Curriculum and teaching

Standard: Leaders have an accurate and informed understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They draw on this when deciding how to deploy staff and allocate resources, and to identify when timely action is needed to bring about improvement.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Staffing and employment advice for schools’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the curriculum is suitable and well planned for each

subject and year group. It identifies clear end points and is appropriately sequenced to build on what has already been taught and learned.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘National curriculum in England: framework for key stages 1 to 4’](#), Department for Education, December 2014.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the curriculum is generally taught well. Teachers draw on their knowledge of pupils’ needs and starting points and an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Leaders make sure that teachers have, or gain, the expertise they need for the subjects and phases they teach.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Teacher appraisal’](#), Department for Education, July 2024.

Standard: Leaders ensure that all pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read are taught to do so through systematic synthetic phonics.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘The national curriculum in England: English programmes of study’](#), Department for Education, July 2014.

[‘The reading framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2023.

Standard: Leaders and staff are particularly aware of pupils who have not yet secured the necessary foundations in communication and language, reading, spelling, handwriting and mathematics. They take appropriate action to secure this foundational knowledge.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Strong foundations in the first years of school’](#), Ofsted, October 2024.

[‘The reading framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2023.

[‘The writing framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Leaders and staff generally use assessment well to check understanding and make changes to teaching and/or the curriculum, as necessary.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Leaders and staff are clear about the importance of high-quality teaching, supplemented with targeted academic support. Any reasonable adjustments or adaptations to the curriculum or teaching for particular pupils are generally considered and implemented carefully. EHC plans are properly considered when designing and delivering the curriculum.

[‘Headteachers’ standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Achievement

Standard: On the whole, pupils are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They generally have appropriate knowledge and skills across the curriculum, as reflected in the quality of their responses and the work they produce.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘National curriculum in England: framework for key stages 1 to 4’](#), Department for Education, December 2014.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021

‘The [Education Act 2002](#)’, [legislation.gov.uk](#), 2002.

Standard: Pupils develop the foundational knowledge and skills they need, including language and communication skills. Pupils who are at the start of their education (and older pupils, where necessary) largely secure the necessary accuracy and fluency in word reading, spelling, handwriting and number facts. Any gaps in pupils’ foundational knowledge or skills are closing quickly.

[‘Strong foundations in the first years of school’](#), Ofsted, October 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

[‘The reading framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2023.

[‘The writing framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

Standard: On the whole, pupils achieve well. Typically, this will be reflected in their attainment and progress in national tests and examinations, which are broadly in line with national averages, including for disadvantaged pupils.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing generally make suitable progress from their starting points. They develop appropriate knowledge and skills to enable them to progress to the next stage. Any gaps in their knowledge or skills are closing quickly.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Service pupils in schools: non-statutory guidance’](#), Ministry of Defence and Department of Education, April 2025.

[‘Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

Attendance and behaviour

Standard: Leaders and staff have an informed and accurate understanding of matters related to attendance, behaviour and attitudes. They establish effective strategies to tackle any issues.

[‘Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Standard: Leaders establish high expectations for all pupils about behaviour, built on positive relationships, and on rules and routines that staff and pupils generally understand.

[‘Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Leaders ensure that staff maintain and reinforce the same high expectations, acting as role models and teaching positive behaviour.

[‘Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Behaviour and discipline in schools: guidance for governing bodies’](#), Department for

Education, September 2015.

Standard: Leaders and staff generally apply agreed rules and sanctions effectively. Suspension and permanent exclusion are used appropriately.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Leaders and staff usually ensure that incidents of bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, physical and/or sexual violence and derogatory language are dealt with quickly and effectively.

[‘Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Preventing bullying’](#), Department for Education, July 2017.

Standard: Pupils generally behave well, follow the agreed school routines and show positive attitudes to their learning. This contributes to a safe and calm environment.

[‘Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Leaders analyse attendance information closely, at whole-school level and for different groups to identify patterns and trends. They use this analysis well to identify the causes of poor attendance, intervene early and remove barriers.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Standard: Overall attendance is broadly in line with national averages or shows an improving trend over time.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Standard: Attendance is improving, including the attendance of pupils who are persistently or severely absent and individuals or groups that leaders have focused on.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions’](#), Department for Education, December 2015.

[‘Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Standard: Any reasonable adjustments or adaptations to attendance and/or behaviour strategies are timely and appropriate, including for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, such as young carers. Any interventions are timely, well-chosen and targeted.

[‘Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Personal development and wellbeing

Standard: A coherent and appropriate programme of personal development

extends across the taught curriculum and wider opportunities and experiences. It makes a positive difference to pupils and enables them to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

[‘Careers guidance and access for education and training providers’](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘The Equality Act 2010 and schools’](#), Department for Education, May 2014.

[‘Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools’](#), Ofsted, November 2025.

[‘Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools’](#), Department for Education, November 2014.

[‘Prevent duty guidance: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales’](#), The Home Office, 2023.

[‘Relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education’](#), Department for Education, 2019.

[‘Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges’](#), Ofsted, June 2021.

Standard: The personal development programme includes a suitable and well taught RHE/RSHE programme, which develops pupils’ knowledge.

[‘Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools’](#), Department for Education, November 2014.

[‘Relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education’](#), Department for Education, 2019.

[‘Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges’](#), Ofsted, June 2021.

Standard: Pupils develop their understanding of, and respect for, protected characteristics, fundamental British values and cultural diversity in modern Britain.

[‘The Equality Act 2010 and schools’](#), Department for Education, May 2014.

[‘Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools’](#), Ofsted, November 2025.

Standard: Pupils have a range of suitable opportunities that broaden their experiences and enable them to develop their talents and interests in areas such as the arts, music and sport.

[‘Character education’](#), Department for Education, November 2019.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘PE and sport premium for primary schools’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

Standard: The school’s careers education, where relevant, prepares pupils for future education, employment or training. The school is making steady progress towards the Gatsby benchmarks.

[‘Careers guidance and access for education and training providers’](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

Standard: Effective pastoral support meets pupils’ needs. They are confident in accessing it when they need it.

[‘Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Service pupils in schools: non-statutory guidance’](#), Ministry of Defence and Department of Education, April 2025.

[‘Strong foundations in the first years of school’](#), Ofsted, October 2024.

[‘Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Using pupil premium guidance for school leaders’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

Standard: The personal development programme is an entitlement for every pupil. Leaders track participation. They take steps to ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known)

to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, for example young carers, can participate appropriately. Reasonable adjustments or adaptations are made for them.

[‘Arranging alternative provision’](#), Department for Education, February 2025.

[‘Charging for school activities’](#), Department for Education, May 2018.

[‘Enhancing physical education provision and improving access to sport and physical activity in school’](#), Department for Education, March 2024.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘The Equality Act 2010 and schools’](#), Department for Education, May 2014.

Early years

Standard: Leaders prioritise the early years to give children a successful start to their education and the best chance of later success. They have an accurate understanding of the quality and impact of education and care in this phase, and an effective strategy to bring about improvements.

[‘Headteachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘National professional qualification \(NPQ\): early years leadership framework’](#), Department for Education, October 2021.

Standard: Leaders know the statutory requirements of the EYFS and make sure they are met. They have a clear vision for providing high-quality education and care for children in the early years and the same high expectations of them as they do for pupils in the rest of the school.

[‘Early years foundation stage EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘National professional qualification \(NPQ\): early years leadership framework’](#), Department for Education, October 2021.

Standard: Leaders ensure that statutory guidance for safe sleeping arrangements and food preparation and provision is well understood and implemented effectively.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders and staff make sure that education and care practices are suitable for the age and stage of children’s development.

[‘Early years foundation stage EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Development matters’](#), Department for Education, September 2023.

[‘Help for early years providers: food safety’](#), Department for Education, April 2025.

[‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions’](#), Department for Education, December 2015.

Standard: Leaders make sure that the curriculum identifies and sequences the key knowledge that children will learn across the EYFS educational programmes.

[‘Early years foundation stage EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Development matters’](#), Department for Education, September 2023

[‘Headteachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Help for early years providers: curriculum planning’](#), Department for Education, July 2024.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the curriculum is well taught and that staff engage in high-quality interactions with children.

[‘Headteachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Early years foundation stage EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Teacher appraisal - guidance for schools’](#), Department for Education, July 2024.

Standard: Staff consider children’s starting points in their curriculum design and approach to teaching so that gaps in children’s knowledge are identified and tackled.

[‘Early years teachers’ standards’](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership and Department for Education, September 2013.

[‘Help for early years providers: curriculum planning’](#), Department for Education, July 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Leaders make sure that early years teachers inform Year 1 teachers about any gaps in children’s knowledge to ensure an effective transition to key stage 1.

[‘Early years foundation stage profile handbook’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Early years teachers’ standards’](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership and Department for Education, September 2013.

Standard: There is a sharp focus on making sure that children acquire a wide vocabulary, communicate effectively and, in Reception, secure their knowledge of phonics.

[‘Development matters’](#), Department for Education, September 2023.

[‘Help for early years providers: communication and language’](#), Department for Education, November 2024.

[‘Strong foundations in the first years of school’](#), Ofsted, October 2024.

[‘The reading framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2023.

Standard: Leaders ensure that staff provide effectively for children’s personal, social and emotional development, including making sure that they feel safe, secure, stimulated and happy.

[‘Early years foundation stage EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Development matters’](#), Department for Education, September 2023.

[‘Help for early years providers: health and wellbeing’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘Help for early years providers: personal, social and emotional development –](#)

[emotions](#)', Department for Education, March 2025.

Standard: Children are being well prepared to reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. Typically, this will be reflected in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development being broadly in line with national averages.

['Early years foundation stage EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

['Early years teachers' standards'](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership and Department for Education, September 2013.

['Headteachers standards 2020'](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[Teachers' Standards](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: By the end of Reception, children use their knowledge of phonics to read accurately and with increasing fluency.

['Early years foundation stage EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

['Early years teachers' standards'](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership and Department for Education, September 2013.

['Headteachers standards 2020'](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

['The reading framework'](#), Department for Education, July 2023.

Standard: Children develop appropriate knowledge and skills across the 7 areas of learning, relevant to their age and stage of development. Children, including disadvantaged children, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing typically achieve well from their starting points. This means that they are generally ready for the next stage of learning.

['Early years foundation stage EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

['Headteachers standards 2020'](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

['Help for early years providers: curriculum planning'](#), Department for Education, July 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Post-16 provision

Standard: Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the 16 to 19 study programme and are addressing any inconsistencies in a timely way. They ensure that students follow a suitable 16 to 19 study programme that is in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance and meets the specific needs of the post-16 cohort.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the curriculum is appropriately sequenced and well taught overall. Leaders and staff typically use assessment well to make changes to teaching and/or the curriculum as necessary.

[‘Headteachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘The Education Act 2002’](#), legislation.gov.uk, 2002.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Generally, students have age-appropriate knowledge and skills across the curriculum. This is reflected in the quality of their responses and the work they produce.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Students generally achieve well. Typically, this will be reflected in their attainment and progress in national tests and examinations being broadly in line with national averages. When published data is not available, including for some students with SEND, leaders can show that students typically make appropriate progress from their starting points.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Students are generally ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They go on to destinations that meet their interests, career goals and aspirations.

[‘Careers guidance and access for education and training providers’](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

[‘Headteachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

Standard: Leaders have considered the needs of students in their curriculum design and approach to teaching. Adaptations to the curriculum or teaching for disadvantaged students, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing are appropriate and enable students to achieve well.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

[‘The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children’](#), Department for Education, February 2018.

Leadership and governance

Standard: Leaders understand the school’s context, strengths and areas for development. They have a clear rationale for their improvement priorities and largely take appropriate action to drive improvement across all key stages and areas of the school’s work. If an aspect of the school’s provision falls short of the expected standard, this is dealt with quickly and effectively.

[‘Academy trust governance guide’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Maintained schools governance guide’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

Standard: Governors/trustees ensure that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined, take account of context, and make sure that resources, including digital technologies, are used effectively. They typically support and challenge leaders appropriately, giving due regard to leaders’ and staff wellbeing and workload.

[‘Academy trust governance guide’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

[‘Maintained schools governance guide’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

Standard: Leaders are role models of high expectations and professionalism. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

[‘Behaviour in Schools - Advice for headteachers and school staff’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Leaders ensure that staff and governors feel valued and involved in the strategic direction of the school. Leaders provide meaningful opportunities for them to share perspectives and insights and collaborate throughout any change process.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

Standard: The professional learning and expertise programme is evidence-informed, of high quality and designed to build expertise. It draws on evidence and includes planned opportunities to apply and embed practice to build an effective team of teachers and staff, including ECTs and trainees, where relevant. Leaders protect time for professional learning.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘School teachers’ pay and conditions document 2025 and guidance on school teachers’ pay and conditions’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

Standard: Leaders support staff’s wellbeing and ensure that their workload is manageable. Leaders have systems to protect staff from bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Managing teachers’ and leaders’ pay’](#), Department for Education, July 2024.

[‘School teachers’ pay and conditions document 2025 and guidance on school teachers’ pay and conditions’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘The Equality Act 2010 and schools’](#), Department for Education, May 2014.

Standard: Leaders and governors develop constructive relationships with all parents and with the wider community, to build trust. They draw on these relationships to support pupils to achieve and feel that they belong.

[‘Academy trust governance guide’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

[‘Behaviour in schools - advice for headteachers and school staff’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Maintained schools governance guide’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Standard: Leaders work with other schools, organisations and professionals in a culture of mutual support and challenge.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

Standard: Leaders act in the best interest of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

[‘Headteachers standards 2020’](#), Department for Education, October 2020.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

Non-association independent schools

This section provides references for the expected standards, as set out for each evaluation area in the non-association independent school inspection toolkit. These are taken from the key guidance documents (including statutory and non-statutory guidance), the independent school standards (ISS), professional standards and relevant research.

Safeguarding

Standard: Leaders have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Multi-agency working is effective. There is strategic oversight of all aspects of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils. Leaders actively try to learn from safeguarding cases and incidents and take any action needed.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

[‘Working together to safeguard children’](#), HM Government, March 2026.

Standard: Pupils are kept safe and feel safe. Their voices are heard, including the voices of pupils who are not on the school site (whether long term, temporarily or for part of the school day). Teaching pupils about how they can stay safe and when they may need help is embedded across the curriculum. Pupils and parents know who to go to for support.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Prevent duty guidance: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales’](#), The Home Office, 2023.

[‘Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools’](#), Department for Education, November 2014.

[‘Relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education’](#), Department for Education, 2019.

[‘Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges’](#), Ofsted, June 2021.

Standard: All staff are vigilant and carry out their responsibilities effectively to keep pupils safe. Staff understand the signs of possible safeguarding concerns. They respond by following the school’s systems confidently and consistently.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working together to safeguard children’](#), HM Government, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child-on-child violence. This includes (but is not limited to) bullying, physical abuse (including physical assault and harm (or the threat of harm) with a weapon), sexual violence and harassment, and domestic abuse in pupils’ own intimate relationships (teenage relationship abuse).

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges’](#), Department for Education, December 2017.

[‘Working together to safeguard children’](#), HM Government, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders know and fulfil the statutory requirements for safeguarding. These include managing safer recruitment, reporting, referrals, record-keeping and the ‘Prevent’ duty.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Prevent duty guidance: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales’](#), The Home Office, 2023.

[‘Working together to safeguard children’](#), HM Government, March 2026.

Standard: The school has clear and accessible policies and procedures that keep pupils safe. Leaders are receptive to challenge and are reflective about their own practices. This means that the impact of safeguarding policies, systems and processes is kept under continual review.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders ensure that staff’s work is monitored and that they get appropriate supervision and support. The conduct and behaviour of staff are appropriate. Leaders follow local authority procedures in managing safeguarding concerns or allegations about adults.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Inclusion

Standard: Leaders identify pupils’ needs quickly and accurately, including any emerging or changing needs. This includes the needs of disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

[‘Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils’](#), Department for Education, November 2015.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders have high expectations for these pupils. They engage proactively and in a timely manner with them and their families to help reduce barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing. Typically, the support they provide (following engagement and any specialist advice, if needed) reduces barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders take a graduated approach (as explained earlier), which means pupils’ needs are generally met. Staff receive suitable training and support to implement this approach.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

The majority of independent schools are not subject to the SEND code of practice (unless approved under s41 of the Children's and Family Act 2014). However, pupils with EHCPs in independent schools will have targeted outcomes that can be best met by following this guidance.

Standard: Leaders have a secure understanding of these pupils' needs and the progress they make. Any strategies and approaches are generally understood and implemented by staff.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Where relevant, the qualified special educational needs coordinator has sufficient authority within the leadership structure to make a positive difference for pupils with SEND.

For independent schools approved under s41 of the Children's and Family Act 2014.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Where relevant, leaders are committed to, and understand, their role in the local area partnership's strategy to improve the experiences of, and outcomes for, pupils with SEND. Where appropriate, they ensure that local partnership strategies have a positive impact on pupils at the school.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

This is a duty on local authorities that is also relevant to those independent schools that have places for SEND pupils commissioned by local authorities.

Standard: Leaders support pupils well who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, including looked-after and previously looked-after children, well. Staff work effectively, including with other professionals, so that these pupils generally improve their opportunities and experiences. Leaders and staff have

regard to the pupils' personal education plans, if any are in place.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Alternative provision is commissioned appropriately and is used in pupils' best interests. Leaders take responsibility for the education and welfare of pupils who are placed in it.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Curriculum and teaching

Standard: Leaders have an accurate and informed understanding of the quality of the curriculum and teaching across the school. They draw on this when deciding how to deploy staff and allocate resources, and to identify when timely action is needed to bring about improvement.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the curriculum is suitable and well planned for each subject and year group. It identifies clear end points and is appropriately sequenced to build on what has already been taught and learned.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the curriculum is generally taught well. Teachers draw on their knowledge of pupils' needs and starting points and an evidence-informed understanding of effective teaching and how pupils learn.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders make sure that teachers have, or gain, the expertise they need for the subjects and phases they teach.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders ensure that all pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read are taught to do so through systematic synthetic phonics.

[‘The reading framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2023.

Standard: Leaders and staff are particularly aware of pupils who have not yet secured the necessary foundations in communication and language, reading, spelling, handwriting and mathematics. They take appropriate action to secure this foundational knowledge.

[“‘Now the whole school is reading”: supporting struggling readers in secondary school’](#), Ofsted, October 2022.

[‘The reading framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2023.

[‘The writing framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

Standard: Leaders and staff generally use assessment well to check understanding and make changes to teaching and/or the curriculum, as necessary.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders and staff are clear about the importance of high-quality teaching, supplemented with targeted academic support. Any reasonable adjustments or adaptations to the curriculum or teaching for particular pupils are generally considered and implemented carefully. EHC plans are properly considered when designing and delivering the curriculum.

[‘Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils’](#), Department for Education, November 2015.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Achievement

Standard: On the whole, pupils are ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They generally have appropriate knowledge and skills across the curriculum, as reflected in the quality of their responses and the work they produce.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Pupils develop the foundational knowledge and skills they need, including language and communication skills. Pupils who are at the start of their education (and older pupils, where necessary) largely secure the necessary accuracy and fluency in word reading, spelling, handwriting and number facts. Any gaps in pupils' foundational knowledge or skills are closing quickly.

[“Now the whole school is reading”: supporting struggling readers in secondary school](#)’, Ofsted, October 2022.

[‘Strong foundations in the first years of school](#)’, Ofsted, October 2024.

[‘The independent school standards](#)’, Department for Education, April 2026.

[‘The reading framework](#)’, Department for Education, July 2023.

[‘The writing framework](#)’, Department for Education, July 2025.

Standard: On the whole, pupils, including those with barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, achieve well. Where relevant, this will be typically reflected in their achievement in national tests and examinations, which is broadly in line with national averages.

[‘The independent school standards](#)’, Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, generally make suitable progress from their starting points. They develop appropriate knowledge and skills to enable them to progress to the next stage. Any gaps in their knowledge or skills are closing quickly.

[‘The independent school standards](#)’, Department for Education, April 2026.

Attendance and behaviour

Standard: Leaders and staff have an informed and accurate understanding of matters related to attendance, behaviour and attitudes. They establish effective strategies to tackle any issues.

[‘Behaviour in schools](#)’, Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)’, Department for Education, September

2025.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Standard: Leaders establish high expectations for all pupils about behaviour, built on positive relationships, and on rules and routines that staff and pupils generally understand.

[‘Behaviour in schools’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders ensure that staff maintain and reinforce the same high expectations, acting as role models and teaching positive behaviour.

[‘Behaviour in schools’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders and staff generally apply agreed rules and sanctions effectively, including keeping a record of any sanctions for serious misbehaviour. Suspension and permanent exclusion are used appropriately.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders and staff usually ensure that incidents of bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, physical and/or sexual violence and derogatory language are dealt with quickly and effectively.

[‘Behaviour in schools’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Preventing bullying’](#), Department for Education, July 2017.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Pupils generally behave well, follow the agreed school routines and show positive attitudes to their learning. This contributes to a safe and calm environment.

[‘Behaviour in schools’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders analyse attendance information closely, at whole-school level and for different groups to identify patterns and trends. They use this analysis well to identify the causes of poor attendance, intervene early and remove barriers.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Standard: Overall attendance is broadly in line with national averages or shows an improving trend over time.

[‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions’](#), Department for Education, December 2015.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Standard: Attendance is improving, including the attendance of pupils who are persistently or severely absent and individuals or groups that leaders have focused on.

[‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions’](#), Department for Education, December 2015.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Standard: Any reasonable adjustments or adaptations to attendance and/or behaviour strategies are timely and appropriate, including for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, such as young carers. Any interventions are timely, well chosen and targeted.

[‘Behaviour in schools’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Best start in life part 2: the 3 prime areas of learning’](#), Ofsted, October 2024.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Personal development and wellbeing

Standard: A coherent and appropriate programme of personal development extends across the taught curriculum and wider opportunities and experiences. It makes a positive difference to pupils and enables them to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

[‘Character education’](#), Department for Education, November 2019.

[‘Prevent duty guidance: guidance for specified authorities in England and Wales’](#), The Home Office, 2023.

[‘Relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education’](#), Department for Education, 2019.

[‘The Equality Act 2010 and schools’](#), Department for Education, May 2014.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: The personal development programme includes a suitable and well-taught relationships and sex education programme, which develops pupils’ knowledge.

[‘Experiences of relationships and sex education, and sexual risk taking’](#), Department for Education, November 2021.

[‘Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools’](#), Ofsted, November 2025.

[‘Relationships education, relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education’](#), Department for Education, 2019.

[‘Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges’](#), Ofsted, June 2021.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Pupils develop their understanding of, and respect for, protected characteristics, fundamental British values and cultural diversity in modern Britain.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

[‘The Equality Act 2010 and schools’](#), Department for Education, May 2014.

[‘Inspecting teaching of the protected characteristics in schools’](#), Ofsted, November 2025.

Standard: Pupils have a range of suitable opportunities that broaden their experiences and enable them to develop their talents and interests in areas such as the arts, music and sport.

[‘Character education’](#), Department for Education, November 2019.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

[‘The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education’](#), HM Government, June 2022.

Standard: The school’s careers education, where relevant, prepares pupils for future education, employment or training.

[‘Independent review of careers guidance in schools and further education and skills providers’](#), Ofsted, September 2023.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Effective pastoral support meets pupils’ needs. They are confident in accessing it when they need it.

[‘Behaviour in schools’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Supporting SEND’](#), Ofsted, May 2021.

[‘Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils’](#), Department for Education, November 2015.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: The personal development programme is an entitlement for every pupil. Leaders track participation. They take steps to ensure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, for example young carers, can participate appropriately. Reasonable adjustments or adaptations are made for them.

[‘The Equality Act 2010 and schools’](#), Department for Education, May 2014.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Early years

Standard: Leaders prioritise the early years to give children a successful start to their education and the best chance of later success. They have an accurate understanding of the quality and impact of education and care in this phase, and an effective strategy to bring about improvements.

[‘Exemptions from the EYFS for providers and individual children’](#), Department for Education, 2026.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders know the statutory requirements of the EYFS and make sure they are met. They have a clear vision for providing high-quality education and care for children in the early years and the same high expectations of them as they do for pupils in the rest of the school.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘The 2002 Education Act’](#), legislation.gov.uk, 2002.

Standard: Leaders ensure that statutory guidance for safe sleeping arrangements and food preparation and provision is well understood and implemented effectively.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders and staff make sure that education and care practices are suitable for the age and stage of children's development.

[‘Development matters’](#), Department for Education, September 2023.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Help for early years providers: food safety’](#), Department for Education, April 2025.

[‘Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions’](#), Department for Education, December 2015.

Standard: Leaders make sure that the curriculum identifies and sequences the key knowledge that children will learn across the EYFS educational programmes.

[‘Development matters’](#), Department for Education, September 2023.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Help for early years providers: curriculum planning’](#), Department for Education, July 2024.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the curriculum is well taught and that staff engage in high-quality interactions with children.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Staff consider children's starting points in their curriculum design and approach to teaching so that gaps in children's knowledge are identified and tackled.

[‘Help for early years providers: curriculum planning’](#), Department for Education, July 2024.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders make sure that early years teachers inform Year 1 teachers about any gaps in children's knowledge to ensure an effective transition to key stage 1.

[‘Early years foundation stage profile handbook’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: There is a sharp focus on making sure that children acquire a wide vocabulary, communicate effectively and, in Reception, secure their knowledge of phonics.

[‘Development matters’](#), Department for Education, September 2023.

[‘Help for early years providers: communication and language’](#), Department for Education, November 2024.

[‘Strong foundations in the first years of school’](#), Ofsted, October 2024.

[‘The reading framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2023.

Standard: Leaders ensure that staff provide effectively for children’s personal, social and emotional development, including making sure that they feel safe, secure, stimulated and happy.

[‘Development matters’](#), Department for Education, September 2023.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Help for early years providers: health and wellbeing’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘Help for early years providers: personal, social and emotional development – emotions’](#), Department for Education, March 2025.

Standard: Children are being well prepared to reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. Typically, this will be reflected in the proportion of children reaching a good level of development being broadly in line with national averages.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: By the end of Reception, children use their knowledge of phonics to read accurately and with increasing fluency.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘The reading framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2023.

Standard: Children develop appropriate knowledge and skills across the 7 areas of

learning, relevant to their age and stage of development. Children, including disadvantaged children, those with SEND, and those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing typically achieve well from their starting points. This means that they are generally ready for the next stage of learning.

[‘Early years foundation stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Help for early years providers: meeting the needs of all children’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Post-16 provision

Standard: Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the post-16 provision and are addressing any inconsistencies in a timely way. They ensure that students follow a suitable programme of study that meets the expectations of the ISS and the specific needs of the post-16 cohort.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the curriculum is appropriately sequenced and well taught overall. Leaders and staff typically use assessment well to make changes to teaching and/or the curriculum as necessary.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Generally, students have age-appropriate knowledge and skills across the curriculum. This is reflected in the quality of their responses and the work they produce.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Students generally achieve well. Typically, this will be reflected in their attainment and progress in national tests and examinations being broadly in line with national averages (where relevant). When published data is not available, including for some students with SEND, leaders can show that students typically make appropriate progress from their starting points.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Students are generally ready for the next stage of education, employment or training. They go on to destinations that meet their interests, career goals and aspirations.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders have considered the needs of students in their curriculum design and approach to teaching. Adaptations to the curriculum or teaching for disadvantaged students, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing are appropriate and enable students to achieve well.

[“‘Now the whole school is reading”: supporting struggling readers in secondary school’](#), Ofsted, October 2022.

[‘Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils’](#), Department for Education, November 2015.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

[‘The reading framework’](#), Department for Education, July 2023.

Leadership and governance

Standard: Leaders ensure that the ISS are met consistently, over time.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders understand the school’s context, strengths and areas for development. They have a clear rationale for their improvement priorities and largely take appropriate action to drive improvement across all key stages and areas of the school’s work. If an aspect of the school’s provision falls short of the expected standard, this is dealt with quickly and effectively.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: The proprietor ensures that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined, takes account of context, and makes sure that resources, including digital technologies, are used effectively. They typically support and

challenge leaders appropriately, giving due regard to leaders' and staff wellbeing and workload.

[‘Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff’](#), Department for Education, March 2024.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Standard: Leaders are role models of high expectations and professionalism. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

[‘Behaviour in schools’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘Teachers’ standards’](#), Department for Education, December 2021.

Standard: Leaders ensure that staff and, where relevant, those responsible for governance feel valued and involved in the strategic direction of the school. Leaders provide meaningful opportunities for them to share perspectives and insights and collaborate throughout any change process.

[‘Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff’](#), Department for Education, March 2024.

Standard: The professional learning and expertise programme is evidence-informed, of high quality and designed to build expertise. It draws on evidence and includes planned opportunities to apply and embed practice to build an effective team of teachers and staff, including ECTs and trainees, where relevant. Leaders protect time for professional learning.

[‘Improve workload and wellbeing for school staff’](#), Department for Education, March 2024.

Standard: Leaders support staff's wellbeing and ensure that their workload is manageable. Leaders have systems to protect staff from bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

[‘The Equality Act 2010 and schools’](#), Department for Education, May 2014.

Standard: Leaders develop constructive relationships with all parents and with the wider community, to build trust. They draw on these relationships to support pupils to achieve and feel that they belong.

[‘Behaviour in schools’](#), Department for Education, February 2024.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

[‘Working together to improve school attendance’](#), Department for Education, August 2024.

Standard: Leaders work with other schools, organisations and professionals in a culture of mutual support and challenge.

[‘Effective school partnerships and collaboration for school improvement: a review of the evidence’](#), Department for Education, October 2015.

Standard: Leaders act in the best interest of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

[‘Keeping children safe in education 2025’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘School culture and practice: supporting disadvantaged pupils’](#), Department for Education, August 2018.

[‘The independent school standards’](#), Department for Education, April 2026.

Further education and skills

This section provides references for the expected standards, as set out for each evaluation area in the further education and skills inspection toolkit. These are taken from the key guidance documents (including statutory and non-statutory guidance), professional standards and relevant research.

Safeguarding (whole-provider level)

Standard: Leaders and those responsible for governance and/or oversight have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. Learners and apprentices are kept safe and feel safe, including those who are not on the provider’s site (whether long term, temporarily or for part of the provider day). They know how to report safeguarding incidents and trust that leaders will address them.

[‘Care and support statutory guidance’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation’](#), Home Office, Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, July 2020.

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: The provider works effectively with its multi-agency partners. Leaders have strategic oversight of all aspects of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of learners and apprentices of all ages.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation’](#), Home Office, Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, July 2020.

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Learners’ and apprentices’ voices are heard. They are informed of the safeguarding support available. Teaching learners and apprentices in an age-appropriate way about how they can stay safe and when they may need help is embedded within the curriculum. Learners and apprentices, parents, employers and other stakeholders know who to go to for support.

[‘Care and support statutory guidance’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: All staff are vigilant and carry out their responsibilities effectively to keep learners and apprentices safe. Staff understand signs of possible safeguarding concerns and respond by following the provider’s systems confidently and consistently.

[‘Care and support statutory guidance’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation’](#), Home Office, Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, July 2020.

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders and those responsible for safeguarding fulfil their responsibilities in relation to child-on-child violence.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders, staff and those responsible for governance and/or oversight know and fulfil the relevant statutory requirements for safeguarding. These include managing safer recruitment, reporting, referrals, record-keeping and the ‘Prevent’ duty. The provider has clear and accessible policies and procedures that help to keep learners and apprentices safe and reflect current statutory guidance.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Care and support statutory guidance’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders keep learners and apprentices safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism in accordance with the ‘Prevent’ duty.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales \(accessible\)’](#), Home Office, March 2024.

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders, staff and those responsible for governance and/or oversight are receptive to challenge and are reflective about their practices. This means that the impact of safeguarding policies, systems and processes is continually monitored.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders and those responsible for governance and/or oversight ensure

that staff are appropriately supervised, supported and monitored. Where the conduct and behaviour of staff are not appropriate, leaders take action.

[‘Guidance on supervising the activities of workers and volunteers with children’](#), Department for Education, September 2012

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders follow local authority procedures in managing safeguarding concerns and allegations about staff. They fulfil their duty to refer allegations or concerns to the DBS. Where the legal duty to refer has been met, there is evidence of a referral to DBS.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Leaders ensure that staff carry out appropriate safeguarding training that is relevant to their roles and reflective of changes to current statutory duties

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Inclusion (whole-provider level)

Standard: Leaders and staff establish a culture in which learners’ and apprentices’ needs are met and learners and apprentices are welcome and, in most cases, feel supported to fulfil their potential, whatever their particular needs.

[‘Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children’](#), Department for Education, February 2018.

[‘Promoting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing’](#), Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and Department for Education, November 2023.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Standard: Leaders and staff quickly and accurately identify learners' and apprentices' learning and support needs. When these emerge or change, staff adapt programmes and provide suitable support in order to meet the needs of learners and apprentices.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Standard: Leaders take an appropriate ‘graduated’ approach (a continuous cycle of ‘assess, plan, do and review’ that helps learners and apprentices to receive an appropriate level of support), which generally meets learners and apprentices needs well. Staff receive suitable training and support to implement this approach.

[‘Children’s social care: national framework’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

[‘Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children’](#), Department for Education, February 2018.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Standard: Where learners and apprentices face barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, leaders take appropriate action for the period of need and do not reduce their high expectations of those learners/apprentices.

[‘Children’s social care: national framework’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

[‘Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children’](#), Department for Education, February 2018.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Standard: Where the provider has a leader responsible for learners and apprentices with SEND, they are qualified and experienced and exercise sufficient leadership to make a positive difference for those learners and apprentices.

[‘Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children’](#), Department for Education, February 2018.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Standard: Leaders take the necessary steps to make sure that any use of

alternative settings, such as work-experience placements and subcontracted locations, is suitable and meets the needs of learners and apprentices, in particular those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND or high needs, those who are known (or previously known) to social care, and those who may face other barriers to their experiences and opportunities, including those without level 2 English and/or mathematics.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Standard: Leaders and other staff support learners and apprentices who are looked-after children to improve their learning and/or wellbeing. This includes having regard to personal education plans, if any are in place.

[‘Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children’](#), Department for Education, February 2018.

Leadership and governance (whole-provider level)

Standard: Leaders understand the provider’s strengths and areas for development. They largely take appropriate action to drive improvement and/or sustain high standards. Where an aspect of the provision falls short of the expected standard, this is dealt with quickly and effectively.

Standard: Governors and/or those responsible for oversight make sure that leaders have a clear vision and strategy and manage resources well. They support and challenge leaders appropriately, giving due regard to their wellbeing and workload.

[‘Code of good governance for independent training providers’](#), AELP, April 2024.

[‘FE and sixth form colleges corporations: governance guide’](#), Department for Education, December 2025.

Standard: Leaders, governors and/or those responsible for oversight make decisions that are in the best interests of learners and apprentices, in particular those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND or high needs, those who are known (or previously known) to social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, including those without level 2 English and/or mathematics.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Adult skills fund: funding framework part 1 – guidance on the underlying policy’](#), Department for Education, December 2024.

[‘Education and training foundation: professional standards for leaders’](#)

[‘Full-time enrolment of 14- to 16-year-olds in further education and sixth form colleges: 2025 to 2026 academic year’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

[‘Professional standards for leaders’](#), Education and Training Foundation, 2021.

[‘Workplace bullying and harassment’](#), GOV.UK, no date.

Standard: Governors and/or those responsible for oversight have a generally accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum, teaching and training, including any subcontracted provision. They work with leaders to monitor and refine actions they have taken to make improvements.

[‘Code of good governance for independent training providers’](#), AELP, April 2024.

[‘FE and sixth form colleges corporations: governance guide’](#), Department for Education, December 2025.

Standard: Leaders ensure that staff feel valued. They consider the wellbeing of staff and make sure workloads are manageable. They avoid creating unnecessary burdens. Leaders protect staff from bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

[‘Education staff wellbeing charter’](#), Department for Education, May 2024.

[‘Workplace bullying and harassment’](#), GOV.UK, no date.

Standard: Leaders and staff collaborate with stakeholders to help enhance learners’ and apprentices’ experiences and/or to maintain their wellbeing.

[‘College and local authority annual accountability agreements’](#), Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency, January 2026.

[‘English devolution: area factsheets’](#), Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, July 2025.

[‘Local skills improvement plans’](#), Department for Education, November 2025.

Standard: Leaders ensure that programmes of professional learning and expertise are generally well planned and implemented and meets the needs of staff.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

Standard: Leaders largely monitor the quality of subcontracted provision carefully to ensure that the courses offered meet the intended curriculum standards. They hold subcontractors to account for any weak performance.

[‘Subcontracting rules for post-16 education and training’](#), Department for Education, June 2025.

Related funding guidance

[‘Adult skills fund: funding and performance management rules 2026 to 2027’](#), Department for Education, June 2026.

[‘Adult skills fund: funding rules’](#), Department for Education, June 2026.

[‘Apprenticeship funding rules’](#), Department for Work and Pensions, April 2026.

[‘Employer guide to apprenticeships’](#), National Apprenticeship Service, July 2018.

[‘High needs funding: 2026 to 2027 operational guide’](#), Education and Skills Funding Agency and Department for Education, April 2026.

[‘Meeting skills needs’](#), Department for Education, January 2025.

Contribution to meeting skills needs (whole-provider level for further education colleges, sixth form colleges and designated institutions only)

Standard: Leaders typically engage well with employers and other stakeholders, and this enables them to have a sound understanding of the skills needs of the local, regional and/or national economy. Leaders plan a relevant curriculum to meet those needs.

[‘College and local authority accountability agreements’](#), Department for Education

and Education and Skills Funding Agency, January 2026.

[‘Local skills improvement plans’](#), Department for Education, November 2025.

Standard: Leaders and managers involve employers and other relevant stakeholders effectively in designing and contributing to subject-level curriculums. Learners and apprentices generally learn well from stakeholders’ knowledge and expertise, which (where relevant) helps prepare them for future independence, employment, training and/or study.

[‘College and local authority accountability agreements’](#), Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency, January 2026.

[‘Skills and post-16 Education Act 2022’](#), legislation.gov.uk, 2022.

Standard: Leaders largely make sure that, at subject level, skills-related curriculum content is planned and taught well. Where applicable, learners and apprentices typically develop useful skills for employment, further training or study.

[‘Skills and post-16 Education Act 2022’](#), legislation.gov.uk, 2022.

Curriculum, teaching and training (provision-type level)

Standard: Leaders typically have an accurate understanding of the quality of the curriculum, teaching, and training. When necessary, they address any areas of concern in a timely and effective way.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes: guide for providers’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Adult skills fund: funding framework part 1 – guidance on the underlying policy’](#), Department for Education, December 2024.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Work and Pensions, February 2026.

Standard: Leaders have largely ensured that the curriculum is well sequenced and

builds on what has already been taught and learned. This equips learners and apprentices with the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to achieve well, and prepares them well for their next steps.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

Standard: Learners and apprentices follow a curriculum designed around well-planned outcomes and experiences, such as those in their EHC plans or individual learning plans.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

Standard: Leaders make sure that the curriculum is, in the main, relevant to local, regional and national employment and training priorities.

[‘College and local authority annual accountability agreements’](#), Department for Education and Education and Skills Funding Agency, January 2026.

[‘Local skills improvement plans’](#), Department for Education, November 2025.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the curriculum is accessible, allowing learners and apprentices to participate in learning and studying the intended curriculum, including those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND, those with high needs, those who are known (or previously known) to social care, or those who may face any other barriers to their learning or wellbeing, including those without level 2 English and/or mathematics.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Promoting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing’](#), Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and Department for Education, November 2023.

[‘Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children’](#), Department for Education, February 2018.

Standard: Leaders ensure that teachers and trainers have the knowledge, skills and resources they need to teach learners and apprentices. They are supporting them to quickly gain the relevant expertise and knowledge, where they do not have these, through professional learning and expertise.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

Standard: Learners and apprentices are taught well. Teachers use appropriate strategies to help them understand and remember what they have learned.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

Standard: Teachers and trainers mostly ensure that enough planned time is built into the curriculum to teach, practise, assess and close any gaps in learners’ and apprentices’ knowledge, skills and behaviours.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

Standard: Teachers and trainers largely have the expertise to prioritise and teach the vocabulary, both spoken and written, required for the specific courses/subjects that they teach.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

Standard: Teachers and trainers largely use assessment well to provide constructive feedback to learners and apprentices, and to refine their approach to teaching and training.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

Standard: Teachers and trainers generally explain vocational, academic and technical subject knowledge well. They select appropriate teaching and training activities and resources to support learners’ and apprentices’ development of new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, July 2019.

[‘Professional standards for teachers and trainers’](#), Education and Training Foundation, 2022.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the curriculum for full-time 14-to-16-year olds meets statutory requirements.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes: guide for providers’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

Standard: Leaders ensure that 16 to 19 study programmes meet the principles and requirements.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes: guide for providers’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

Standard: In adult learning programmes, the curriculum is aligned to the funding authority, employer and stakeholder needs, and the relevant local, regional and national priorities. The curriculum is planned and tailored to help adult learners develop the personal, social and employability skills that they need to succeed.

[‘Local skills improvement plans’](#), Department for Education, November 2025.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the principles and requirements of apprenticeships are met. Staff and employers co-plan and implement on- and off-the-job training so that apprentices can apply and practise newly taught knowledge, skills and behaviours at work.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Work and Pensions, February 2026.

Standard: In provision for learners with high needs, they follow tailored programmes that meet their individual needs. Teachers and trainers collaborate with external partners so that learners are well prepared for their next steps in learning, training or employment.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Achievement (provision-type level)

Standard: Learners and apprentices, in particular those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND or high needs, those who are known (or previously known) to social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, including those without level 2 English and/or mathematics, typically make appropriate progress from their starting points and/or achieve well. They largely achieve relevant standards and qualifications within the anticipated timeframe.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Work and Pensions, February 2026.

[‘RARPA \(Recognising and recording progress and achievement\)’](#), Natspec, no date.

Standard: Learners and apprentices generally develop the intended new

knowledge, skills and behaviours, as they progress through the curriculum, and they can apply these effectively. They produce work of the standard expected for the level of course they are studying.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Adult skills fund: funding framework part 1 – guidance on the underlying policy’](#), Department for Education, December 2024.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Work and Pensions, February 2026.

Standard: Learners and apprentices broadly develop the English, mathematical and digital skills they need to study the curriculum and achieve their learning goals, including making progress towards level 2 mathematics and English qualifications.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Work and Pensions, February 2026.

Standard: Learners and apprentices are usually ready for the next stage of education, employment or training, and/or for greater independence in the community. They mostly go on to destinations that reflect their interests and meet their career goals and aspirations.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Work and Pensions, February 2026.

Standard: Learners on 16-to-19 study programme who take level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics typically make positive progress in English and mathematical knowledge, skills and behaviours, compared to their starting points.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

Standard: Learners with high needs typically make at least the planned progress towards ambitious outcomes, such as those identified in their EHC plans.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Preparation for adulthood arrangements in local areas: a thematic review’](#), Ofsted and Care Quality Commission, December 2024.

Standard: Adult learners achieve the personal targets and goals set for them to help them build confidence and/or improve their health and wellbeing, prepare for further learning or employment, improve essential skills, develop stronger communities, and equip them as parents to support their children’s learning.

[‘Adult skills fund: funding framework part 1 – guidance on the underlying policy’](#), Department for Education, December 2024.

Participation and development (provision-type level)

Standard: Leaders typically ensure that learners and apprentices study and, where relevant, work in safe and respectful environments, where their wellbeing is prioritised, particularly those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND or high needs, those who are known (or previously known) to social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, including those without level 2 English and/or mathematics.

[‘Promoting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing’](#), Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and Department for Education, November 2023.

[‘Professional standards for teachers and trainers’](#), Education and Training Foundation, 2022.

Standard: Leaders set high expectations for the attendance, behaviours and attitudes of groups of learners and apprentices. Learners and apprentices typically behave appropriately and have high attendance at lessons and other activities. Staff address any inappropriate behaviour consistently and promptly.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Professional standards for teachers and trainers’](#), Education and Training Foundation, 2022.

[‘Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges’](#), Ofsted, June 2021.

Standard: Leaders do not tolerate bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, physical and/or sexual violence, or derogatory language. They usually act quickly and appropriately when concerns arise. Learners and apprentices know how to raise issues and are confident that staff will take them seriously.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges’](#), Ofsted, June 2021.

Standard: Leaders identify the reasons why certain learners and apprentices do not attend or participate regularly, particularly those who are disadvantaged, young carers and those groups listed above. Leaders’ actions support learners and apprentices to re-engage with their studies.

[‘Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children’](#), Department for Education, February 2018.

Standard: Leaders generally understand learners’ and apprentices’ wider development needs. They provide suitable opportunities for groups of learners and apprentices to take part in citizenship programmes, volunteering and/or leadership-related activities, which prepare them well for the future.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Work and Pensions, February 2026.

Standard: The curriculum includes age-appropriate content on learners’ and apprentices’ mental and physical health, healthy relationships, and how to protect themselves from radicalisation, extremist views and harmful online content. Learners and apprentices develop an appropriate understanding of these issues, and they generally know how to stay safe and make informed choices about their wellbeing.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Promoting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing’](#), Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and Department for Education, November 2023.

[‘Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges’](#), Ofsted, June 2021.

[‘Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales \(accessible\)’](#), Home Office, March

2024.

Standard: Learners and apprentices develop their understanding of, and respect for, protected characteristics, fundamental British values and cultural diversity in modern Britain. Staff address prejudiced views or comments.

[‘What are British values?’](#), Education and Training Foundation, no date.

Standard: Learners and apprentices receive coherent careers education and tailored guidance. On the whole, this helps them make informed decisions about their next steps and challenges any misconceptions or stereotypes they may hold about careers.

[‘Careers guidance and access for education and training providers’](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

[‘Good career guidance: the next 10 years’](#), Gatsby Benchmarks, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders provide a work-related learning programme that is matched to learners’ and apprentices’ needs, aspirations and intended destinations, and which meets the expectations of the 16 to 19 study programme.

[‘16 to 19 study programmes guidance: 2025 to 2026 academic year’](#), Department for Education, July 2025.

Standard: Leaders ensure that learners with high needs access planned support and activities to develop their resilience, confidence and independence over time.

[‘SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

Initial teacher education

This section provides references for the expected standards, as set out for each evaluation area in the initial teacher education inspection toolkit. These are taken from the key guidance documents (including statutory and non-statutory guidance and mandatory requirements) and relevant research.

Inclusion

Standard: Leaders and those responsible for overseeing the ITE provision promote inclusive practices and champion equality and diversity.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘The Equality Act 2010’](#), legislation.gov.uk, April 2010.

Standard: Trainees typically feel welcomed and valued, regardless of their backgrounds or prior experiences. Leaders act on feedback to improve trainees’ experiences.

[‘Apprenticeship funding rules’](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

Standard: The provider’s inclusive policies and practices foster a safe environment for trainees to disclose any needs, knowing support will be made available.

[‘Apprenticeship funding rules’](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

Standard: Leaders and staff understand their trainees’ needs and typically take action to help trainees reduce any barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, including trainees with identified SEND.

[‘Apprenticeship funding rules’](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

Standard: Leaders make any reasonable adjustments or adaptations required that are appropriate to the teaching profession and meet trainees’ needs.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#),

Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘The Equality Act 2010’](#), legislation.gov.uk, April 2010.

Standard: Trainees generally receive helpful information about a variety of appropriate internal and external guidance that is available to help them to support their own learning and/or wellbeing.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

Curriculum, teaching and training

Standard: Leaders ensure that the ITE curriculum is ambitious, well-structured and designed to prepare trainees to teach their subject(s) and phase.

[‘Best start in life: a research review for early years’](#), Ofsted, October 2024.

[‘Building great teachers? Initial teacher education curriculum research: phase 2’](#), Ofsted, January 2020.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, March 2025.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard’](#), Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, April 2025.

[‘Ofsted subject reports series \(per subject\)’](#), Ofsted, April 2024.

[‘SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Subject research reviews’](#), Ofsted, April 2024.

[‘Supporting SEND’](#), Ofsted, May 2021.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, January 2019.

[‘Teachers’ standards \(early years\)’](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership, September 2013.

[‘Teachers’ standards: overview’](#), Department for Education, no date.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the ITE curriculum meets all statutory and non-statutory guidance, mandatory requirements and trainee entitlements, as relevant to the phase.

[‘Apprenticeship funding rules’](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, March 2025.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard’](#), Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, April 2025.

[‘Teachers’ standards: overview’](#), Department for Education, no date.

[‘Teachers’ standards \(early years\)’](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership, September 2013.

Standard: In primary and secondary phases, ITAP elements play a key role in enhancing trainees’ knowledge and application of specific, foundational and pivotal aspects of teaching. Leaders ensure that ITAP elements are well embedded in the ITE curriculum, including through mentoring.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, March 2025.

[‘Intensive training and practice’](#), Department for Education, December 2023.

Standard: Trainees have sufficient and purposeful opportunities to learn about and practise teaching their subject(s) and phase.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, March 2025.

Standard: Leaders ensure that the ITE curriculum breaks down key knowledge and teaching skills into logical, meaningful steps. Leaders typically make sure that teacher educators and mentors provide trainees with sufficient opportunities to apply

and revisit this knowledge.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, January 2019.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, March 2025.

Standard: The ITE curriculum is purposefully sequenced and integrated across all its taught elements, including teaching practice.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, January 2019.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, March 2025.

Standard: The ITE curriculum teaches trainees to meet the needs of all pupils and learners, including those who are disadvantaged, those with SEND, those who are known (or previously known) to children’s social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing, such as young carers. Trainees learn about the roles of key professionals within their phase, how to identify barriers to learning, and how to adapt their teaching to meet pupils’ and learners’ needs.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education,

January 2024.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, March 2025.

[‘Learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard’](#), Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, April 2025.

[‘SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Supporting SEND’](#), Ofsted, May 2021.

[‘Teachers’ standards \(early years\)’](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership, September 2013.

[‘Teachers’ standards: overview’](#), Department for Education, no date.

Standard: The ITE curriculum encompasses trainees’ roles in keeping pupils and learners safe. Trainees are taught to be curious, how to spot signs of harm, and how to promote the safety and welfare of the pupils and learners they teach. Trainees learn about their statutory safeguarding duties as set out in ‘Keeping children safe in education’, ‘Working together to safeguard children’ and the Prevent duty.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[‘Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales \(accessible\)’](#), Home Office, March 2024.

[‘Working together to safeguard children’](#), Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: The ITE curriculum is informed by relevant, high-quality research. Trainees are well equipped to apply this learning to the teaching of their subject(s) (where the research is available) and phase.

[‘Best start in life: a research review for early years’](#), Ofsted, October 2024.

[‘Building great teachers? Initial teacher education curriculum research: phase 2’](#), Ofsted, January 2020.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, January 2019.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, March 2025.

[‘Learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard’](#), Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, April 2025.

[‘Ofsted subject reports series \(per subject\)’](#), Ofsted, April 2024.

[‘SEND Code of Practice 0-25 years’](#), Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care, September 2024.

[‘Subject research reviews’](#), Ofsted, April 2024.

[‘Supporting SEND’](#), Ofsted, May 2021.

Standard: Teacher educators and mentors are knowledgeable and skilful in the subjects and phases they teach. They are well informed about the ITE curriculum and model effective, evidence-based teaching methods to help trainees to learn and retain knowledge over time in the subjects they train trainees to teach.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, January 2019.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for](#)

[accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25](#)', Department for Education, 2025.

['Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships'](#), Department for Education, August 2023.

Standard: Teacher educators and mentors understand the needs of individual trainees and make the required adaptations to their training to support trainees in learning about the ITE curriculum.

['Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice'](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

['Initial teacher training and early career framework'](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

['Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25'](#), Department for Education, 2025.

['Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships'](#), Department for Education, August 2023.

Standard: Teacher educators and mentors use assessment accurately to identify and support trainees to address any gaps in their knowledge. They use this information refine the ITE curriculum where necessary.

['Diploma in Teaching \(further education and skills\) qualification framework'](#), Department for Education, August 2025.

['Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice'](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

['Education inspection framework: overview of research'](#), Ofsted, January 2019.

['Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education'](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

['Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education'](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

['Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25'](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘Learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard’](#), Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, April 2025.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Education, August 2023.

Standard: Teacher educators and mentors give helpful developmental feedback to trainees.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, January 2019.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

Standard: Trainees benefit from high-quality mentoring that meets all entitlements and mandatory requirements. Mentors understand the ITE curriculum and their role in implementing it.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

Achievement

Standard: Trainees learn, develop and apply the knowledge and skills they need to teach and manage behaviour effectively in their subject(s) and phase.

[‘Apprenticeship funding rules’](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

[‘Diploma in Teaching \(further education and skills\) qualification framework’](#), Department for Education, August 2025.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘Learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard’](#), Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, April 2025.

[‘Teachers’ standards \(early years\)’](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership, September 2013.

[‘Teachers’ standards: overview’](#), Department for Education, no date.

Standard: Trainees are well prepared for the realities of teaching their subject(s) and phase and are largely ready for their next stage of employment. They understand their statutory safeguarding duties as set out in ‘Keeping children safe in education’, ‘Working together to safeguard children’ and the Prevent duty as they apply to their phase.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher](#)

[education](#)’, Department for Education, May 2026.

‘[Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education](#)’, Department for Education, May 2026.

‘[Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25](#)’, Department for Education, 2025.

‘[Keeping children safe in education](#)’, Department for Education, September 2025.

‘[Learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard](#)’, Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, April 2025.

‘[Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales \(accessible\)](#)’, Home Office, March 2024.

‘[Working together to safeguard children](#)’, Department for Education, March 2026.

Standard: Trainees generally reflect on their teaching, know their professional strengths, and act on priorities for improvement.

‘[Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education](#)’, Department for Education, May 2026.

‘[Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education](#)’, Department for Education, May 2026.

‘[Initial teacher training and early career framework](#)’, Department for Education, January 2024.

‘[Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25](#)’, Department for Education, 2025.

‘[Learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard](#)’, Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, April 2025.

‘[Teachers’ standards \(early years\)](#)’, National College for Teaching and Leadership, September 2013.

‘[Teachers’ standards: overview](#)’, Department for Education, no date.

Standard: Trainees with identified SEND and those who may face other barriers to

learning and/or wellbeing are not put at a disadvantage and are given every opportunity to succeed.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Education, August 2023.

Standard: Typically, over time, trainees complete their ITE programme and achieve their qualification/professional status.

[‘Learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard’](#), Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, April 2025.

[‘Teachers’ standards \(early years\)’](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership, September 2013.

[‘Teachers’ standards: overview’](#), Department for Education, no date.

Professional behaviours, personal development and wellbeing

Standard: Leaders and staff have high expectations for trainees’ professional behaviours and attendance. Trainees are committed to their learning and participate well.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Teachers’ standards \(early years\)’](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership, September 2013.

[‘Teachers’ standards: overview’](#), Department for Education, no date.

Standard: Leaders, staff and partner organisations typically provide the pastoral support, advice and guidance that trainees need to complete their ITE programme. They promote trainees’ mental health and wellbeing. Trainees know how to seek wider support, where needed.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Teachers’ standards \(early years\)’](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership, September 2013.

[‘Teachers’ standards: overview’](#), Department for Education, no date.

Standard: Leaders ensure that incidents of bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation towards trainees are not tolerated. Where these occur, they are typically dealt with quickly and sensitively. Staff, partner organisations and trainees know how to report concerns.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘The Equality Act 2010’](#), legislation.gov.uk, April 2010.

Standard: Trainees know, understand and demonstrate the professional behaviours associated with teaching, including when on teaching practice and in the workplace. Typically, they are well prepared to enter the profession by the end of the programme.

[‘Diploma in Teaching \(further education and skills\) qualification framework’](#), Department for Education, August 2025.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘Learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard’](#), Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, April 2025.

[‘Teachers’ standards \(early years\)’](#), National College for Teaching and Leadership, September 2013.

[‘Teachers’ standards: overview’](#), Department for Education, no date.

Standard: Trainees learn how to manage a demanding workload and understand how to put this into practice.

[‘Addressing teacher workload in initial teacher education \(ITE\)’](#), Department for Education, November 2018.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

Standard: Trainees, on the whole, know how to ask for help and are well supported when needed, including trainees with identified SEND and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or wellbeing.

[‘Addressing teacher workload in initial teacher education \(ITE\)’](#), Department for Education, November 2018.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025’.

Leadership

Standard: Leaders make sure that their vision, values, and priorities are shared and commonly understood across the ITE provision. They typically have clearly defined expectations for what can be achieved.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

Standard: Leaders work collaboratively with relevant partner organisations and stakeholders to inform the ITE provision. They typically consider the national context, alongside their local context, when designing ITE programmes.

[‘Addressing teacher workload in initial teacher education \(ITE\)’](#), Department for Education, November 2018.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#),

Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training: forming partnerships’](#), Department for Education, August 2023.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

Standard: Leaders routinely evaluate the quality of the ITE programmes, including how well these prepare trainees to teach their subject(s) and phase. They generally make well-considered and effective decisions to improve or maintain quality.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Education, August 2023.

Standard: Leaders carefully consider the views of trainees, partner organisations and provider staff when evaluating the effectiveness of ITE programmes. These views largely inform meaningful improvement priorities.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Education, August 2023.

Standard: Those responsible for overseeing the ITE provision hold leaders to account, ensuring that statutory duties and mandatory requirements are met. They challenge leaders and support them to implement the strategic vision, giving due regard to leaders’ wellbeing and workload.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

Standard: Leaders make sure that all those who teach, mentor and support trainees undertake timely and purposeful professional learning to develop their expertise and carry out their roles effectively.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Education inspection framework: overview of research’](#), Ofsted, January 2019.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for](#)

[accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25](#)', Department for Education, 2025.

Standard: The provider's selection processes are rigorous. They ensure that trainees have the necessary knowledge, skills and/or experience to be successful in their subject(s) and/or phase. Leaders collaborate with partner organisations to develop selection strategies and processes.

['Apprenticeship funding rules'](#), Department for Education, May 2025.

['Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice'](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

['Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education'](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

['Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education'](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

['Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25'](#), Department for Education, 2025.

['Keeping children safe in education'](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

Standard: Leaders use partnerships and stakeholder relationships well to provide trainees with valuable opportunities to broaden and apply their teaching knowledge and skills in various, relevant contexts.

['Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice'](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

['Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education'](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

['Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education'](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

['Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25'](#), Department for Education, 2025.

Standard: Leaders and those responsible for oversight of the ITE provision take action to ensure staff feel valued and workload is manageable. They avoid creating

unnecessary burdens.

[‘Education staff wellbeing charter’](#), Department for Education, May 2024.

Standard: Leaders have systems in place to protect staff from bullying, unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Where these do occur, they are dealt with consistently and sensitively.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Initial teacher training \(ITT\): criteria and supporting advice: statutory guidance for accredited ITT providers. Academic year 2024/25’](#), Department for Education, 2025.

[‘The Equality Act 2010’](#), legislation.gov.uk, April 2010.

Compliance, including safeguarding

Standard: The provider ensures that its ITE programmes meet the DfE’s mandatory compliance criteria for primary and secondary phases.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education, January 2024.

Standard: In the early years phase, the provider has regard to the DfE’s EYITT criteria and supporting advice document.

[‘Early years initial teacher training \(EYITT\): criteria and supporting advice’](#), Department for Education, October 2024.

Standard: In the primary and secondary phase, the ITE curriculum covers the full entitlement described in the ITTECF.

[‘Initial teacher training and early career framework’](#), Department for Education,

January 2024.

Standard: In the FE and skills phase, the ITE curriculum is fully aligned to the occupational standard

[‘Learning and skills teacher apprenticeship standard’](#), Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, April 2025.

Standard: In the FE and skills phase, the provider considers the DfE’s ‘Expectations for the delivery of initial teacher education for FE’.

[‘Curriculum content guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

[‘Delivery guidance for courses of further education initial teacher education’](#), Department for Education, May 2026.

Standard: The provider makes sure that apprenticeship provision meets the principles and requirements of apprenticeships.

[‘Provider guide to delivering high-quality apprenticeships’](#), Department for Education, August 2023.

Standard: The provider complies with all relevant legislation and requirements relating to the ‘Prevent’ duty, the Equality Act 2010 and (where relevant) the PSED.

[‘Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales \(accessible\)’](#), Home Office, March 2024.

[‘The Equality Act 2010’](#), legislation.gov.uk, April 2010.

Standard: Leaders consistently follow safer recruitment processes when recruiting trainees, in line with ‘Keeping children safe in education’.

[‘Keeping children safe in education’](#), Department for Education, September 2025.

[↑ Back to top](#)

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. [Please fill in this survey \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

Cancel



Services and information

[Benefits](#)

[Births, death, marriages and care](#)

[Business and self-employed](#)

[Childcare and parenting](#)

[Citizenship and living in the UK](#)

[Crime, justice and the law](#)

[Disabled people](#)

[Driving and transport](#)

[Education and learning](#)

[Employing people](#)

[Environment and countryside](#)

[Housing and local services](#)

[Money and tax](#)

[Passports, travel and living abroad](#)

Government activity

[Departments](#)

[News](#)

[Guidance and regulation](#)

[Research and statistics](#)

[Policy papers and consultations](#)

[Transparency](#)

[How government works](#)

[Get involved](#)

[Visas and immigration](#)

[Working, jobs and pensions](#)

[Help](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookies](#) [Accessibility statement](#) [Contact](#)

[Terms and conditions](#) [Rhestr o Wasanaethau Cymraeg](#)

[Government Digital Service](#)

OGL

All content is available under the [Open Government Licence v3.0](#), except where otherwise stated



[© Crown copyright](#)