

# Non-association independent school inspection handbook

Handbook for inspecting non-association independent schools in England under  
section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008

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## Introduction

1. This handbook describes the main activities undertaken during inspections of non-association independent schools in England under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008 from September 2015.<sup>1</sup> It sets out the evaluation criteria that inspectors use to make their judgements and on which they report. This includes the extent to which the school meets the requirements of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (referred to as the independent school standards).<sup>2</sup>
2. The handbook has two parts:
  - Part 1. How non-association independent schools (referred to as schools) will be inspected.  
This contains information about the process before, during and after the inspection.
  - Part 2. The evaluation schedule.  
This contains the evaluation criteria inspectors use to make the graded judgements about schools. It includes the kinds of evidence used and activities carried out by inspectors to make their judgements.
3. This handbook is primarily a guide for inspectors on how to carry out school inspections. However, it is made available to schools and other organisations to ensure that they are informed about the process and procedures of inspection. It seeks to balance the need for consistency in inspections with the flexibility required to respond to the individual circumstances of each school. This handbook should not be regarded as a set of inflexible rules, but as an account of the procedures that normally govern inspection. Inspectors will exercise their professional judgement when using it. This handbook is for school inspections to be carried out from September 2015 under the new 'Common inspection framework: education, skills and early years' (the CIF).<sup>3</sup>
4. This handbook applies to standard inspections. It does not cover the range of additional inspections that Ofsted undertakes of independent schools: emergency, progress monitoring, pre-registration and material change inspections. Guidance on these inspections is available in the 'Handbook for additional inspections of non-association independent schools'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Education and Skills Act 2008; [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/25/contents).

<sup>2</sup> The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014; [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents/made).

<sup>3</sup> *Common inspection framework: education, skills and early years*, Ofsted, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015).

<sup>4</sup> *Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools*, Ofsted, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/conducting-additional-inspections-of-independent-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conducting-additional-inspections-of-independent-schools).

## **Part 1. How schools will be inspected**

### **What are the legal requirements for the inspection of schools?**

#### **How schools are selected for inspection**

5. All independent schools are inspected at the direction of the Department for Education (DfE), which is the registration authority for independent schools. Therefore, Ofsted may be asked to inspect an independent school at any time. This might occur, for example, where the DfE has particular concerns about a school.
6. The CIF and this handbook set out the arrangements for standard inspections of independent school carried out from September 2015.
7. These inspections are conducted under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008.

#### **Frequency of inspections**

8. All schools will have a standard inspection within three years from September 2015.
9. Schools inspected from January 2015 that are judged as requires improvement or inadequate will normally have a standard inspection within two years of the previous standard inspection.
10. Schools that are judged to be requires improvement following a standard inspection from January 2015 may also receive a progress monitoring inspection before their next standard inspection. The purpose of the progress monitoring inspection is for inspectors to judge whether the school has addressed any un-met independent school standards and the qualitative issues identified at the previous standard inspection.
11. On a progress monitoring inspection of a school that was judged as requires improvement but met all the independent school standards, inspectors will judge whether the school continues to comply with the standards to which the qualitative issues identified at the previous standard inspection relate.
12. The progress monitoring inspection of schools judged as inadequate in inspections from January 2015 will also judge whether schools have addressed any un-met independent school standards and the qualitative issues identified at the previous standard inspection.

#### **Conducting additional inspections as part of a standard inspection**

13. The DfE may commission Ofsted to conduct an additional inspection as part of a standard inspection. It may commission Ofsted to consider a school's application to make a material change to its registration, a school's progress in implementing its action plan and in meeting un-met independent school standards, or a complaint or other issue about a school, as part of a standard inspection. The DfE will request this in an inspection commissioning form.

14. Similarly, if the DfE commissions Ofsted to carry out an additional inspection and a standard inspection is already scheduled to take place in the same or next term, Ofsted will recommend to the DfE that the additional inspection be carried out as part of the standard inspection.
15. In both cases, this will be a single inspection event, with one report published on the Ofsted website.<sup>5</sup>

### **New schools**

16. Proprietors wishing to open a new school must apply to the DfE for registration. They are asked to supply the information set out in section 98 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 and The Education (Independent Educational Provision in England) (Provision of Information) Regulations 2010.<sup>6</sup>
17. The Education and Skills Act 2008 requires Ofsted to conduct a pre-registration inspection of a prospective school before it opens. These inspections are commissioned by the DfE. Inspectors consider the written evidence supplied in the school's application before the pre-registration inspection is made to the school in order to advise the Secretary of State about the school's readiness for registration. Schools may not accept pupils until the school has been registered. Following a pre-registration inspection, the inspector reports to the registration authority indicating the extent to which the independent school standards are likely to be met. This report is not published, but is made available to the school.<sup>7</sup> The decision on whether or not to register the school lies with the DfE.
18. Once registered, new schools receive their first standard inspection in their first year of operation, at the request of the DfE. These reports are published on the Ofsted website.

### **Boarding or residential provision**

19. Where boarding provision in boarding schools has been judged inadequate or requires improvement, it is inspected again within two years. Where the boarding provision has been judged good or outstanding, it will be inspected within three years. Residential provision in residential special schools is inspected annually.
20. An inspection of boarding or residential provision in a boarding or residential special school will be integrated with the school inspection where possible (see Annex). Integrated inspections cannot be carried out when inspection cycles do not

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<sup>5</sup> <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

<sup>6</sup> The Education (Independent Educational Provision in England) (Provision of Information) Regulations 2010; [www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/2010/2919/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uk/si/2010/2919/contents/made).

<sup>7</sup> Guidance on pre-registration inspections is available in the *Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools*, Ofsted, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/conducting-additional-inspections-of-independent-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conducting-additional-inspections-of-independent-schools).

coincide. In such cases, only an inspection of the boarding or residential provision will be conducted.<sup>8</sup>

## Separately registered childcare provision

21. Early years or childcare provision of more than two hours a day that is not managed by the school's proprietor/governing body must normally be registered with Ofsted. If provision managed directly by the school's proprietor/governing body includes care for children under two years old, or where no child attending is a pupil of the school, it must be registered by Ofsted. Provision registered in this way is not inspected as part of an inspection of the school.

## When can an inspection take place?

22. Inspection can take place at any point after the end of five working school days from the beginning of the autumn term. For example, if pupils return to school on a Wednesday, inspection can take place as early as the following Wednesday.

## Before the inspection

### Inspectors' planning and preparation

23. The lead inspector, and in the case of integrated inspections the lead social care regulatory inspector, will prepare for the inspection by gaining an overview of the school's recent performance and any changes since the previous inspection. They will check compliance with aspects of the independent school standards where that is possible before an inspection (such as in relation to provision of information).<sup>9</sup> They carry out this activity before they arrive at the school on the first day of the inspection. The lead inspector will use all available evidence to develop an initial picture of the school's performance. Their planning will be informed by analysis of:
  - the previous inspection reports, which may include boarding and early years inspection reports
  - any reports or advice notes resulting from additional inspections carried out since the last standard inspection, in particular emergency inspections<sup>10</sup>
  - the findings of any recent Ofsted survey
  - responses from Parent View,<sup>11</sup> Ofsted's online survey for parents<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The inspection of the boarding/residential provision will be conducted under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools or residential special schools, as appropriate. The boarding/residential inspection will follow *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*, Ofsted, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-framework-for-inspecting-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-framework-for-inspecting-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools).

<sup>9</sup> All planning activity will be recorded on evidence forms and will contribute to the summary evaluation form for the inspection.

<sup>10</sup> Information on additional inspections is contained in the *Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools*, Ofsted, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/conducting-additional-inspections-of-independent-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conducting-additional-inspections-of-independent-schools).

<sup>11</sup> <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

- pupils', and if relevant placing authorities', replies to Ofsted's point-in-time surveys (see Annex)
- information from the provider information portal (PIP)<sup>13</sup>
- information on the school's website, including:
  - the presence of the safeguarding policy, as required by the independent school standards
  - the suitability of the safeguarding policy, taking into account current government requirements
  - curriculum information (so the lead inspector can start to assess the breadth and balance of the school's curriculum and whether it is likely to promote preparation for, and an appreciation of, life in modern Britain)
- information provided by the DfE, in particular any specific focus for the inspection, in the inspection commissioning form, where the DfE has commissioned:
  - the inspection to be brought forward
  - an additional inspection that will form part of the standard inspection
- any complaints from parents or members of the public that the DfE has asked Ofsted to consider as part of the inspection
- the school's census returns
- any other information publicly available or available from relevant stakeholders such as local authorities and the police.

24. There may be other relevant information that is in the public domain and reported in the press. Inspectors should therefore conduct a brief internet search as part of their pre-inspection planning to see whether there are any safeguarding or other issues – for example a change of governance – that may need to be followed up during inspection.<sup>14</sup>
25. The lead inspector will prepare and distribute brief joining instructions for the inspection team. These will include factual information, a brief analysis of the pre-inspection information, and the key issues and lines of enquiry that are the focus of the inspection.
26. In the case of integrated inspections of boarding and residential special schools, the inspection of boarding or residential provision is undertaken by one or more social care regulatory inspectors. Contact between the education and social care regulatory inspectors takes place before the start of the inspection. Guidance on pre-inspection activity for integrated inspections is set out in the 'Handbook for

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<sup>12</sup> 'Parents' refers to mothers, fathers and/or carers.

<sup>13</sup> The provider information portal (PIP) provides a high-level view for Ofsted inspectors of information about providers we inspect and regulate.

<sup>14</sup> A change in proprietor constitutes a material change to the school's registration, which must be agreed with the DfE before being implemented.



inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools, *Guidance for inspecting boarding and residential provision in schools in England*.<sup>15</sup>

### **Notification and introduction**

27. Ofsted will normally contact the school by telephone to announce the inspection around lunchtime on the day before the inspection is due to start.
28. If the headteacher is unavailable when the notification call is made, Ofsted will ask to speak to the most senior member of staff available. Once Ofsted has informed the school by telephone that the inspection will take place, it will send confirmation to the school by email.
29. Where it appears that a school is no longer operating, Ofsted will check whether the DfE requires an inspection to be carried out to ascertain whether or not the school is still operating. If the DfE requires such an inspection, the standard inspection will be changed to an emergency inspection. The emergency inspection will be carried out in line with the guidance in the 'Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools'.<sup>16</sup>

### **Requests for deferral or cancellation**

30. If a school requests a deferral of its inspection, the inspection support administrator must immediately make Ofsted aware of this by contacting the Ofsted regional duty desk. Ofsted will consult the DfE and then decide whether to grant deferral in accordance with its deferral policy.<sup>17</sup>
31. In exceptional circumstances, an inspection might be cancelled or deferred after the school has been notified, following a request made by the school. Normally, however, if pupils are receiving education in the school, an inspection will go ahead.
32. The deferral policy makes clear that where the inspection of a school has been deferred previously on two consecutive occasions because there were no pupils on roll, the inspection will not be deferred for a third time (see Annex).
33. The deferral policy also makes clear that the absence of the headteacher is not normally a reason for deferring an inspection. If a school is within six months of confirmed closure, but the headteacher does not request a cancellation when the inspection support administrator makes contact, the inspection support administrator should call the duty desk to highlight this. The duty desk will seek a

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<sup>15</sup> *Handbook for inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools, Guidance for inspecting boarding and residential provision in schools in England*, Ofsted, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools-guidance-for-inspectors](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools-guidance-for-inspectors).

<sup>16</sup> *Handbook for additional inspections of independent schools*, Ofsted, 2015;

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/conducting-additional-inspections-of-independent-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/conducting-additional-inspections-of-independent-schools).

<sup>17</sup> *Deferring Ofsted inspections*, Ofsted, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferring-ofsted-inspections](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/deferring-ofsted-inspections).

decision from the DfE whether the inspection should still be carried out. A decision will be made on a case-by-case basis.

34. In the case of unannounced inspections, any requests for a deferral will be passed to the Ofsted Regional Director, who will decide whether the request can be granted.

### **No-notice inspections**

35. Ofsted may conduct inspections without notice.<sup>18</sup> Where this is the case, there will not be a prior telephone call.

### **The lead inspector's initial telephone call**

36. In announced inspections, on the morning of the inspection, the lead inspector will contact the school and ask to speak to the headteacher. The call will be short and focused on practical issues. The lead inspector will arrange a time during the afternoon to start the inspection.
37. The purpose of the lead inspector's initial call is to:
- make the school aware of the need to inform parents of the inspection, and that Parent View is the main vehicle for gathering the views of parents at the point of inspection; inspectors should remind the school that Ofsted's letter to parents containing the link to Parent View may be sent electronically or as a paper copy via pupils
  - establish whether the school has any pupils who attend off-site alternative provision, either on a full or part-time basis. Inspectors must ask the school about the registration status of any alternative providers that it uses. Any provider of alternative provision must be registered as an independent school if it caters full-time for five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one such pupil who is looked after, has an education, health and care (EHC) plan, or has a statement of special educational needs
  - establish whether the school has an off-site unit to cater for pupils with behaviour or attendance difficulties either run by the school or in partnership with other schools
  - make arrangements for the inspection; this includes an invitation to the headteacher to participate in observations of teaching and learning and to observe the main inspection team meetings
  - make arrangements for meetings with key staff
  - establish what the governance structure of the school is, and make arrangements for a meeting with the proprietor, chair of governors and as

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<sup>18</sup> Inspection without notice will be considered where there are serious concerns about one or more of the following: the breadth and balance of the curriculum; rapidly declining standards; safeguarding including a decline in standards of pupils' behaviour and the ability of staff to maintain discipline; and standards of leadership or governance.

many governors as possible, and/or representatives of those responsible for governance, and request that as many governors as possible are also present at the final feedback meeting

- request that relevant school documents are made available as soon as possible from the start of the inspection (see paragraph 38)
- provide an opportunity for the school to ask any questions
- establish whether the school is either providing support for other schools or receiving it. If so, inspectors should include this information, giving the names of the school(s), in the 'information about the school' section of the report. This should include any such activity over the previous 12 months. Where a school has received support from the leader of another school, it will be important to establish the extent and the impact of this, to determine whether that leader should be nominated for recognition by HMCI as an exceptional leader.

38. Inspectors will ask the school to make the following information available at the start of the inspection. This includes the information required to comply with the independent school standards:

- a summary of any school self-evaluation or equivalent
- school timetable, current staff list and times for the school day
- any information about pre-planned interruptions to normal school routines during the inspection
- the single central record of the checks and vetting of all staff working with pupils
- records and analysis of exclusions, pupils taken off roll, incidents of poor behaviour and any use of internal isolation
- records and analysis of bullying, discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour, either directly or indirectly, including racist, disability and homophobic bullying, use of derogatory language and racist incidents
- a list of referrals made to the designated person for safeguarding in the school and those that were subsequently referred to the local authority, along with brief details of the resolution
- a list of all pupils who are open cases with children's services/social care and for whom there is a multi-agency plan
- up-to-date attendance analysis for all groups of pupils
- documented evidence of the work of the proprietor and/or governors and their impact

39. Inspectors may request additional information, such as:

- the current school improvement plan
- records of the evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- information about the school's performance management arrangements,

including the most recent performance management outcomes and their relationship to salary progression, in an anonymised format

- any reports of external evaluation of the school.

### Using a school's self-assessment during inspection

40. Ofsted does not require schools to produce a self-evaluation document or summary in a particular format. Any assessment that is provided should be part of the school's business processes and not generated solely for inspection purposes.

### Safeguarding

41. Inspectors will always have regard for how well children and learners are helped and protected so that they are kept safe. Although inspectors will not provide a separate grade for this key aspect of a provider's work, they will always make a written judgement under leadership and management in the inspection report about whether the arrangements for safeguarding children and learners are effective.
42. Ofsted has published a document setting out the approach inspectors should take to inspecting safeguarding in all the settings covered by the CIF. The document 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings', August 2015,<sup>19</sup> should be read alongside the CIF and this handbook.
43. It is also essential that inspectors are familiar with the statutory guidance in relation to safeguarding:
- 'Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges'<sup>20</sup>
  - 'Working together to safeguard children'.<sup>21</sup>

### Reporting on evidence or allegations of child abuse

44. On a very small number of occasions, inspectors may come across evidence or ongoing allegations of child abuse within a school. Inspectors should consult 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings'. Inspectors must not attempt to investigate the incident.

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<sup>19</sup> *Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings*, Ofsted, August 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015).

<sup>20</sup> *Keeping children safe in education*, Department for Education, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2).

<sup>21</sup> *Working together to safeguard children*, Department for Education, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2).

## Seeking the views of registered parents, pupils and other stakeholders

45. When a school is notified of a standard inspection, it is asked to notify all registered parents of registered pupils at the school, including those who have been excluded, are placed in alternative provision, or are away from school.
46. Ofsted's email confirming the inspection includes a letter that formally notifies parents. It also explains how to use Parent View and how parents can contact inspectors. Schools should encourage parents to complete Parent View by placing a link on their website to the Parent View website.<sup>22</sup> In addition, inspectors should encourage the school to notify parents using its own electronic systems (such as SMS messages), where these are available.
47. Inspectors will review the evidence from Parent View throughout the inspection to ensure that all online responses received during the inspection are taken into account. If the response rate for Parent View is low, inspectors may take steps during the inspection to gather further evidence of parents' views.
48. Inspectors will also take into account any other evidence from parents, including the results of any past surveys the school has carried out or commissioned.
49. If individual parents raise serious issues, inspectors should follow these up with the school and record its response.
50. During integrated inspections of boarding or residential special schools, social care regulatory inspectors will take account of the views that parents have given on Parent View about the school's boarding or residential provision. Views of pupils, local authorities that place and fund pupils in schools, boarders or residential pupils and boarding staff will have been gathered through Ofsted's annual point-in-time surveys (see Annex).<sup>23</sup>
51. The views of the staff at schools are gathered through a questionnaire, which the inspection support administrator sends to the school by email alongside the formal notification of inspection letter. The school is asked to distribute the questionnaire to all staff apart from those in the boarding provision, whose views will have already been sought through the point-in-time survey.
52. The questionnaire states that staff should complete and return their questionnaires in a sealed envelope marked 'Confidential – for the attention of the Ofsted inspection team' by 11am on the second day of inspection, where practicable.

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<sup>22</sup> <https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

## During the inspection

### Days allocated to inspection and inspection team members

53. Standard inspections do not normally last longer than three days. The size of the inspection team will vary according to the size and nature of the school. Inspectors will spend most of their time gathering first-hand evidence to inform judgements and to check the extent to which the school complies with the independent school standards.
54. All inspectors are suitably trained to inspect all types of independent school. There is no requirement to deploy inspectors of a particular faith to inspect a school of the same faith. It would be unusual for an inspection team of a faith school to consist entirely of inspectors of that faith.

### The start of the on-site inspection

55. The lead inspector should meet briefly with the headteacher and/or senior leadership team at the beginning of the inspection to:
  - introduce any team inspectors
  - make arrangements for a longer meeting at a convenient time with the headteacher to discuss the school's self-evaluation or equivalent and other relevant matters
  - confirm arrangements for meetings with representatives of those responsible for the governance of the school and with key staff
  - confirm arrangements for providing feedback following teaching and learning observations in lessons
  - request information about staff absence and other practical issues
  - check whether there are reasons why any teachers should not be observed, for example where they are subject to performance management procedures
  - ensure that the headteacher is aware that Ofsted's evidence from observations of teaching and learning, whether joint or otherwise, must not be used as evidence in capability/disciplinary proceedings or for the purposes of performance management
  - establish how the school will give the lead inspector access to its policy documents and records so that inspectors can check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
56. Where there is more than one inspector, a short team meeting should take place to clarify inspection activities, the initial lines of enquiry the team should explore and individual roles and responsibilities.
57. Please refer to the annex for information on inspections of schools where there are no pupils on roll.

## **Gathering and recording evidence**

58. Inspectors will gather evidence of the school's compliance with the independent school standards, and to secure the inspection judgements.
59. Inspectors must spend as much time as possible gathering evidence about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in lessons and other learning activities. They must gather a range of evidence about the typicality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. Inspectors will scrutinise pupils' work, talk to pupils about their work, gauging both their understanding and their engagement in learning, and obtain pupils' perceptions of the typical quality of teaching in a range of subjects.
60. Inspectors will evaluate evidence relating to the achievement of specific groups of pupils and individuals, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They will give particular attention to the quality of learning within lessons and on-site separate provision, and evidence of learning in off-site alternative provision.
61. Other evidence gathered by inspectors will include discussions with pupils and staff, listening to pupils read and looking at examples of pupils' work to seek out evidence for progression in knowledge and understanding. Inspectors will also scrutinise the school's records and documentation relating, for example, to pupils' academic and vocational achievement and the welfare and safety of pupils in alternative provision.
62. Evidence is recorded on evidence forms. Inspectors will also use an 'independent school standards compliance record' to record whether a school complies with the requirements of all paragraphs of the independent school standards.

## **Observing teaching, learning and assessment**

63. Inspectors will visit lessons to gather evidence about teaching, learning and assessment and will consider this first-hand evidence alongside documentary evidence about the quality of teaching and views from leaders, governors, staff, pupils and parents. Inspectors will also include evidence from observing pupils' learning in, for example, extra-curricular activities. This range of evidence also informs evaluation of pupils' progress, pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare, and the impact of leaders' and managers' improvements to teaching and assessment.
64. Once discussed with the headteacher, the lead inspector will share the strategy for observing in lessons with the inspection team and ensure that senior leaders and inspectors understand the rationale for it. Observations in lessons will cover a wide range of subjects, key stages and ability groups. The school will not normally be informed in advance about which classes will be visited. Not all teachers and classes will necessarily be observed. This will be the case in most secondary schools and large schools.

65. Inspectors may engage in:

- short visits to a number of lessons, spending a few minutes in each
- short observations of small group teaching
- observing teaching in lessons, during which they may observe activities, talk with pupils about their work and scrutinise pupils' hard copy and electronic work
- joining a class or specific group of pupils as they go from lesson to lesson, to assess their experience of a school day or part of a school day. In this way, the experience, progress and learning of these pupils can be judged within the context of other pupils' experience, such as their behaviour, their attitudes to learning and their access to the curriculum
- joint observations of teaching and learning carried out with the headteacher and/or senior staff.

### Clarification for schools

66. The information below, originally published by Ofsted in the autumn 2014 and revised in March 2015, serves to confirm facts about the requirements of Ofsted and to dispel myths about inspection that can result in unnecessary workloads in schools. It is intended to highlight specific practices that are not required by Ofsted. Inspectors **must not** advocate a particular method of planning, teaching or assessment. It is up to schools themselves to determine their practices and for leadership teams to justify these on their own merits rather than by reference to this inspection handbook.

#### *Lesson planning*

- Ofsted **does not** require schools to provide individual lesson plans to inspectors. Equally, Ofsted **does not** require schools to provide previous lesson plans.
- Ofsted **does not** specify how planning should be set out, the length of time it should take or the amount of detail it should contain. Inspectors are interested in the effectiveness of planning rather than the form it takes.

#### *Self-evaluation*

- Ofsted does not require self-evaluation to be provided in a specific format. Any assessment that is provided should be part of the school's business processes and not generated solely for inspection purposes.

#### *Grading of lessons*

- Ofsted **does not** award a grade for the quality of teaching or outcomes in the individual lessons visited. It **does not** grade individual lessons. It **does not** expect schools to use the Ofsted evaluation schedule to grade teaching or individual lessons.



### *Lesson observations*

- Ofsted **does not** require schools to undertake a specified amount of lesson observation.
- Ofsted **does not** expect schools to provide specific details of the pay grade of individual teachers who are observed during inspection.

### *Pupils' work*

- Ofsted **does not** expect to see a particular frequency or quantity of work in pupils' books or folders. Ofsted recognises that the amount of work in books and folders will depend on the subject being studied and the age and ability of the pupils.
- Ofsted recognises that marking and feedback to pupils, both written and oral, are important aspects of assessment. However, Ofsted **does not** expect to see any specific frequency, type or volume of marking and feedback; these are for the school to decide through its assessment policy. Marking and feedback should be consistent with that policy, which may cater for different subjects and different age groups of pupils in different ways, in order to be effective and efficient in promoting learning.
- While inspectors will consider how written and oral feedback are used to promote learning, Ofsted **does not** expect to see any written record of oral feedback provided to pupils by teachers.
- If it is necessary for inspectors to identify marking as an area for improvement for a school, they will pay careful attention to the way recommendations are written to ensure that these do not drive unnecessary workload for teachers.

### *Evidence for inspection*

- Ofsted **does not** expect schools to provide evidence for inspection beyond that set out in this inspection handbook.
- Ofsted **will** take a range of evidence into account when making judgements, including published performance data, the school's in-year performance information and work in pupils' books and folders, including that held in electronic form. However, unnecessary or extensive collections of marked pupils' work **are not** required for inspection.
- Ofsted **does not** expect performance- and pupil-tracking information to be presented in a particular format. Such information should be provided to inspectors in the format that the school would ordinarily use to monitor the progress of pupils in that school.
- Ofsted **does not** require teachers to undertake additional work or to ask pupils to undertake work specifically for the inspection.
- Ofsted **will** usually expect to see evidence of the monitoring of teaching and learning and its link to teachers' performance management but this should be the information that the school uses routinely and **not** additional evidence generated for inspection.

### *Statutory provisions*

- Ofsted **will** report on any failure to comply with statutory arrangements, including those relating to the workforce, where these form part of the inspection framework and evaluation schedule (Part 2 of this handbook).

### **Feedback to and discussion with teachers and other staff after observations**

67. Inspectors must offer feedback to teachers. Feedback may take a variety of forms, at the discretion of inspectors, such as one to one, discussions with groups of observed teachers, or to whole staff groups. The lead inspector should make the arrangements clear to senior leaders so that all staff understand how feedback will be conducted. These discussions should encourage a dialogue between the inspector and teacher about the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching observed, the context of the lesson and how the lesson fits into the pupils' programme of learning.
68. Inspectors must **not** provide an overall grade (either numerically or in words) for the lesson or for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment or outcomes. The headteacher is responsible for advising staff that the feedback will not be used by the school for performance management purposes; it is provided in confidence.

### **Joint observations**

69. The lead inspector should invite the headteacher or senior and/or middle leaders to take part in a selection of joint lesson observations. The number of these is at the discretion of the lead inspector.
70. After a joint observation, the inspector and headteacher or other leader must discuss their views about the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching, learning and assessment or other aspects of the lesson they have observed. Following a joint observation, the headteacher or leader will feed back to the teacher observed. If possible, the inspector should observe this feedback. This may provide evidence about the quality of the leaders' discussion about pedagogy, and the effectiveness of the school's arrangements for professional development and performance management.
71. If the headteacher or other leader offers a written record of the observation, the inspector should consider this. The inspector and the school's observer should discuss any differences in their analysis of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment or other aspects of the lesson they have observed and the pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare. Any notes taken by the headteacher or other leader should remain in the school. They should not be included in the evidence base for the inspection.

## **Talking to and observing pupils outside of lessons**

72. Inspectors must ensure that they observe pupils in a range of situations outside normal lessons to evaluate other aspects of personal development, behaviour and welfare, for example:
- at the start and finish of the school day
  - during lunchtime, including in the dining hall, and break or play times
  - during assemblies and tutor periods
  - when moving between lessons
  - during enrichment activities (including clubs and activities outside the normal timetabled curriculum).

## **The use of performance information**

73. During inspection, inspectors should consider performance information presented by the school for current pupils across year groups and previous cohorts, including that provided by external organisations. They should also consider the published data available to them before the inspection.
74. Performance information must be considered alongside other evidence gathered during the inspection on progress, attainment, attendance and exclusion to evaluate:
- overall consistency in performance, trends of improvement or decline, and differences between groups
  - the accuracy of the school's assessment of pupils' progress and attainment
  - the robustness and accuracy of the school's self-evaluation or equivalent, particularly about pupils' outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment, and pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare.
75. Inspectors should consider a wide range of information. No single measure or indicator determines judgements.
76. Inspectors should not report separately on small numbers (typically fewer than five) where individual pupils could be identified.

## **Meetings with pupils, parents, staff and other stakeholders**

77. Inspectors must take advantage of opportunities to gather evidence from a wide range of pupils, both formally and informally. During informal conversations with pupils, inspectors must ask them about their experiences of learning and behaviour in the school, including the prevention of bullying and how the school deals with discrimination and prejudiced behaviour, if they happen.

78. As well as meeting pupils, inspectors should usually conduct meetings with:
- parents (these may be informal at the start and end of the day)
  - staff
  - other stakeholders.
79. Many schools gather views regularly from these groups and inspectors will consider findings from these consultations/surveys.
80. These meetings must take place without the presence of the proprietor, headteacher or senior staff. In drawing on evidence from such meetings, every effort must be made to protect the identity of individuals. There may be circumstances, however, in which it is not possible to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewee. Inspectors have a duty to pass on disclosures that raise child protection or safeguarding issues and/or where there are concerns about serious misconduct, bullying of staff or criminal activity.

### **Meeting those responsible for governance**

81. Inspectors will always seek to meet with proprietors and governors (if the school has them) during the course of the inspection.
82. The contribution of the proprietor and/or governors to the school's performance is evaluated as part of the judgement on effectiveness of leadership and management. As with the meetings between inspectors and pupils, parents and staff, meetings with the proprietor and/or governors should take place without the presence of the headteacher or senior staff.

### **Meetings during inspection**

83. The lead inspector should meet the headteacher periodically throughout the inspection to:
- provide an update on emerging issues, including initial general findings about teaching, learning and assessment, and enable further evidence to be provided
  - allow the headteacher to raise concerns, including any related to the conduct of the inspection or of individual inspectors
  - alert the headteacher to any serious concerns.
84. The lead inspector must ensure that the executive headteacher or equivalent, if such arrangements exist, is invited to contribute to the inspection.
85. The inspection team will meet briefly at different points during the inspection. In particular, the team should:
- meet briefly in the morning on day two
  - meet at the end of day two to discuss and record emerging findings (the proprietor and headteacher should be invited)

- meet at the end of day three to finalise judgements and identify areas for improvement (the proprietor and headteacher should be invited)<sup>24</sup>
- record important points from, and the outcomes of, all team meetings on evidence forms, including electronic summary evaluation forms.

86. If there is evidence that the school may be judged inadequate or requires improvement, the lead inspector should alert the headteacher and proprietor to this possibility. It must be emphasised that final judgements are not made until the final team meeting at the end of day three.

### **Reaching final judgements**

87. Inspection activity, including lesson observations, should continue throughout the second and third day. The team should also ensure that time is set aside to complete any feedback to staff and to prepare for the final team meeting and the final feedback. At the final team meeting on day three, an electronic summary evaluation form will be completed. The main points for feedback to the school will be recorded as the meeting progresses.

### **Providing feedback**

88. The on-site inspection concludes with a final feedback meeting with the school. Those connected with the school who are likely to attend include:

- the proprietor, headteacher and other senior leaders agreed by the lead inspector and headteacher
- if the school has a governing body, the chair and as many representatives as possible from the governing body.

89. During this meeting to the school, the lead inspector will ensure that the those attending are clear:

- about the independent school standards that are met and those that are not met
- that the DfE will decide any action to take in respect of any standards that are not met
- about the provisional grades awarded for each key judgement; sufficient detail must be given by the lead inspector to enable all attendees to understand how judgements have been reached and for those responsible for governance to play a part in beginning to plan how to tackle any areas for improvement
- that the grades are provisional and so may change as a result of quality assurance procedures or moderation and must, therefore, be treated as restricted and confidential to the relevant senior personnel (as determined by the school), including those responsible for governance; they must not be

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<sup>24</sup> This meeting will be at the end of day two in the case of inspections of small schools, where there are up to four pupils on the school's roll.

shared beyond the school's leadership team; information about the inspection outcomes should be shared more widely only when the school receives a copy of the final inspection report

- that the main findings of the inspection and the main points provided orally in the feedback meeting, subject to any change, will be referred to in the text of the report, although the text of the report may differ slightly from the oral feedback
- about any recommendations for improvement
- that where the school has been judged requires improvement or inadequate, it will be subject to a progress monitoring inspection
- that, on receipt of the draft report, they must ensure that the report remains restricted and confidential to the relevant senior personnel (as determined by the school) and that the information contained within it is not shared with any third party or published under any circumstances
- that the headteacher or proprietor is invited and encouraged to complete the post-inspection survey
- about the procedure for making a complaint about the inspection.

### **Inadequate schools**

90. If inspectors reach the conclusion that the school is not complying with one or more independent school standards and this is having a negative impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development, including the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and therefore the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate, the lead inspector will complete 'Form A – initial advice to the registration authority that an independent school is not complying with the independent school standards'. Ofsted will provide the Form A to the DfE as soon as possible.
91. The purpose of Form A is to alert the registration authority – the DfE – to the judgement that the school is not meeting all the independent school standards. The DfE will use the information to determine whether to take regulatory action and to prioritise those schools that require most urgent attention.

### **After the inspection**

#### **Arrangements for publishing the report**

92. The lead inspector is responsible for writing the inspection report and the independent school standards compliance record, and for submitting the evidence to Ofsted shortly after the inspection ends. The text of the report should explain the judgements and reflect the evidence. The findings in the report should be consistent with the feedback given to the school at the end of the inspection.
93. Where an additional inspection has formed part of the standard inspection, the outcomes will be included in the report and compliance record for the standard inspection.

94. Inspection reports will be quality-assured before Ofsted sends a draft copy to the provider. The draft report is restricted and confidential to the relevant personnel (as determined by the school), including those responsible for governance, and should not be shared more widely or published. Ofsted may share a draft of the inspection report with the DfE, as necessary.
95. Ofsted will inform the school of the timescale for commenting on the draft. The lead inspector will consider any factual inaccuracies identified by the school and will make changes as appropriate. Ofsted will notify the school of the lead inspector's response.
96. Typically, schools will receive an electronic version of the final report within 14 working days of the end of the inspection. In most circumstances, the final report will be published on Ofsted's website within 19 working days. Ofsted will notify the school of the publication date when it sends the draft report.
97. If Ofsted decides that a report will be subject to further quality assurance, the school will usually receive an electronic version of the final report within 23 working days. In these circumstances, the final report will usually be published within 28 working days.
98. Paragraph 32(1)(d) of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 requires the proprietor to:
  - ensure that a copy of the inspection report is published and maintained on the school's website
  - provide a copy of the report to the registered parents of every registered pupil at the school by the date specified by Ofsted, which is five working days from receipt.

The proprietor may send or give a copy of the report to parents. Alternatively, if parents have provided an email address, the school may either email an electronic copy of the report to them, or email a link to where the report is available to download from the internet.<sup>25</sup>

99. Her Majesty's Chief Inspector also expects schools to ensure that all pupils are made aware of the findings of the inspection. The proprietor may also wish to make any local authorities that have placed pupils in the school aware of the report.
100. In all cases, the inspection process should not be treated as complete until all inspection activity has been undertaken and the final version of the inspection report has been sent to the provider and published on Ofsted's website.

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<sup>25</sup> The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014; [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/contents/made).

## The inspection evidence base

101. The evidence base for the inspection must be retained for the time specified in Ofsted's guidance.<sup>26</sup> This is normally six months from when the report is published. Information must not be disposed of if it found that it is still required by Ofsted and inspection evidence must be kept for longer than six months, for example when:

- safeguarding is ineffective
- the school is being monitored because it is less than good or an investigation is linked to the inspection or there is a potential or current litigation claim against Ofsted, such as a judicial review
- a complaint has been made
- inspections are of a very sensitive nature, or are likely to be of national or regional importance due to high levels of political or press interest.

## Quality assurance and complaints

### Quality assurance

102. All inspectors are responsible for the quality of their work. The lead inspector must ensure that inspections are carried out in accordance with the principles of inspection and the code of conduct.

103. Ofsted monitors the quality of inspections through a range of formal processes and HMI/Senior HMI visit some providers to quality-assure inspections. Ofsted may also evaluate the quality of an inspection evidence base. The lead inspector will be responsible for giving team inspectors feedback about the quality of their work and their conduct.

104. All schools are invited to take part in a post-inspection evaluation in order to contribute to inspection development.

### Handling concerns and complaints

105. The great majority of Ofsted's work is carried out smoothly and without incident. If concerns do arise during an inspection, they should be raised with the lead inspector as soon as possible in order to resolve issues before the inspection is completed. The lead inspector should seek advice where necessary. Any concerns raised and actions taken should be recorded in the inspection evidence.

106. If it is not possible to resolve concerns during the inspection, the school may wish to lodge a formal complaint. The lead inspector should ensure that the school is

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<sup>26</sup> *Retention and disposing of information*. Inspectors can access this through the engagement hub: <https://ofstedengagement-hub.ofsted.gov.uk/user/login?destination=home>.



informed of the procedures for making a formal complaint. Information about how to complain is available on the GOV.UK website.<sup>27</sup>

107. Complaints must be submitted no more than 10 working days after the publication of any inspection report. Ofsted does not normally delay publication of an inspection report while complaints are investigated. Complainants should not wait for the outcomes of any related Freedom of Information (FOI) request before making a complaint.

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<sup>27</sup> *Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted*, Ofsted, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted).

## Part 2. The evaluation schedule – how schools will be judged

### Background to the evaluation schedule

108. The evaluation schedule must be used in conjunction with the guidance set out in Part 1 of this document – ‘How schools will be inspected’ – and the ‘Common inspection framework: education, skills and early years’ (the CIF).<sup>28</sup>
109. The evaluation schedule is not exhaustive. It does not replace the professional judgement of inspectors. Inspectors must interpret grade descriptors in relation to pupils’ age, stage and phase of education.
110. In line with the CIF, inspectors will make key judgements on the following areas:
- overall effectiveness
  - effectiveness of leadership and management
  - quality of teaching, learning and assessment
  - personal development, behaviour and welfare
  - outcomes for pupils.
111. Inspectors use the following four-point scale to make all judgements, including, where applicable, judging the effectiveness of the early years provision and the sixth form provision:
- grade 1: outstanding
  - grade 2: good
  - grade 3: requires improvement
  - grade 4: inadequate.
112. In reaching these judgements, inspectors take account of any of the independent school standards that are not met and give appropriate consideration to the impact on the quality of each aspect of the school’s work.
113. In the published regulations, each independent school standard is set out in one or more paragraphs.<sup>29</sup> For example, paragraph 12 is a standard in its own right, and paragraph 5(a) is an element of the standard in paragraph 5.

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<sup>28</sup> *Common inspection framework: education, skills and early years*, Ofsted, August 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015).

<sup>29</sup> The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014; [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2014/3283/contents/made).

However, for the purpose of this guidance document, the term 'compliance with the standard' is used in the context of both examples shown above.

114. Please note that all references to 'leaders' in this document include proprietors and those in governance roles.

## **The evaluation schedule and grade descriptors**

### **Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of education**

115. Inspectors must use all their evidence to evaluate what it is like to be a pupil in the school. In making their judgements about a school's overall effectiveness, inspectors will first consider the extent to which the school meets all paragraphs of all parts of the independent school standards.
116. Inspectors will next consider whether the standard of education is good or exceeds good and is outstanding. If it is not good, then inspectors will consider whether it requires improvement or is inadequate.
117. In judging the overall effectiveness, inspectors will take account of the four key judgements. Inspectors should first make the key judgements on:
- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
  - personal development, behaviour and welfare
  - outcomes for pupils.
118. In coming to each of these key judgements, inspectors will also draw on evidence from inspection of any early years provision or sixth form provision and consider its impact in the wider context of the school.
119. Inspectors will then judge the effectiveness of any early years or sixth form provision. For either case or both, inspectors must report a grade and write sections in the report that summarise the key findings and explain the effectiveness grading.
120. The grade for early years and/or the grade for the sixth form may be the same as, higher or lower than the overall effectiveness grade. Inspectors will take into account the size of the early years and sixth form provision in relation to the size of the school, when considering the impact of these judgements on the overall effectiveness grade. Inspectors will explain any difference between the early years and/or sixth form provision and the overall effectiveness grades in the report.
121. Inspectors will then make the key judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management. In making this judgement, inspectors must take into proportionate account any significant issues in the quality of early years provision and/or sixth form provision that may have an impact on judging the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a whole.

122. Inspectors will always make a written judgement in the section on leadership and management about the effectiveness of the arrangements for safeguarding pupils.
123. Before making the final judgement on overall effectiveness, inspectors must evaluate:
- the effectiveness and impact of the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (see below)
  - the extent to which the education provided by the school meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school, including:
    - disabled pupils
    - pupils who have special educational needs.

### **Defining spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

124. The DfE has published non-statutory advice to help schools understand their obligations under the standards relating to a school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development:<sup>30</sup>
- 'Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils – Departmental advice for independent schools, academies and free schools', DfE, November 2013
  - 'Improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils: supplementary information – Departmental advice for independent schools, academies and free schools', DfE, November 2014.

The advice sets out the aims of each of the standards in part 2 of the independent school standards (spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils).

### **Grade descriptors for overall effectiveness**

#### **Outstanding (1)**

- All of the independent school standards (and, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are met.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding.
- All other key judgements are likely to be outstanding. In exceptional circumstances one of the key judgements may be good, as long as there is convincing evidence that the school is improving this area rapidly and securely towards outstanding.
- The school's thoughtful and wide-ranging promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their physical well-being enables pupils to thrive.

<sup>30</sup> Departmental advice on improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, and supplementary information, Department for Education, November 2014; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-sm-sc-development-of-pupils-in-independent-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-sm-sc-development-of-pupils-in-independent-schools).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Safeguarding is effective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Good (2)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All of the independent school standards (and, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are met.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is at least good.</li> <li>■ All other key judgements are likely to be good or outstanding. In exceptional circumstances, one of the key judgement areas may require improvement, as long as there is convincing evidence that the school is improving it rapidly and securely towards good.</li> <li>■ Deliberate and effective action is taken to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their physical well-being.</li> <li>■ Safeguarding is effective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Requires improvement (3)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ All of the independent school standards may be met, but the school is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of a good judgement. Any un-met independent school standards (or, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are minor, easily rectified and do not have a serious impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development.</li> <li>■ Other than in exceptional circumstances, it is likely that, where the school is judged to require improvement in any of the key judgements, the school's overall effectiveness will require improvement.</li> <li>■ There are weaknesses in the overall promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.</li> <li>■ Safeguarding is effective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Inadequate (4)</b></p> <p><b>Overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate if any of the following applies.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There are one or more un-met independent school standards (or, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) that have a negative impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development, including the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.</li> <li>■ The judgement on overall effectiveness is likely to be inadequate where any one of the key judgements is inadequate and/or safeguarding is ineffective and/or there are serious weaknesses in the overall promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.</li> </ul>

## Effectiveness of leadership and management

125. The CIF sets out the overarching criteria for judging the effectiveness of leadership and management.

126. In making this judgement in schools, inspectors will consider:

- whether the school meets all paragraphs in all parts of the independent school standards
- the leaders' vision and ambition for the school and how these are communicated to staff, parents and pupils

- whether leaders have created a culture of high expectations, aspirations and scholastic excellence in which the highest achievement in academic and vocational work is recognised as vitally important
- whether leaders have the highest expectations for social behaviour among the pupils and staff, so that respect and courtesy are the norm
- the rigour and accuracy of self-evaluation and how well it leads to planning that secures continual improvement
- the design, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum, ensuring breadth and balance and its impact on pupils' outcomes and their personal, development, behaviour and welfare
- how well the school supports the formal curriculum with extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding, and to improve their skills in a range of artistic, creative and sporting activities
- how well the school prepares pupils positively for life in modern Britain and promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith
- the effectiveness of the actions leaders take to secure and sustain improvements to teaching, learning and assessment and how effectively those responsible for governance hold them to account for this
- how leaders ensure that the school has a motivated, respected and effective teaching staff to deliver a high quality education for all pupils, and how effectively governors hold them to account for this
- the quality of continuing professional development for teachers at the start and middle of their careers, and later, including to develop leadership capacity, and how leaders and those responsible for governance use performance management to promote effective practice across the school
- how effectively leaders monitor the progress of groups of pupils to ensure that none fall behind and underachieve
- how well leaders engage with parents, carers and other stakeholders and agencies to support all pupils
- how effectively leaders use additional funding and measure its impact on outcomes for pupils
- how well leaders promote all forms of equality and foster greater understanding of and respect for people of all faiths (and those of no faith), races, genders, ages, disability and sexual orientation (and other groups with protected characteristics<sup>31</sup>) through their words, actions and influence within the school and more widely in the community
- the effectiveness of safeguarding

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<sup>31</sup> As defined by section 4 of the Equality Act 2010: [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15).

- the effectiveness of leaders' work to raise awareness and keep pupils safe from the dangers of abuse, sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism, and what the staff do when they suspect that pupils are vulnerable to these issues.

### Sources of evidence

127. Inspectors will obtain a range of evidence from meetings with leaders and governors and first-hand evidence of their work across the school. Inspectors will use documentary evidence provided by the school, evaluating the impact of leaders' and governors' work, both currently and over time, in conjunction with first-hand evidence. Responses to the staff questionnaire and Parent View will also provide useful evidence for judging the culture that has been established in the school by leaders and managers.
128. If the headteacher decides not to distribute the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted at the point of inspection, the school should be able to provide other evidence of regularly surveying the staff. Evidence should also be provided of how leaders and managers have responded to concerns raised by staff or parents, for example about how staff are supported by senior leaders to tackle low-level disruptive behaviour.

### Safeguarding

129. In judging the effectiveness of leadership and management, inspectors **must** also judge whether the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are effective. There is detailed guidance on evaluating safeguarding arrangements in 'Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings from September 2015'.

### Governance

130. Inspectors will consider whether those responsible for governance:
- work effectively with leaders to communicate the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school and develop a culture of ambition
  - provide a balance of challenge and support to leaders, understanding the strengths and areas needing improvement at the school
  - provide support for an effective headteacher or are hindering school improvement because of a lack of understanding of the issues facing the school
  - understand how the school makes decisions about teachers' salary progression and performance
  - performance manage the headteacher rigorously
  - understand the impact of teaching, learning and assessment on the progress of pupils currently in the school
  - ensure that assessment information from leaders provides governors with

sufficient and accurate information to ask probing questions about outcomes for pupils.

131. Inspectors will report on the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They will report on the extent to which the education the school provides meets the needs of these pupils.

## Grade descriptors for the effectiveness of leadership and management

Note: Grade descriptors are not a checklist. Inspectors adopt a 'best fit' approach that relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

### Outstanding (1)

- All of the independent school standards (and, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are met.
- Leaders and governors have created a culture that enables pupils and staff to excel. They are committed unwaveringly to setting high expectations for the conduct of pupils and staff. Relationships between staff and pupils are exemplary.
- Leaders and governors focus on consistently improving outcomes for all pupils, but especially for disadvantaged pupils. They are uncompromising in their ambition.
- The school's actions have secured substantial improvement in progress for disadvantaged pupils. Progress is rising across the curriculum, including in English and mathematics.
- Governors systematically challenge senior leaders so that the effective deployment of staff and resources, including special educational needs (SEN) funding, secures excellent outcomes for pupils. Governors do not shy away from challenging leaders about variations in outcomes for pupil groups, especially between disadvantaged and other pupils.
- Leaders and governors have a deep, accurate understanding of the school's effectiveness informed by the views of pupils, parents and staff. They use this to keep the school improving by focusing on the impact of their actions in key areas.
- Leaders and governors use incisive performance management that leads to professional development that encourages, challenges and supports teachers' improvement. Teaching is highly effective across the school.
- Staff reflect on and debate the way they teach. They feel deeply involved in their own professional development. Leaders have created a climate in which teachers are motivated and trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for their pupils.
- The broad and balanced curriculum inspires pupils to learn. The range of subjects and courses helps pupils acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in all aspects of their education, including the humanities and linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technical, social, physical and artistic learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and, within this, the promotion of fundamental British values, are at the heart of the school's work.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity and diversity exceptionally well, for pupils and staff, so that the ethos and culture of the whole school prevents any form of direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour. Leaders, staff and pupils do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders and managers have created a culture of vigilance



where pupils' welfare is actively promoted. Pupils are listened to and feel safe. Staff are trained to identify when a pupil may be at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation and they report their concerns. Leaders and staff work effectively with external partners to support pupils who are at risk or who are the subject of a multi-agency plan.

- Leaders' work to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism is exemplary. Leaders respond swiftly where pupils are vulnerable to these issues. High quality training develops staff's vigilance, confidence and competency to challenge pupils' views and encourage debate.

### **Good (2)**

- All of the independent school standards (and, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are met.
- Leaders set high expectations of pupils and staff. They lead by example to create a culture of respect and tolerance. The positive relationships between leaders, staff and pupils support the progress of all pupils at the school.
- Leaders and governors are ambitious for all pupils and promote improvement effectively. The school's actions secure improvement in disadvantaged pupils' progress, which is rising, including in English and mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the quality of education at the school. This helps them plan, monitor and refine actions to improve all key aspects of the school's work.
- Leaders and governors use performance management effectively to improve teaching. They use accurate monitoring to identify and spread effective practice across the school.
- Teachers value the continuing professional development provided by the school. It is having a positive impact on their teaching and pupils' learning. Teaching is consistently strong across the school or, where it is not, it is improving rapidly.
- Governors hold senior leaders stringently to account for all aspects of the school's performance, including the use of SEN funding, ensuring that the skilful deployment of staff and resources delivers good or improving outcomes for pupils.
- The broad and balanced curriculum provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn. The range of subjects and courses helps pupils acquire knowledge, understanding and skills in all aspects of their education, including the humanities and linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technical, social, physical and artistic learning. This supports pupils' good progress. The curriculum also contributes well to pupils' behaviour and welfare, including their physical, mental and personal well-being, safety and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders consistently promote fundamental British values and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders promote equality of opportunity and diversity, resulting in a positive school culture. Staff and pupils work together to prevent any form of direct or indirect discriminatory behaviour. Leaders, staff and pupils do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders and staff take appropriate action to identify pupils who may be at risk of neglect, abuse or sexual exploitation, reporting concerns and supporting the needs of those pupils.
- Leaders protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Staff are trained and are increasingly vigilant, confident and competent to encourage open discussion with pupils.

### **Requires improvement (3)**

- All of the independent school standards may be met, but the school is not yet demonstrating the characteristics of a good judgement. Any un-met independent school standards (or, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) are minor, easily rectified and do not have a serious impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development.
- Leadership and management are not yet good.
- Safeguarding is effective.

#### **Inadequate (4)**

**Leadership and management are likely to be inadequate if any of the following applies.**

- There are one or more un-met independent school standards (or, where relevant, statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage) that have a negative impact on pupils' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development, including the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Capacity for securing further improvement is poor and the improvements leaders and governors have made are unsustainable, have been implemented too slowly or are overly dependent on external support.
- Leaders are not doing enough to tackle poor teaching, learning and assessment, which significantly impairs the progress of pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, disabled or have special educational needs.
- Leaders are not aware of, or are not taking effective action to stem, the decline in the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The unbalanced and poorly taught curriculum fails to meet the needs of pupils or particular groups of pupils.
- The range of subjects is narrow and does not prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.
- Leaders are not taking effective steps to secure good behaviour from pupils and a consistent approach to discipline.
- Leaders and governors, through their words, actions or influence, directly and/or indirectly undermine or fail to promote equality of opportunity. They do not prevent discriminatory behaviour and prejudiced actions and views.
- Safeguarding is ineffective. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils do not meet statutory requirements, or they give serious cause for concern. Insufficient action is taken to remedy weaknesses following a serious incident.
- Leaders and governors are not protecting pupils from radicalisation and extremist views when pupils are vulnerable to these. Policy and practice are poor, which means pupils are at risk.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

132. The CIF sets out the overarching criteria for judging the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
133. Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment in school by evaluating the extent to which:
- teachers and other staff have consistently high expectations of what each pupil can achieve, including the most able and the disadvantaged

- teachers and other staff have a secure understanding of the age group they are working with and have relevant subject knowledge that is detailed and communicated well to pupils
- assessment information is gathered from looking at what pupils already know, understand and can do, and is informed by their parents/previous providers as appropriate
- assessment information is used to plan appropriate teaching and learning strategies, including to identify pupils who are falling behind in their learning or who need additional support, enabling pupils to make good progress and achieve well
- except in the case of the very young, pupils understand how to improve as a result of useful feedback, written or oral, from teachers and parents/carers understand how pupils should improve and how they can contribute to this
- the school's engagement with parents, carers and employers helps them to understand how children and learners are doing in relation to the standards expected and what they need to do to improve
- equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity are promoted through teaching and learning
- English, mathematics and the skills necessary to function as an economically active member of British society are promoted through teaching and learning.

### Sources of evidence

134. Inspectors will use a considerable amount of first-hand evidence gained from observing pupils in lessons, talking to them about their work, scrutinising their work and assessing how well leaders are securing continual improvements in teaching. Direct observations in lessons will be supplemented by a range of other evidence to enable inspectors to evaluate the impact that teachers and support assistants have on pupils' progress. Inspectors will **not** grade the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in individual lessons or learning walks.

135. Inspectors will consider:

- leaders' evaluations of teaching and its impact on learning
- how information at transition points between schools is used effectively so that teachers plan to meet pupils' needs in all lessons from the outset – this is particularly important between the early years and Key Stage 1, and Key Stages 2 and 3
- whether work in all year groups, particularly in Key Stage 3, is demanding enough for all pupils
- pupils' views about the work they have undertaken, what they have learned from it and their experience of teaching and learning over time

- information from discussions about teaching, learning and assessment with teachers, teaching assistants and other staff
- parents' views about the quality of teaching, whether they feel their children are challenged sufficiently and how quickly leaders tackle poor teaching
- scrutiny of pupils' work, with particular attention to:
  - pupils' effort and success in completing their work, both in and outside lessons, so that they can progress and enjoy learning across the curriculum
  - how pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills have developed and improved
  - the level of challenge, and whether pupils have to grapple appropriately with content, not necessarily 'getting it right' first time, which could be evidence that the work is too easy
  - how well teachers' feedback, written and oral, is used by pupils to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. Inspectors should note the clarification points set out in Part 1 of this document about pupils' work and marking.

136. In evaluating the accuracy and impact of assessment, inspectors will consider how well:

- teachers use any assessment for establishing pupils' starting points, teacher assessment and testing to modify teaching so that pupils achieve their potential by the end of a year or key stage. Inspectors should note that Ofsted does not expect to see any particular system of assessment in place
- assessment draws on a range of evidence of what pupils know, understand and can do across the curriculum
- teachers make consistent judgements about pupils' progress and attainment, for example within a subject, across a year group and between year groups.

### **Inspecting the impact of the teaching of literacy including reading**

137. Literacy includes the key skills of reading, writing and oral communication that enable pupils to access different areas of the curriculum.

138. Inspectors will consider the impact of the teaching of literacy and the outcomes across the range of the school's provision. They will consider the extent to which the school intervenes to provide support for improving pupils' literacy, especially those pupils at risk of underachieving.

139. During the inspections of schools with pupils up to Key Stage 3, inspectors must listen to children reading. They should place a particular focus on hearing lower-attaining pupils read and should discuss their reading with them. This is

to find out how effectively the school is teaching reading and, except where the school has an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, to assess whether the pupils are equipped with the phonic strategies needed to tackle unfamiliar words. There may be occasions when inspectors need to hear lower-attaining pupils read in Years 7 and 8 in secondary schools.

140. Inspectors should decide which pupils they will listen to read, taking into account the school's progress information and data on reading and other information such as lesson observations. Inspectors should hear children read from books that are appropriate to their age, including from previously unseen books. When listening to younger children read, inspectors may use the national phonics check material to help them make their judgements about the impact of phonics teaching.<sup>32</sup> Wherever possible, inspectors should listen to children reading within a classroom or in an open area with which pupils are familiar.

### **Inspecting the impact of the teaching of mathematics**

141. When evaluating the effectiveness of a school's work in mathematics through the analysis of performance information/data, observations in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work, inspectors will consider:
- how well the school is identifying and tackling inconsistency in the quality of mathematics teaching between different groups of pupils, key stages, sets and classes, including those taught by non-specialist teachers of mathematics in secondary schools
  - how well teaching, in the mathematics lessons observed, through discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work and by reviewing curriculum plans:
    - fosters mathematical understanding of new concepts and methods, including teachers' explanations and the way they require pupils to think and reason mathematically for themselves
    - ensures that pupils acquire mathematical knowledge appropriate to their age and starting points, and enables them to recall it rapidly and apply it fluently and accurately, including when calculating efficiently and in applying arithmetic algorithms
    - uses resources and approaches to enable pupils in the class to understand and master the mathematics they are learning
    - develops depth of understanding and readiness for the next stage. The

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<sup>32</sup> *Statutory guidance: phonics screening check*, Department for Education and Skills Funding Agency, February 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-1-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-ara/phonics-screening-check](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/key-stage-1-assessment-and-reporting-arrangements-ara/phonics-screening-check).

national curriculum for mathematics at Key Stage 1 and 2<sup>33</sup> specifies the aims and then states, 'The expectation is that the majority of pupils will move through the programmes of study at broadly the same pace.' At all key stages, the national curriculum<sup>34</sup> states, 'Decisions about when to progress should always be based on the security of pupils' understanding and their readiness to progress to the next stage. Pupils who grasp concepts rapidly should be challenged through being offered rich and sophisticated problems before any acceleration through new content. Those who are not sufficiently fluent with earlier material should consolidate their understanding, including through additional practice, before moving on.'

- enables pupils to solve a variety of mathematical problems, applying the mathematical knowledge and skills they have been taught
- enables pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects in the curriculum, where appropriate.

## Grade descriptors for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Note: Grade descriptors are not a checklist. Inspectors adopt a 'best fit' approach that relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

### Outstanding (1)

- Teachers demonstrate deep knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use questioning highly effectively and demonstrate understanding of the ways pupils think about subject content. They identify pupils' common misconceptions and act to ensure they are corrected.
- Teachers plan lessons very effectively, making maximum use of lesson time and coordinating lesson resources well. They manage pupils' behaviour highly effectively with clear rules that are consistently enforced.
- Teachers provide adequate time for practice to embed the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills securely. They introduce subject content progressively and constantly demand more of pupils. Teachers identify and support any pupil who is falling behind, and enable almost all to catch up.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding systematically and effectively in lessons, offering clearly directed and timely support.
- Teachers provide pupils with incisive feedback, in line with the school's assessment policy, about what pupils can do to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. The pupils use this feedback effectively.

<sup>33</sup> *Mathematics programmes of study: key stages 1 and 2: National curriculum in England*, Department for Education, September 2013; [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/335158/PRIMARY\\_national\\_curriculum\\_-\\_Mathematics\\_220714.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335158/PRIMARY_national_curriculum_-_Mathematics_220714.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> *Statutory guidance: national curriculum in England: mathematics programmes of study*, Department for Education, July 2014; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-mathematics-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-mathematics-programmes-of-study](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-mathematics-programmes-of-study/national-curriculum-in-england-mathematics-programmes-of-study).

- Teachers set challenging homework, in line with the school's policy and as appropriate for the age and stage of pupils, that consolidates learning, deepens understanding and prepares pupils very well for work to come.
- Teachers embed reading, writing and communication and, where appropriate, mathematics exceptionally well across the curriculum, equipping all pupils with the necessary skills to make progress. For younger children in particular, except where there is an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage in place, the teaching of phonics is effective in enabling them to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Teachers are determined that pupils achieve well. They encourage pupils to try hard, recognise their efforts and ensure that pupils take pride in all aspects of their work. Teachers have consistently high expectations of all pupils' attitudes to learning.
- Pupils love the challenge of learning and are resilient to failure. They are curious, interested learners who seek out and use new information to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills. They thrive in lessons and also regularly take up opportunities to learn through extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils are eager to know how to improve their learning. They capitalise on opportunities to use feedback, written or oral, to improve.
- Parents are provided with clear and timely information on how well their child is progressing and how well their child is doing in relation to the standards expected. Parents are given guidance about how to support their child to improve.
- Teachers are quick to challenge stereotypes and the use of derogatory language in lessons and around the school. Resources and teaching strategies reflect and value the diversity of pupils' experiences and provide pupils with a comprehensive understanding of people and communities beyond their immediate experience.

## **Good (2)**

- Teachers use effective planning to help pupils learn well. Time in lessons is used productively. Pupils focus well on their learning because teachers reinforce expectations for conduct and set clear tasks that challenge pupils.
- In lessons, teachers develop, consolidate and deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. They give sufficient time for pupils to review what they are learning and to develop further. Teachers identify and support effectively those pupils who start to fall behind and intervene quickly to help them to improve their learning.
- Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to plan learning that sustains pupils' interest and challenges their thinking. They use questioning skilfully to probe pupils' responses and they reshape tasks and explanations so that pupils better understand new concepts. Teachers tackle misconceptions and build on pupils' strengths.
- Teachers give pupils feedback in line with the school's assessment policy. Pupils use this feedback well and they know what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers set homework, in line with the school's policy and as appropriate for the age and stage of pupils, that consolidates learning and prepares pupils well for work to come.
- Teachers develop pupils' reading, writing and communication, and where appropriate mathematics, well across the curriculum. For younger children in particular, except where there is an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage in place, the teaching of phonics is effective in enabling them to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Teachers expect and encourage all pupils to work with positive attitudes so that they can apply themselves and make strong progress.

- Pupils develop the capacity to learn from mistakes and they become keen learners who want to find out more. Most are willing to find out new information to develop, consolidate and deepen their knowledge, understanding and skills, both in lessons and in extra-curricular activities.
- Most pupils commit to improving their work. They are given time to apply their knowledge and understanding in new ways that stretches their thinking in a wide range of subjects, and to practise key skills.
- The school gives parents accurate information about how well their child is progressing, how well their child is doing in relation to the standards expected, and what their child needs to do to improve.
- Teachers challenge stereotypes and the use of derogatory language in lessons and around the school. Teachers promote equality of opportunity and diversity in teaching and learning.

### **Requires improvement (3)**

- Teaching, learning and assessment are not yet good.

### **Inadequate (4)**

**Teaching, learning and assessment are likely to be inadequate if any of the following applies.**

- Teaching is poorly planned.
- Weak assessment practice means that teaching fails to meet pupils' needs.
- Pupils or particular groups are making inadequate progress because teaching does not develop their knowledge, understanding and skills sufficiently.
- Pupils cannot communicate, read, write, or apply mathematics as well as they should, so they do not make sufficient progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills because they are unable to access the curriculum.
- Teachers do not promote equality of opportunity or understanding of diversity effectively and so discriminate against the success of individuals or groups of pupils.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

142. The CIF sets out the overarching criteria for judging personal development, behaviour and welfare.
143. Inspectors must make a clear written judgement about behaviour and a separate clear written judgement about personal development and welfare in the report. Where the judgements differ, the lower of the two will determine the overall judgement for personal development, behaviour and welfare and is recorded in the report.
144. Evaluating, judging and reporting behaviour and welfare in this way distinguishes between each aspect so that schools and parents clearly understand the two separate judgements. Inspectors must consider carefully the effectiveness of safeguarding when pupils' welfare is judged to require improvement or be inadequate.



## Attendance and punctuality

145. Inspectors will consider:

- overall absence and persistent absence rates for all pupils, and for different groups in relation to national figures for all pupils
- the extent to which low attenders are improving their attendance over time and whether attendance is consistently low (in the lowest 10%)
- punctuality in arriving at school and at lessons.

## Sources of evidence

146. Inspectors will make this judgement using evidence seen during the inspection as well as evidence of trends over time. The judgement will be informed by documentary evidence about behaviour, including how the school tackles poor behaviour, as well as discussions with and observations of pupils at break times, lunchtimes and between lessons. Inspectors will take into account the school's use of exclusion, including the rates, patterns and reasons for exclusion, as well as any differences between groups of pupils. Inspectors will gather the views of parents, staff, governors and other stakeholders.
147. Inspectors must take account of the views different groups of pupils express, their experiences of others' behaviour and attitudes towards them, and their understanding of the importance of such attributes in school and adult life.
148. Inspectors evaluate the experience of particular individuals and groups, such as pupils for whom referrals have been made to the local authority (checking how the referral was made and the thoroughness of the follow-up), disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, looked after children, those with medical needs and those with mental health needs. Inspectors must look at a small sample of case studies about the experience of these pupils.
149. If the school runs (on its own or in partnership with other schools) an off-site unit for pupils whose behaviour is poor or with low attendance, an inspector must visit the unit. Inspectors will assess safeguarding procedures, the quality of teaching and how effectively the unit helps to improve pupils' behaviour, learning and attendance.

## Grade descriptors for personal development, behaviour and welfare

Note: Grade descriptors are not a checklist. Inspectors adopt a 'best fit' approach that relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

### Outstanding (1)

- Pupils are confident, self-assured learners. Their excellent attitudes to learning have a strong, positive impact on their progress. They are proud of their achievements and of their school.
- Pupils discuss and debate issues in a considered way, showing respect for others' ideas and points of view.
- In secondary schools, high quality impartial careers guidance helps pupils to make informed choices about which courses suit their academic needs and aspirations. They are prepared for the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training.
- Pupils understand how their education equips them with the behaviours and attitudes necessary for success in their next stage of education, training or employment and for their adult life.
- Pupils value their education and rarely miss a day at school. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance. The attendance of pupils who have previously had exceptionally high rates of absence is rising quickly towards the national average.
- Pupils' impeccable conduct reflects the school's effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour. Pupils are self-disciplined. Incidences of low-level disruption are extremely rare.
- For individuals or groups with particular needs, there is sustained improvement in pupils' behaviour. Where standards of behaviour were already excellent, they have been maintained.
- Pupils work hard with the school to prevent all forms of bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying.
- Staff and pupils deal effectively with the very rare instances of bullying behaviour and/or use of derogatory or aggressive language.
- The school's open culture actively promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Pupils are safe and feel safe at all times. They understand how to keep themselves and others safe in different situations and settings. They trust leaders to take rapid and appropriate action to resolve any concerns they have.
- Pupils can explain accurately and confidently how to keep themselves healthy. They make informed choices about healthy eating, fitness and their emotional and mental well-being. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and are confident in staying safe from abuse and exploitation.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online and of the dangers of inappropriate use of mobile technology and social networking sites.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development equips them to be thoughtful, caring and active citizens in school and in wider society.

### Good (2)

- Pupils are confident and self-assured. They take pride in their work, their school and their appearance.
- Pupils' attitudes to all aspects of their learning are consistently positive. These positive

attitudes have a good impact on the progress they make.

- Pupils show respect for others' ideas and views.
- In secondary schools, pupils use impartial careers guidance to make choices about the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training.
- Pupils are punctual and prepared for lessons. They bring the right equipment and are ready to learn.
- Pupils value their education. Few are absent or persistently absent. No groups of pupils are disadvantaged by low attendance. The attendance of pupils who have previously had exceptionally high rates of absence is showing marked and sustained improvement.
- Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the day, including at lunchtimes.
- The school is an orderly environment. Pupils respond quickly to instructions and requests from staff, allowing lessons to flow smoothly and without interruption. Low-level disruption is rare.
- Pupils' good conduct reflects the school's efforts to promote high standards. There are marked improvements in behaviour for individuals or groups with particular behavioural needs.
- Parents, staff and pupils have no well-founded concerns about personal development, behaviour and welfare.
- Teachers and other adults are quick to tackle the rare use of derogatory or aggressive language and always challenge stereotyping.
- Teachers and other adults promote clear messages about the impact of bullying and prejudiced behaviour on pupils' well-being. Pupils work well with the school to tackle and prevent the rare occurrences of bullying.
- The school's open culture promotes all aspects of pupils' welfare. Pupils are safe and feel safe. They have opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe. They enjoy learning about how to stay healthy and about emotional and mental health, safe and positive relationships and how to prevent misuse of technology.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures they are prepared to be reflective about and responsible for their actions as good citizens.

### **Requires improvement (3)**

- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are not yet good, and/or behaviour in the school is not yet good.
- Pupils are safe and they feel safe.

### **Inadequate (4)**

**Personal development, behaviour and welfare are likely to be inadequate if any of the following applies.**

- Pupils' lack of engagement, persistent low-level and/or high-level wilful, disruption, contribute to reduced learning and/or disorderly classrooms.
- A significant minority of pupils show a lack of respect for each other or staff and a lack of self-discipline. Pupils ignore or rebut requests from teachers to moderate their conduct. This results in poor behaviour around the school.
- Pupils show negative attitudes about the value of good manners and behaviour as key factors in school life, adult life and work.
- Attendance is consistently low for all pupils or groups of pupils and shows little sign of sustained improvement.
- A significant minority of pupils do not understand how and why to live healthy, positive

lives both physically and emotionally.

- Incidents of bullying or prejudiced and discriminatory behaviour, both direct and indirect, are frequent.
- Pupils have little confidence in the school's ability to tackle bullying successfully.
- Pupils or particular groups of pupils are not safe or do not feel safe at school and/or at alternative placements.

## Outcomes for pupils

150. The CIF sets out the overarching criteria for judging outcomes.

151. Inspectors will take account of current standards and progress, including the school's own performance information, and make a relevant judgement on academic and other learning outcomes for pupils by evaluating the extent to which all pupils:

- progress well from their different starting points and achieve or exceed standards expected for their age
- attain relevant qualifications so that they can and do progress to the next stage of their education into courses that lead to higher-level qualifications and into jobs that meet local and national needs.

152. To judge outcomes, inspectors will evaluate pupils' academic and vocational achievement.

153. In judging achievement, inspectors will give most weight to pupils' progress. They will take account of pupils' starting points in terms of their prior attainment and age when evaluating progress. Within this, they will give most weight to the progress of pupils currently in the school, taking account of how this compares with the progress of recent cohorts, where relevant. Inspectors will consider the progress of pupils in **all** year groups, not just those who have taken or are about to take examinations or national tests. As part of pupils' progress, inspectors will consider the growth in pupils' security, breadth and depth of knowledge, understanding and skills.

## Sources of evidence

154. Inspectors will gather evidence about the progress of current pupils through:

- observations in lessons
- discussions with pupils about their understanding of things they have been learning about
- scrutiny of pupils' development of knowledge, understanding and skills over time as shown in their work, including that in their books
- the school's own information, taking account of the quality and rigour of the assessment on which it is based.

155. Inspectors will recognise that published data for very small groups of children should be treated with caution. For example, it will not be possible to draw conclusions about trends in relation to very small groups. Equally, it will be misleading to compare national rates of progress and attainment with progress and attainment rates for very small groups or for groups that have high proportions of pupils with special educational needs arising from their low cognitive abilities.

156. In scrutinising pupils' work, inspectors will consider how well:

- pupils are making good progress towards meeting or exceeding the expected attainment for their age as set out in the school's own curriculum and assessment policies
- all pupils are set challenging goals, given their starting points, and are making good progress towards meeting or exceeding these
- pupils are gaining and consolidating knowledge, understanding and skills
- pupils, including the most able, do work that deepens their knowledge, understanding and skills, rather than simply undertaking more work of the same difficulty, or going on to study different content.

### **Disadvantaged pupils**

157. Inspectors will take particular account of the progress made by disadvantaged pupils, by the end of the key stage, compared with that made nationally by other pupils with similar starting points, and the extent to which any gaps in this progress, and consequently in attainment, are closing. Inspectors will first consider the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared with the national figures for non-disadvantaged pupils, and how much any gaps are closing. They will then also consider any in-school gaps between disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment and the progress and attainment of the other pupils in the school, and how much these gaps are closing.

158. Inspectors will consider the impact of what a school is doing to narrow any gaps in progress and attainment between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils. Where in-school gaps are narrowing, inspectors will check that this is because the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils are rising, and not because the progress or attainment of non-disadvantaged pupils is falling. Where an in-school attainment gap exists or widens, inspectors should consider whether this is because disadvantaged pupils attain more highly than other pupils nationally, but non-disadvantaged pupils in the school attain even more highly. These circumstances would not reflect negatively on a school.

### **The most able**

159. Inspectors will pay particular attention to whether the most able pupils are making progress towards attaining the highest standards and achieving as well as they should. They will also consider whether the most able pupils are

receiving the support they need to reach their full potential. For example, inspectors will consider whether a large enough proportion of pupils who had the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics achieve A\*/A GCSE grades in these subjects by the age of 16 and whether enough current pupils are on track to do so.

### **Catching up**

160. Inspectors will consider the progress that lower-attaining pupils are making and the impact of provision for them on raising their attainment so that they reach the standards expected for their age. Inspectors will also consider the impact of provision on raising the attainment of other pupils who have fallen behind so that they attain as well as they should.

### **Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs**

161. Inspectors will consider the progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in relation to the progress of pupils nationally with similar starting points. The expectation is that the identification of special educational needs leads to additional or different arrangements being made, and a consequent improvement in progress.
162. For groups of pupils whose cognitive ability is such that their attainment is unlikely ever to rise above 'low', the judgement on outcomes will be based on an evaluation of the pupils' learning and progress relative to their starting points at particular ages and any assessment measures the school holds. Evaluations should not take account of their attainment compared with that of all other pupils.

### **Incomplete key stages**

163. When evaluating pupil progress, inspectors will take into account those pupils who started a key stage elsewhere or have not completed their current key stage. This could include middle schools and newly opened schools or schools where pupil mobility is high. When evaluating progress between Key Stages 2 and 4, inspectors will take into account pupils who start part way through a phase or key stage.

### **Off-site provision**

164. Inspectors must consider the progress of pupils who attend off-site alternative provision for all or part of the week and the school's own records of these pupils' progress.

## Grade descriptors for outcomes for pupils

Note: Grade descriptors are not a checklist. Inspectors adopt a 'best fit' approach that relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

### Outstanding (1)

- Throughout each year group and across the curriculum, including in English and mathematics, current pupils make substantial and sustained progress, developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills, considering their different starting points.
- The progress across the curriculum of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, currently on roll, matches or is improving towards that of other pupils with the same starting points.
- Pupils are typically able to articulate their knowledge and understanding clearly in an age-appropriate way. They can hold thoughtful conversations about them with each other and adults.
- Pupils read widely and often across subjects to a high standard, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age.
- For pupils generally, and specifically for disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, progress is above average across nearly all subject areas.
- From each different starting point, the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in English and in mathematics are high compared with national figures. The progress of disadvantaged pupils matches or is improving towards that of other pupils nationally.
- The attainment of almost all groups of pupils is broadly in line with national averages or, if below these, it is improving rapidly.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment and have attained relevant qualifications. Compared with the national average for all pupils, higher proportions of pupils and of disadvantaged pupils progress to a range of higher and further education establishments, apprenticeships, employment or training. These destinations strongly support their career plans.

### Good (2)

- Across almost all year groups and in a wide range of subjects, including in English and mathematics, current pupils make consistently strong progress, developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills, considering their different starting points.
- In a wide range of subjects, the progress of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs currently on roll is close to or is improving towards that of other pupils with the same starting points.
- Pupils read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension appropriate to their age.
- Pupils' progress is above average or improving across most subject areas. Overall progress of disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is above average or improving.
- From different starting points, the proportions of pupils making and exceeding expected progress in English and in mathematics are close to or above national figures. The very large majority of disadvantaged pupils is similar to or improving in relation to other pupils nationally.

- Where attainment overall is low, it shows consistent improvement.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment and have attained relevant qualifications. The proportion of pupils progressing to higher and further education establishments, apprenticeships, employment or training is close to or above average. They do so at a level suitable to meet appropriate career plans.

### **Requires improvement (3)**

- Outcomes are not yet good.

### **Inadequate (4)**

#### **Outcomes are likely to be inadequate if any of the following applies.**

- Progress in any key subject<sup>35</sup> or key stage indicates pupils are underachieving considerably.
- From their different starting points, the proportions of pupils in different year groups making or exceeding expected progress in English or in mathematics are consistently low and show little or no improvement.
- For disadvantaged pupils, the proportions making or exceeding expected progress from their different starting points in English or in mathematics are consistently well below those of other pupils nationally and show little or no improvement.
- There are wide gaps in the progress and/or attainment of different groups and these are not improving.
- The school's performance regularly falls below the floor standards.<sup>36</sup> Any improvement is insufficient, fragile or inconsistent.
- Pupils' proficiency in reading, writing or mathematics is not sufficiently strong for them to succeed in the next year or stage of education, or in training or employment.
- Pupils have not attained the qualifications appropriate for them to progress to their next stage of education, training or employment.

## **Inspecting the effectiveness of the early years provision: quality and standards**

165. Inspectors are required to write a section in the inspection report that summarises the effectiveness of the early years provision and to provide a numerical grade for it.
166. In order to achieve comparability with the way registered early years providers are inspected and judged under the CIF, the grade descriptors below reflect those in the early years handbook.
167. Inspectors will judge the overall quality and standards of the early years provision, taking into account:
- the effectiveness of leadership and management

<sup>35</sup> 'Key' subjects in primary schools are English and mathematics. In secondary schools, they are English, mathematics, science and any subjects studied by a high proportion of pupils.

<sup>36</sup> Floor standards refer to the expected levels of performance at Key Stages 2 and 4 set by the government.



- the quality of teaching,<sup>37</sup> learning and assessment
- how well the provision contributes to children’s personal development, behaviour and welfare
- outcomes for children.

168. Inspectors will consider:

- the rigour and effectiveness of systems to drive improvement, including:
  - monitoring the quality of provision and children’s outcomes
  - the professional development of staff
  - evaluation of the impact of actions taken
  - setting ambitious targets
- the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures
- how well teaching nurtures, engages and motivates children, and promotes their sense of achievement and commitment to learning
- the breadth of the curriculum and how well it is based on accurate assessment of children’s learning and development, so that activities and experiences meet their needs
- the quality and impact of phonics teaching, except where there is an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage in place
- how well all staff work with parents, engage them in their children’s learning and keep them informed about their children’s achievements and progress
- children’s enjoyment of learning, including their participation and willingness to make choices and decisions, and the extent to which children are active and inquisitive learners who are creative and think critically
- how well children behave, cooperate and share with each other, make friends, respect each other’s differences and build their understanding and respect for different families, people and communities beyond their

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<sup>37</sup> Teaching in the early years should not be taken to imply a ‘top down’ or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children’s next steps in learning and monitor their progress.

immediate experience

- the extent to which children behave in ways that are safe, understand how to stay safe and show that they feel safe
- the proportions of children who have made typical or better progress from their starting points, including disabled children, those with special educational needs and the most able
- the attainment of children at the end of Reception compared with Early Years Foundation Stage profile national figures, including the proportion that achieve a good level of development,<sup>38</sup> particularly in terms of how well children are prepared for Key Stage 1
- whether outcomes are consistent across areas of learning, particularly in the prime areas and the specific areas of literacy and mathematics
- how quickly disadvantaged children, and any groups that are underachieving, are catching up.

### **Inspecting provision for two-year-olds**

169. From September 2015, schools that take two-year-olds as part of their early years provision will no longer need to register that provision with Ofsted. The provision for two-year-olds will be inspected as part of the standard inspection of the school. Inspectors should ensure that the written judgement on the effectiveness of early years provision includes evaluation of the provision for two-year-olds.

170. When observing provision for two-year-olds, inspectors will assess whether practitioners are:

- knowledgeable about the typical development and characteristics of learning for two-year-olds, including their emotional and physical dependency on adults
- aware of the large difference in development between children who are 'just two' and those approaching their third birthday
- aware when children need comforting and respond in an appropriate way that provides that comfort
- focused on teaching children through the three prime areas of learning
- attentive to children's care needs and use times caring for them as an opportunity to help children's learning
- giving children time to be in familiar, small groups and opportunities to be in smaller, quieter areas for play

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<sup>38</sup> A child achieves a good level of development, as defined by the government, if she or he meets the expected level in the early learning goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language) and in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy. This is not the same as making good progress.

- patient, attentive and allow two-year-olds to express their ideas
- listening to children and responding to children’s verbal and non-verbal communication rather than interrupting them
- gently talkative with children and are not put off when there is no response
- not reactive when children display a tantrum.

171. Inspectors will be aware that two-year-olds typically:

- continue to develop the language to communicate verbally – they may often use single words, they may string single words together or use language that is hard for adults to discern
- show interest in others but are learning to play cooperatively – children may play ‘side-by-side’ although they may be less willing to share resources
- watch others and copy others as ways of learning
- have conflict with other two-year-olds
- ask ‘what?’ and ‘where?’
- begin to develop their independence – children may often state ‘me do it’ and ‘no’
- use physical means to express themselves.

## Grade descriptors for the effectiveness of the early years provision

Note: Grade descriptors are not a checklist. Inspectors adopt a ‘best fit’ approach that relies on the professional judgement of the inspection team.

### Outstanding (1)

- All of the independent school standards are met in relation to the early years provision.
- There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements.<sup>39</sup>
- The pursuit of excellence by leaders and managers is shown by an uncompromising, highly successful drive to improve outcomes, or maintain the highest levels of outcomes, for all children over a sustained period.
- Incisive evaluation of the impact of staff’s practice leads to rigorous performance management and supervision. Highly focused professional development improves the quality of teaching.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- Children’s health, safety and well-being are greatly enhanced by the vigilant and consistent implementation of robust policies and procedures.
- Leaders use highly successful strategies to engage parents and carers, including those

<sup>39</sup> *Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*, Department for Education, 2014; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2014](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2014).

from different groups, in their children's learning in school and at home.

- A highly stimulating environment and exceptional organisation of the curriculum provides rich, varied and imaginative experiences.
- Teaching is consistently of a very high quality, inspirational and worthy of dissemination to others; it is highly responsive to children's needs.
- Assessment is accurate and based on high quality observations. It includes all those involved in the child's learning and development. Provision across all areas of learning is planned meticulously. It is based on rigorous and sharply focused assessments of children's achievement so that every child undertakes highly challenging activities.
- Children are highly motivated and very eager to join in. They consistently demonstrate curiosity, imagination and concentration. They are highly responsive to adults and each other. They do not distract others or become distracted easily themselves.
- Children are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and manage risks. They demonstrate exceptionally positive behaviour and high levels of self-control, cooperation and respect for others.
- Children make consistently high rates of progress in relation to their starting points and are extremely well prepared academically, socially and emotionally for the next stage of their education. As a result, almost all children, including disabled children, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged children and the most able, are making substantial and sustained progress.
- Gaps between the attainment of groups of children and all children nationally, including disadvantaged children, have closed or are closing rapidly. Any gaps between areas of learning are closing.

## **Good (2)**

- All of the independent school standards are met in relation to the early years provision.
- There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements.
- Leaders and managers have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision as a result of effective self-evaluation. The impact of concerted and effective action to improve provision, including the training and development of staff, can be seen in children's achievement.
- Leaders ensure that children's needs are identified and give children the support they need, including through effective partnerships with external agencies and other providers.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- Child protection policies and procedures are implemented consistently; practice is reviewed regularly and clearly evaluated.
- The curriculum provides a broad range of interesting and demanding experiences that meet children's needs and help them make progress towards the early learning goals.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- All adults have high expectations of children based on accurate assessment of children's skills, knowledge and understanding when they join the school. Practitioners use regular and precise assessments of children's learning and development to plan activities that are suitably challenging for all children.
- Parents and carers contribute to initial assessments of children's starting points and are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning and development at home.
- Children are motivated and interested in a broad range of activities and are keen

learners. They listen carefully to adults and each other.

- Children's behaviour is good and shows that they feel safe. They gain an understanding of risk through activities that encourage them to explore their environment. Children are learning to respect and celebrate each other's differences and to build their understanding of diversity beyond their immediate experience through a range of activities that teach them effectively about people in the wider world.
- Children make at least typical progress and most children make progress that is better than this from their starting points. This includes disabled children, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged children and the most able. Children develop the key skills needed to make a positive start to the next stage of their education.
- Where children's starting points are below those of other children of their age, assessment shows they are catching up quickly. Any gaps between the attainment of groups and all children nationally, are closing.

### **Requires improvement (3)**

- All of the independent school standards may be met in relation to the early years provision, but the early years requires improvement because provision and outcomes are not good. Any un-met independent school standards in relation to the early years provision are minor, easily rectified and do not have a serious impact on children's welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development.
- There are no material breaches of statutory welfare requirements.
- The effectiveness of the early years provision is not yet good.
- Safeguarding is effective.

### **Inadequate (4)**

**The early years provision is likely to be inadequate if any of the following applies.**

- There are one or more un-met independent school standards in relation to the early years provision which have a negative impact on children's welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development, including the promotion of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Statutory welfare requirements are not met.
- Self-evaluation is weak, with too little focus on raising achievement and improving the quality of provision. Any actions taken to tackle areas of identified weakness have been insufficient or ineffective.
- The curriculum is too narrow. It does not offer a broad range of experiences that challenge children or promote their understanding of people and communicates beyond their own experience.
- Teachers and other adults are not knowledgeable enough and/or they are not vigilant enough to ensure that children are kept safe and that their health and welfare are promoted.
- Safeguarding is ineffective.
- Leaders and/or staff have a poor understanding of how to promote children's learning and development, resulting in weak teaching that is not matched to children's needs.
- Information from assessment is not accurate and not used well enough to enable children to make the progress they should.
- Children's behaviour is not managed consistently. As a result, more than occasionally, lack of engagement in activities leads to a disorderly environment that hinders their learning and/or puts them and others at risk.

- Children, or specific groups of children such as disabled children, those with special educational needs or the most able, do not achieve as well as they can. Many start Year 1 without the skills and knowledge they need.
- Low attainment of any group shows little sign of rising. Gaps between different groups show little sign of closing or may be widening.
- Strategies for engaging parents about their child's learning and development are weak. As a result, parents do not know what their child is learning or how they can help them improve.

## **Inspecting the effectiveness of the sixth form provision**

172. Inspectors are required to write a section in the inspection report that summarises the effectiveness of the sixth form provision and to provide a numerical grade for it.
173. In order to achieve comparability with the way 16 to 19 provision within further education and skills providers is inspected and judged under the CIF, the grade descriptors below reflect those in the further education and skills handbook.
174. Inspectors will judge the effectiveness of the sixth form provision, taking into account:
- the effectiveness of leadership and management
  - the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
  - the personal development, behaviour and welfare of learners
  - outcomes for learners.
175. Inspectors will consider how well:
- leaders promote high expectations and use rigorous systems to drive improvement, including through monitoring and developing the quality of sixth form provision and improving the progress and achievement of learners and groups of learners
  - teaching and assessment support and challenge learners
  - programmes of study build on each learner's prior attainment and enable them to make progress and move on to a higher level of qualification when they are ready to do so
  - learners receive high quality impartial careers guidance that prepares them for their chosen next steps and enables them to make well-informed decisions about their future plans
  - learners develop personal, social, employability and independent learning skills, and achieve high levels of punctuality, attendance and conduct, including through the contribution of non-qualification or enrichment activities and/or work experience
  - learners understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy, both physically and emotionally

- learners, and groups of learners, progress to the planned next stage in their careers, such as a higher level of education or training, or to employment or an apprenticeship.

176. Inspectors will also consider whether or not arrangements for safeguarding learners are effective.

## Grade descriptors: the overall effectiveness of the sixth form provision

### Outstanding (1)

- All of the independent school standards are met in relation to the sixth form provision.
- Leaders pursue excellence. They improve provision and outcomes rapidly and reduce achievement gaps between groups by monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment as well as learners' retention, progress and skill development.
- Leaders plan, manage and evaluate programmes of study so that learners undertake highly individualised and challenging learning that builds on their prior attainment and prepares them very well for future employment.
- High quality impartial careers guidance ensures learners follow programmes of study that build on their prior attainment and enables them to develop clear, ambitious and realistic plans for their future. Learners understand the options available and are informed about local and national skills needs.
- Teaching, learning and assessment support and challenge learners to make sustained and substantial progress in all aspects of their study programme. Teaching enables learners who fall behind to catch up swiftly and the most able to excel.
- Learners are confident and conduct themselves well. They are punctual. They have excellent personal, social and employability skills and undertake high quality non-qualification activities and work experience that matches their needs. Attendance rates are high.
- Learners are safe and feel safe. They are thoughtful, caring and respectful citizens. They take responsibility for keeping themselves safe and healthy and contribute to wider society and life in Britain.
- Throughout the time spent on their programmes of study, learners and groups of learners make substantial and sustained progress from their starting points. Rates of retention are high for almost all groups of learners. Any gaps in the progress or retention of groups with similar starting points are closing.
- Almost all learners progress swiftly to higher levels during their study programme. Almost all learners complete their programmes of study, achieve qualifications relevant to their career aims and move on to sustained education, employment, training or an apprenticeship.
- Progress on level 3 qualifications in terms of value added is above average across nearly all subjects.

### Good (2)

- All of the independent school standards are met in relation to the sixth form provision.
- Leaders have high expectations. They improve provision and reduce achievement gaps between groups by monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and learners' retention, progress and skill development.
- Leaders plan and manage individualised programmes of study that build on learners' prior attainment and prepare them well for future employment.

- Impartial careers guidance ensures learners undertake programmes of study that build on their prior attainment and enables them to develop clear and realistic plans for their future.
- Teaching, learning and assessment support and challenge learners so that they make strong progress across all aspects of their programmes of study. Learners who fall behind are helped to catch up and the most able are stretched.
- Learners develop personal, social and employability skills including through high quality non-qualification activities and work experience relevant to their needs. They are punctual and attendance is high.
- Learners are safe and feel safe. They behave well, respect others and understand how to keep themselves safe and healthy and to contribute to wider society and life in Britain.
- The great majority of learners and groups of learners make strong progress from their starting points. Gaps in the progress or retention of groups with similar starting points are closing.
- The great majority of learners progress to higher levels during and after their study programme. They complete their programmes of study, achieve qualifications relevant to their career aims and move on to sustained education, employment, training or an apprenticeship.
- Progress on level 3 qualifications in terms of value added is above average or improving across most subjects.

### **Requires improvement (3)**

- All of the independent school standards may be met in relation to the sixth form provision, but the sixth form requires improvement because it is not good. Any unmet independent school standards in relation to the sixth form provision are minor, easily rectified and do not have a serious impact on students' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development.
- Effectiveness of the provision for sixth form students is not yet good.
- Safeguarding is effective.

### **Inadequate (4)**

#### **The sixth form provision is likely to be inadequate if any of the following applies.**

- There are one or more unmet independent school standards in relation to the sixth form provision which have a negative impact on students' welfare, health and safety, academic or personal development, including the promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leadership of sixth form provision is weak.
- Programmes of study are insufficiently challenging or relevant to learners' prior attainment or planned next steps.
- Weak assessment practice or poor planning mean that teaching fails to meet learners' needs.
- Learners, or groups of learners, make inadequate progress from their starting points.
- Too few learners are retained on their courses or achieve their core aim.
- Learners, or groups of learners, are ill-prepared for their next steps in terms of attainment, personal skills or behaviours.
- Too many learners, or groups of learners, are unsuccessful in securing relevant sustained education, employment or training.
- Safeguarding is ineffective.



## Annex. Additional guidance

### Evaluating the quality of boarding and residential provision in schools

177. Where the school provides boarding or residential provision, inspectors will make four key judgements on that provision. These judgements are made in accordance with the guidance and grade descriptors in the evaluation schedule for the inspection of boarding and residential provision in schools.<sup>40</sup>
178. If the provision does not meet one or more of the national minimum standards, the following standard phrase must appear as one of the recommendations in the inspection report:
- 'The school must ensure that it meets the national minimum standards for boarding schools that have not been met.'
- or
- 'The school must ensure that it meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools that have not been met.'
179. The national minimum standards not met should be listed towards the end of the report.
180. Inspectors must consider the impact of the judgements on the boarding/residential provision on the judgements for the whole school. To do this, they will need to take account of the proportion of boarders/residential pupils in the school and the seriousness of the issues found.
181. For the effectiveness of leadership and management, the numerical grades for the school and boarding should either be the same or be within one grade of each other. The inspection report should clearly state the reasons for any differences.

### Integrated inspections of education and boarding or residential provision

182. In boarding or residential special schools, the social care regulatory inspector begins to inspect in the afternoon of the preparation day of the inspection and must use 'boarding time' during the first evening to talk to young people in the boarding or residential accommodation. In schools with boarding or residential provision, lead inspectors should consider the timing of team meetings so that the social care regulatory inspector is available to join them: it is important that the findings of the social care regulatory inspector contribute to all key and overall judgements about the school.

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<sup>40</sup> *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: The inspection framework*, Ofsted, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-framework-for-inspecting-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-framework-for-inspecting-boarding-and-residential-provision-in-schools).

183. Inspectors must work closely together to plan sufficient time to discuss their findings throughout the inspection. The lead education inspector should join the social care regulatory inspector on some inspection activities so that they can gain a full picture of provision at the school. This is particularly important in assessing personal development, behaviour and welfare and the strength of the links between the day school and boarding provision.

### **Aligned inspections of schools with registration as children's homes**

184. The inspection of education in a school that is also registered as a children's home may take place as a stand-alone inspection of the education provision or be aligned with the full inspection of the children's home.<sup>41</sup> Where possible, Ofsted will attempt to align both inspections so that inspectors may work together and share evidence.

185. Where the education inspection takes place as a stand-alone event, inspectors must read the most recent education and children's home reports on the preparation day. They must make themselves aware of any current issues concerning children's welfare that may affect aspects of the school inspection, and ensure that they take these into consideration during the inspection.

186. Where the education and children's homes inspections are aligned, the education and social care regulatory inspectors should work together to share evidence, for example about outcomes. The lead education inspector should contact the social care regulatory inspector in advance to discuss the inspection. The social care regulatory inspector is likely to be more familiar and up to date with developments at the children's home, and this knowledge should be shared. The lead education inspector should share with the social care regulatory inspector any issues arising from the pre-inspection evidence or the initial telephone call to the school.

187. In the notification telephone calls, neither the inspection support administrator nor the lead education inspector will refer to the inspection of the children's home, as such inspections are conducted with no notice.

188. Throughout the inspection, inspectors should share the evidence that is required by them both in order to make the judgements in their respective evaluation schedules, for example evidence of child protection and safe recruitment procedures, records, risk analyses and matters relating to safeguarding children's welfare, health and safety. They may inspect these matters jointly, where practicable, but in any event should share their

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<sup>41</sup> All registered children's homes will have at least two inspections in a year. At least one of these will be a full inspection, and the children's homes may also be subject to an interim inspection. All inspections are conducted in line with the *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection from 1 April 2015*, Ofsted, 2015; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-childrens-homes-framework](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-childrens-homes-framework).

judgements with one another to ensure that they match up, and that any inconsistencies are justified and clear to the school and the children's home.

189. Inspectors should aim to feed back their judgements jointly at the end of the inspection, so that the school/home receives clear and consistent messages from Ofsted, particularly about the provision covered in both inspection schedules.
190. Aligned inspections always result in separate reports – one for the DfE, which covers the education provision, and one for Ofsted, which reports the findings from the care inspection.

## **Inspecting schools where there are no pupils on roll**

191. Where the inspection of a school has been deferred previously on two consecutive occasions because there were no pupils on roll, the inspection will not be deferred for a third time. The inspection will go ahead even though there will be no pupils present.
192. The purpose of the inspection will be to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards required for continued registration. Inspectors will still make qualitative judgements about the effectiveness of the school, and will comment on the extent to which it is ready to educate and safeguard pupils.
193. It may not be possible for inspectors to check compliance with the following paragraphs of the independent school standards:
  - paragraphs 2(1)–2(1)(a), 2(1)(b)(i)–2(1)(b)(ii), 2(2)(a), 2(2)(b), 2(2)(d)–2(2)(d)(ii), 2(2)(h), 2(2)(i), 3(a)–(j) in part 1
  - any of the paragraphs in part 2
  - any of the paragraphs in part 3.
194. If not, inspectors must insert a tick in the column entitled 'not applicable' in the *Independent school standards compliance record*. All other paragraphs of the standards must be checked. This is the only situation where the above mentioned paragraphs can be marked as 'not applicable'. Compliance with these paragraphs must always be checked where there are pupils on roll.
195. Where there are no pupils on roll, it may not be possible for inspectors to gather sufficient evidence to make secure inspection judgements.
196. However, inspectors must carry out the following inspection activities and consider the following evidence. A judgement must be made if there is sufficient evidence to secure it.
  - Check compliance with the standards by carrying out a systematic trawl of documents to determine whether policies are in place.
  - Check whether all schemes of work are in place.

- Gather evidence of assessment for achievement, if pupils have attended the school within the last three years.
- Check lesson plans from previous teaching, where available.
- Check whether curriculum plans are in place and are suitable for the age range of pupils that the school is registered to take.
- Check provision for and achievement of past pupils of the school who were disabled pupils or who had special educational needs, including careers advice and links to trainers and providers for students aged 16 and over.
- In the case of schools that are also registered as children's homes, check how well the care and teaching staff work together in terms of plans for communication between 'home and school', homework arrangements.
- Discuss with the proprietor, leaders and managers how the school is prepared to take on any pupils.
- Talk to the proprietor, leaders and managers about methods for monitoring teaching.

197. These matters must be reported in the inspection report, under the appropriate headings.

198. Where it is not possible to make a judgement, inspectors must clearly state that no judgement has been made as there is insufficient evidence. Inspectors must report on the extent to which the school is prepared to educate and safeguard pupils. If there is no evidence of pupils attending in last three years, this should be reported. Similarly, if the school has no tangible plans to have pupils on roll in the next 12 months this should be reported so that the DfE may consider removing the school's registration.

199. The report should reflect that there were no pupils on roll, but the inspection went ahead as it had already been deferred twice. It should also state that the purpose of the inspection was to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards required for continued registration and to report on the extent to which the school is ready to educate and safeguard pupils.

200. On the front cover of the report, inspectors must insert the words 'No judgement made' into the first column of the judgement table, and leave the second column (for the numerical grades) blank.

201. In the judgement table at the back of the independent school standards compliance record, inspectors should insert a footnote reference number next to the judgements they cannot make. The text for the footnote must state:

'As there are currently no pupils on roll at the school, the inspector was unable to gather sufficient evidence to make this judgement.'

## Independent schools with exemption from the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Introduction

202. Section 46 of the Childcare Act 2006 gives the Secretary of State the power to confer exemptions from the learning and development requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in prescribed circumstances. These circumstances are set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Exemptions from Learning and Development Requirements) Regulations 2008, as amended by the Early Years Foundation Stage (Exemptions from Learning and Development Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations 2012.<sup>42,43</sup>
203. From 26 October 2012, when the amendments came into force, schools that meet certain conditions may take up an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the EYFS.
204. There are two routes for applying for exemption: the independent schools route and the established principles route.

### Independent schools route

205. Registered independent schools that meet the four conditions below can take an exemption from all of the learning and development requirements. Exemptions will only be granted for pupils aged three and upwards; however, pupils who are 'rising 3' (that is, children who will turn three within the first term that they attend the school) should be treated in the same way as three-year-olds.

### Quality threshold

206. Quality is determined by the school's most recent inspection report.
207. For a school where the last report still contains a separate EYFS judgement, the school must have received a judgement of good or outstanding for 'Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage'.
208. For a school where the last report does not include a separate EYFS judgement, the school must have received a judgement of good or outstanding against parts 1 and 2 of the independent school standards.
209. In inspection reports written before 1 January 2013, this means a judgement of good or outstanding for quality of education provided and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

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<sup>42</sup> The Early Years Foundation Stage (Exemptions from Learning and Development Requirements) Regulations 2008; [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/1743/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/1743/contents/made).

<sup>43</sup> The Early Years Foundation Stage (Exemptions from Learning and Development Requirements) (Amendment) Regulations 2012; [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2463/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/2463/contents/made).

210. For inspection reports written after 1 January 2013, this means a judgement of good or outstanding for quality of teaching, quality of curriculum and pupils' behaviour and personal development.
211. For any exemption taken up where the most recent inspection report is dated after 1 January 2013, the report must also show that the school meets any standards under part 1 of the independent school standards relating to the education of children below compulsory school age.
212. The other conditions (seeking the views of parents, informing the local authority and notifying the DfE) are set out in the DfE's guidance 'The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements: guidance on exemptions for early years providers'.<sup>44</sup>
213. Under the independent schools route, exemptions will be granted in full against all the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. An exemption is 'taken up' on the date that the school notifies the DfE provided that it has met all the conditions. The DfE will send an acknowledgement to confirm receipt of the notification. An exemption will remain valid for as long as the school continues to meet the quality threshold.

### **Established principles route**

214. Some independent schools are governed by established principles relating to the learning and development of young children, which cannot be reconciled with some or all of the EYFS learning and development requirements. Such schools can be granted exemption from some or all of the EYFS learning and development requirements via the established principles route if they meet the following conditions, which are taken from the DfE's guidance 'The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements: guidance on exemptions for early years providers'.
215. If the provider's established principles cannot be reconciled with one or more of the learning and development requirements of the EYFS, the provider is required to explain why they cannot be reconciled in their application in order to seek an exemption. They must set out how the early learning goals, educational programmes, or aspects of the EYFS profile assessment, conflict with the provider's established principles.
216. The other conditions (seeking the views of parents, informing the local authority and requesting a direction from the DfE) are set out in the DfE's

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<sup>44</sup> *The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements: guidance on exemptions for early years providers*, Department for Education, 2012; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-learning-and-development-requirements-guidance-on-exemptions-for-early-years-providers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-learning-and-development-requirements-guidance-on-exemptions-for-early-years-providers).

guidance 'The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements: guidance on exemptions for early years providers'.<sup>45</sup>

217. Under the established principles route, exemptions can be granted, and modifications can be made, against the learning and development requirements. These in turn may be classified into educational programmes, early learning goals and assessment arrangements.
218. If an exemption is granted under the established principles route, it will take effect from the date of the letter from the DfE granting the provider exemption. During the period between applying and receiving the response, the provider is **not** exempt from the EYFS learning and development requirements.

### What happens after exemption?

219. Schools that have taken up an exemption must continue to meet the conditions above. They must notify the DfE and the local authority if, after taking up an exemption, they cease to meet the conditions and therefore are no longer eligible for an exemption. Any school that is no longer eligible for an exemption will be required to re-introduce and meet the learning and development requirements of the EYFS.
220. Independent schools that take up full exemption from the EYFS learning and development requirements are still able to practise in a way that meets the EYFS learning and development requirements but they will be classified officially as exempt and will not be subject to local authority moderation.

### Before an inspection

221. If the school has EYFS provision, it may transpire in the notification telephone call that the school has recently taken, or is in the process of applying for, exemption from the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. In anticipation of this, the lead inspector must check whether the school meets the quality threshold for exemption, by checking that the previous inspection report contains a judgement of good or outstanding for:
- overall effectiveness of the EYFS, or
  - overall quality of education and quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development where the last report does not have a separate EYFS judgement and was written before 1 January 2013, or
  - quality of teaching, quality of curriculum and pupils' behaviour and personal development, if the last report was written after 1 January 2013.

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<sup>45</sup> *The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learning and development requirements: guidance on exemptions for early years providers*, Department for Education, 2012; [www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-learning-and-development-requirements-guidance-on-exemptions-for-early-years-providers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-learning-and-development-requirements-guidance-on-exemptions-for-early-years-providers).

222. Then, during their initial phone call with the headteacher (after the inspection service provider has notified the school of their inspection), the lead inspector must ask whether the school has or has applied for an exemption from the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. If so, the lead inspector must ask whether the application was via the independent schools route, or through the established principles route, and if the latter whether the exemption covers all or part of the EYFS learning and development requirements.
223. If the school has applied for an exemption under the independent schools route, and meets the quality threshold, the inspection must proceed as if the exemption has been granted.
224. However, if the school has applied through the established principles route, and has not yet received a letter from the DfE granting the exemption, the school is not exempt from the EYFS learning and development requirements, and will therefore be inspected against them.

### **On-site inspection activity**

225. Where an independent school is exempt from the learning and development requirements (or has applied through the independent schools route for an exemption and meets the quality threshold) EYFS provision for children aged three and over should be inspected against the independent school standards, rather than the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. Exempted independent schools must continue to comply with the independent school standards for children aged three and over, and the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements – the Childcare Act 2006 does not allow for any exemptions from the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS.
226. Inspectors may ask to see copies of letters granting exemptions via the established principles route.
227. All independent schools that have EYFS provision must deliver the EYFS in full, unless they have an exemption or have applied for an exemption through the independent schools route and meet the quality threshold.

### **Inspection reports**

228. Inspection reports must include a line to state that a school is exempt from the EYFS learning and development requirements, or that a school no longer meets the conditions for exemption, as appropriate. Standard text for use by inspectors is available in the guidance 'Independent school inspection reporting requirements and report template instructions'.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> 'Independent school inspection reporting requirements and report template instructions' is an internal training document and is available on the Ofsted intranet site only.



## Point-in-time surveys

229. Ofsted will provide each school with the instructions for accessing and completing the online point-in-time surveys. The school is asked to distribute these to all day pupils and, as appropriate, all boarders/residential pupils, boarding staff and the local authorities that place children at the school.<sup>47</sup> The online surveys will normally be open for a period of six weeks during the academic year.
230. All of the point-in-time surveys are available on the Ofsted website as Word documents. Ofsted will provide a copy of them to schools that do not have access to the internet. Widgit, Makaton and Picture Communication System versions of the point-in-time surveys for day pupils and for boarders/residential pupils are published on the Ofsted website, and British Sign Language versions are available on YouTube.<sup>48, 49, 50</sup> Links to these adapted versions are included in the request sent to the school about the distribution and completion of the surveys.
231. Alternatively, schools may adapt the surveys for day pupils and boarders/residential pupils to suit any other needs of their pupils, for example by translating them into Braille or other symbol versions, such as photo symbols. However, it is important that any such translations ensure that the questions remain the same in essence. Schools may also make other reasonable adjustments such as providing additional support with completing the point-in-time survey for pupils who have low literacy skills or learning difficulties. It is important, however, that pupils are able to express their views privately if they so wish.
232. The responses to all surveys are sent directly to Ofsted where they are collated and analysed, so that they can form part of the pre-inspection information for the relevant school's next inspection.
233. During inspection, the lead inspector may share the quantitative data with the school, but any comments from users that are recorded in analyses remain confidential to the inspection team.<sup>51</sup> In the case of boarding schools, there

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<sup>47</sup> The point-in-time survey is only sent to local authorities that place and fund pupils in independent special schools, including residential special schools.

<sup>48</sup> The point-in-time survey for placing authorities is available on the GOV.UK website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/point-in-time-survey-for-local-authorities-which-place-and-fund-children-in-independent-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/point-in-time-survey-for-local-authorities-which-place-and-fund-children-in-independent-schools).

<sup>49</sup> The Word and alternative versions of the point-in-time survey for day pupils are available on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/point-in-time-survey-for-pupils-aged-3-to-19-at-non-association-independent-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/point-in-time-survey-for-pupils-aged-3-to-19-at-non-association-independent-schools).

<sup>50</sup> The Word and alternative versions of the point-in-time survey for boarders/residential pupils are available on the Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-boarders-or-residential-pupils-about-accommodation](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/survey-of-boarders-or-residential-pupils-about-accommodation).

<sup>51</sup> Inspectors should note that the point-in-time surveys state the following: 'When we write our inspection report, we may refer to the issues you have raised. We may also use the data in our other

may be sets of analyses for up to three years of annual point-in-time surveys available to the lead inspector by the time an inspection of the boarding provision is due. All sets will be taken into account, and the lead inspector will explore with the school any particular 'themes' arising from the analyses.

234. In rare cases where there is no analysis from point-in-time surveys, inspectors will need to put greater emphasis on finding alternative ways to seek the views of staff and pupils. For instance, it would be helpful for inspectors to make themselves available at a certain time in a certain place, and make this known to pupils or staff so that they can come forward with any issues.